

**Calside Primary School  
and  
Calside Nursery**



**Parental Engagement and Involvement Strategy**

**September 2024**



“Our schools across Dumfries and Galloway have high expectations and high aspirations for pupils and staff. Like you, we want the best possible future for your child. We know that children do better at school and go on to achieve more in life when families and schools work together. We want to make sure that you, as parents and carers, feel involved in your child’s learning, feel welcome and listened to in our schools. We have a shared interest in your child being happy, confident and successful in school.”

Dr. Gillian Brydson, Executive Director (Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing)  
[Authority Handbook 2023]

## **Purpose of our Strategy**

This document sets out the key priorities for our parental involvement and engagement, and sits within the Dumfries and Galloway Parental Involvement and Engagement Strategy 2023-2026. The D&G Strategy and associated supports can be read at:

<https://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/17608/Parental-Involvement-and-Engagement-PIE>.

Our strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis in collaboration with the Pupil Council and the Parent Council, and shared with the wider Parent Forum for consultation.

## **Aims of our Strategy**

In Calside Nursery and Calside Primary School, we will work in partnership with parents/carers to ensure that our learners have the opportunity to enjoy, achieve and learn together. We will promote positive partnerships with parents/carers built on honest and open communication, mutual respect and the shared aspirations that each child reaches their potential whilst in our nursery and school. We recognise the pivotal role that parents/carers play in the education, development and success of their children.

“When parents and schools work together, children do better. The active involvement of parents in the life of the school can help promote a learning community in which pupils can engage positively with school staff and their peers. Schools can benefit from developing positive partnerships with parents by involving them in all decisions affecting their children’s education and learning. A relationship of mutual trust and respect can enable effective communication that supports both parents and teachers. The better the information that schools provide to parents, the more parents can support their children’s learning and the school. Information that parents share with the school can assist teachers in adapting their teaching to suit the learning styles of pupils and take account of any particular issues that may exist.”

[Scottish Schools \(Parental Involvement\) Act 2006 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/10)

## Key Areas of Parental Involvement and Engagement

In our school, we look at the following six key areas for Parental Involvement and Engagement:

### Family Support

Family Support is inextricably linked to Learning at Home, which is the learning which happens in the home, outdoors or in the community. It can take place through everyday activities that families already do and can overlap with aspects of organised or active learning activities.

Each class shares what we are learning in school via the Class Sway. This includes the termly newsletter so that parents/carers can support this at home, as well as homework for the current learning. If a parent/carer wishes for advice as to the core homework or to request additional homework, they should email the class teacher directly who will be glad to help.

Parents, carers and family members are invited to Stay & Play, or to Come & Join Us regularly through the school year. These sessions are designed to build parental confidence in our approaches to learning and teaching, so that parents/carers feel they can support at home.

As children start Nursery, we have a transition programme to support the family. This includes visits and induction sessions, as well as a full welcome pack. This supports the children to explore their new environment and the parents to see how the nursery works. Children with more individual needs have tailored induction programmes dependent on need: this may include shorter induction sessions, home visits and social stories. When the children start nursery, parents meet with the keyworker to complete Care Plans to ensure that needs are met. Settling in reports are sent to parents at the end of the child's first term.

As children start primary school, we have a transition programme to support both the children and parents/carers in this next step in the learning journey. This includes time in their new classes for the children, but also a parental information session to support them with key information. Parents also receive an information pack with support guides to prepare their child/ren for school. When the children start school, there is a follow-up parental session to outline what learning is like in Primary 1 and how they can support at home.

As children come to the end of their primary journey, we offer a parental session at the beginning of P7 to outline what to expect of the transition process. We then support parents/carers with the process as needed.

If a child is joining our Learning Centre, allocated via the Resourced Provision Panel, they will receive an individualised transition programme tailored to their needs. Parents/carers will be invited to be an integral part of this process through visits and transition meetings, to which all partners who work with the child will be invited.

If during a child's schooling, a parent/carer or the staff feel the child would benefit from additional support, meetings will be arranged with our Principal Teacher of Additional Support for Learning and the appropriate referrals for support will be made. These can be initiated by the parent/carer or may be initiated by the class teacher.

## Communication

Communication is key to positive relationships with our families. We place a high value on getting our communication right.

Regular communications allow us to share information, dates and events with parents/carers promptly. We share information about the curriculum and what we are learning in class; how the child/ren are progressing in their learning journey and their next steps; and how to support at home. We use a range of various methods. These are:

- Direct telephone calls;
- Emails via Groupcall;
- Friday maildrop;
- School newsletters;
- The school website “Calside Courier”;
- Class Sways;
- Evisense profiling for children within the Learning Centre;
- Termly class newsletters;
- Learning Conferences for the primary school in November and May;
- IEP meetings and reviews;
- Annual reports for the primary school published in April;
- Settling in reports for the nursery sent at the end of the child/ren’s first term;
- All written communication can be translated into the language of parents/carers as needed;
- Language Line Solutions can be accessed for interpretation for verbal communications in the language of parents/carers as needed;
- Curricular Workshops or guides;
- P1 Parental Workshop in June for incoming P1, and then in September when the P1s have started;
- P7 Parental Workshop in September to guide parents as to what to expect in P7, and then Parental Profile session in May to allow parents to contribute to their child’s profile for secondary school;
- Stay and Play sessions throughout the year;
- Come and Join Us sessions throughout the year;
- Invitations to assemblies, performances and other school events such as Sports Day.

## Volunteering

We welcome family members as volunteers in school and greatly value the wide range of support they can offer to contribute to the smooth running of the school as and when required.

We have benefitted from volunteers who have offered their skill and expertise to work with groups for activities such as woodwork, baking or a foreign language; some volunteers listen to reading groups; some volunteers accompany classes on trips; or some volunteer with activities such as cycle training or running sports training. If a family member is interested in volunteering in the school, please contact the Headteacher for an initial discussion.

Parents/carers may wish to be involved in the Parent Council. At Calside, we have an enthusiastic Parent Council who support the school both educationally and socially. They have a calendar of events which raise funds for the school as well as providing social opportunities for our whole school community.

The Council provides support for a wide range of school activities, both educational and social, and is a means by which parents can become more deeply involved in the life of the school. If a parent/carer wishes to become involved, the Parent Council can be contacted via email at [calsideparentcouncil@outlook.com](mailto:calsideparentcouncil@outlook.com).

### **Learning at Home**

Learning at home can happen through curriculum-related activities such as homework, reading and sharing books. Activities for learning at home are designed to allow parents to engage in their child's learning and build upon the learning from school. Home learning activities can also include working together with your child on activities such as preparing a meal or setting the table, helping with household tasks or gardening. Please see our Home Learning guidance for further details.

Our learners take part in a wide range of activities out of school: these form a crucial part of our children's development as unique confident individuals. Parents are asked to share these activities and successes with us so that we can celebrate these achievements in class, in assemblies and in the regular wider achievements newsletters. Previously, wider achievements were recorded within each child's page in ClassDojo. We are currently exploring ways to replace this since the loss of ClassDojo.

### **Decision Making**

Parents have the right to receive advice and information about their child's education, general information about the school, to be told about meetings involving their child, and to participate in activities, such as taking part in decisions relating to the Parent Council.

Parents can be involved in making decisions through:

- Involvement in our Parent Council.
- Participating in surveys from the school regarding School Improvement Planning or other areas of school development: these often take the form of Quick Questions via email. We appreciate that parents/carers are busy so we send these surveys on an ongoing basis, and we make them short so that they are easy to complete.
- We also ask Quick Questions as parents/carers leave events: again these are designed to be easy to complete.
- Being part of focus groups: these are linked to areas of school development that we are working on, and are usually linked to the Quick Questions surveys.

### **Collaborations with the community**

We identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programmes, family practices, and student learning and development. We work with a wide range of partners to enhance the learning and resources we offer. These include, but are not limited to:

- Our Pupil Voice groups which are currently the Pupil Council, the Rights group, the Eco group, the Junior Road Safety Officers, the House Captains and the Digital Leaders;
- Our Parent Council;
- Active Schools who run after-school clubs within our activity calendar, organise inter-school sports activities and run Play Leader training for the upper school;
- Dumfries High School as our cluster high school who offer curricular sessions such as Science and Drama, as well as a transition programme to support P7 as they move on;

- Our feeder nurseries who work with us to offer an effective transition programme as children move into primary school;
- Collaboration with partners to enrich individualised curriculum opportunities and interventions such as Youth Work, the Autism Outreach Service and Chariots of Fire.
- Collaborations with local companies and third sector organisations such as Sustrans and the Emergency Services to enrich the curriculum;
- Collaborations with partners on our inter-generational project including Active Communities and Charnwood Residential Home.

### **Our Calendar for Parental Involvement and Engagement**

We agree and send out diary dates as soon as we can, in order to give parents ample opportunity to join us. These are shared at the beginning of the school year, and the beginning of each term via the mail-drop, Friday email and Class Sways. Diary dates are kept up-to-date on the school website “Calside Courier” in the Dates for Your Diary section.

The calendar broadly runs as follows:

- August/September: P1 parental workshop “Learning in P1”;
- August/September: P7 parental workshop “The Primary 7 Year”;
- September: Come and Join Us session to meet the teacher, and see what life is like in our new classes;
- September/October: an update on the progress we are making with the Nursery and School Improvement Plans;
- October: Stay and Play session in the nursery, to see what life is like in Nursery;
- November: Learner Conferences for primary children;
- November: Stay and Play in Nursery, P1 and P2;
- November: Come and Join Us in P3-P7 linking to an area of the curriculum;
- December: Christmas performances;
- January-March: Come and Join Us in all classes linking to an area of the curriculum;
- March: Standards & Quality Audit as to our improvement progress, and development of the Nursery and School Improvement Plans for the next year;
- April: annual reports for primary children sent out;
- May: Learner Conferences for primary children;
- May: Sports’ Days for both nursery and primary;
- May: P7 parental profile session;
- June: induction workshop for new P1 parents;
- June: P7 Leavers’ Ceremony.

Each class also presents a class assembly to share their learning, and practice performing in front of an audience. The timing of this is dependent on the curriculum for the year, and will be shared with parents in advance.

Pupil Voice groups may also lead parental sessions or workshops linked to their activities. For instance, the Digital Leaders have offered Internet Safety activities or Digi Week, whereas the Junior Road Safety Officers have made leaflets and guides.

### **Next Steps for this session**

- Develop a replacement method of sharing wider achievements between home and school, building pupil profiles to show their progress through their learning journey.
- Review the updated “My World of Work” app currently used for the P7 profiles, considering whether to extend this across Second level.
- Refine our termly class newsletters to highlight the development of skills for lifelong learning and work.
- Review our homework rationale with parents;
- Update our homework programme to include the development of skills for lifelong learning and work.
- Refine the learner conference paperwork and annual report format in the primary, to include the development of skills for lifelong learning and work.
- Continue to refine our parental workshops, Stay & Play, Come & Join Us and transition programmes based on parental feedback, and including the pupils in their design.
- Further develop our community links through our curriculum and through our inter-generational project.