



# Parental Involvement *Strategy*

# Parental Involvement Strategy

## Introduction

The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement Act) 2006 strengthens the existing framework for supporting parental involvement and meaningful engagement in the education of their children and the wider school community.

Research evidence indicates that when parents take a supportive role in their child's education there is a positive impact on children's achievements.

Parents' involvement in their child's education is a significant factor in the Journey to Excellence guide published in 2006, where improved and more flexible parental involvement is promoted as part of the way of helping young people realise their own full potential through high quality learning.

Dumfries and Galloway Council recognises that partnership with parents is central to the Education (Additional Support for Learning Scotland) Act 2004 and is an important part of the Additional Support for Learning Framework for Support and Authority Guidelines. Parental involvement is also a key aim within the parents and carers entitlement as outlined in our Inclusive Education Policy Statement. Parental Involvement is part of the underpinning philosophy of the Dumfries and Galloway Integrated Children's Services Plan in which the engagement

with children, young people and families is a key strategic priority and we are therefore committed to giving a range of opportunities for children, young people and families to be involved in policy and service delivery at all levels. *"Children, young people and their families should be involved in decisions that effect them, should have their voices heard and should be encouraged to play an active and responsible role in their communities"*. A similar message is delivered in the Authority's Policy for Personal Support (October 2006)

The development of greater parental involvement is a priority in the Dumfries and Galloway Education Improvement Plan 2008-11 where there are commitments to increasingly engage parents in school and authority decision making.

## Rationale

The purpose of this strategy is to provide all schools and early years establishments with a coherent and supportive framework through which schools can engage as many parents as possible in the education of their children. At the same time, the strategy aims to provide opportunities for parents to work in partnership with Dumfries and Galloway Schools Services and with other members of the community to support the wider life of the school.

The definition of a "parent" is the one set out in the Education Scotland Act 1980 which states that "parent includes guardian and any person who is liable to maintain or has parental responsibilities in relation to, or has care of a child or young person"



## The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006

The act covers three broad levels of engagement with parents. These are:

### Learning at home:

The Act recognises the vital part parents and carers play in children's learning and development. Parents are the first and ongoing educators of their own children and, as such, should receive information and support to help develop their child's learning at home and in the community.

### Home / School Partnership:

The Act reflects the shared role and responsibility that school, parents and the community have in working together to educate children. Schools must be open to the involvement of parents in the work they do and they should consider ways of providing information that helps parents engage with the school and their child's education.



### Parental Representation:

The act provides a framework for ensuring that parents have the opportunity to express their views and have these taken into account on matters affecting the education of their children, the school's arrangements for promoting parental involvement and other matters of issues of interest to parents. It makes provision for parents to be members of the Parent Forum at a school, and to have their views represented to the school, education authority and others, through a representative Parent Council for the school.

# Parental Involvement Strategy

## Principles

Successful parental involvement requires to be underpinned by a number of basic principles.

- The education of the whole child is based upon a partnership between parents and all staff involved in the process. An effective partnership between home and school will support and enhance the learning experience of each child and should facilitate early identification of potential opportunities and possible difficulties.
- Meaningful parental involvement will be carried out within a climate of mutual trust and respect. The roles, rights and responsibilities of all parties should be respected.
- Procedures to promote all types of parental involvement should be inclusive and encourage participation by all parents and carers. Steps should be taken by Dumfries and Galloway Council and individual schools to assist parents overcome any barriers to involvement.
- Representative groups such as, Parent Forums, Parent Councils, PTAs and Pupil Councils have a valuable role to play in encouraging good relationships between parents, schools and Schools Services.

- The need for the ongoing sharing of information and views at all levels is recognised.

## Implementation

All centrally and school- based Schools Services staff will take forward the strategies for Parental Involvement. Parents of children at pre-school, primary and secondary levels should be encouraged to contribute within the spirit of this guidance. Liaison will also take place with other services such as, Community Learning and Development, NHS and early years establishments as well as pupils, all of whom should be aware of the principles of Parental Involvement.

Dumfries and Galloway Council will be proactive in encouraging parental involvement of parents of "looked after children" that is children who are subject to supervision orders and live with family members as well as children who live with foster carers, in residential schools or care homes; non-resident parents and other parents/carers allocated the responsibility of a young person. The Council is also very aware of the duties as a corporate parent and the formal and local partnerships needed between its departments, services and associated agencies to ensure they

work together to meet the needs of looked after children and young people all within the "Looked after children and young people: we can and must do better" report and action plan.

It will provide help, encouragement and support to address individual support needs for pupils. Each school has a designated teacher with special responsibility for planning for and monitoring the needs of "looked after children". The Authority has established a reference group to support better outcomes in the achievement, attainment and well-being of "looked after children".

Schools have a responsibility to ensure that non-resident parents receive all information they are entitled to.

Parents from nursery departments will be invited to play a full part in the Parent Councils for their school. All other pre-school groups will be made aware of the Parental Involvement Act and be encouraged to maximise the involvement of parents in all areas of their work and in particular work with infant departments to encourage parents to be involved at the transition into primary education.

## Roles Rights and Responsibilities

In line with the requirements of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 the Council, through the Service Director Schools Services, is committed to providing support to schools to enable them to implement parental involvement within their own effective school policy. The designated responsibilities within these three areas are;

### 1. Schools Services

- Will provide advice and information to parents.
- Will ensure the Senior Management Team respond to issues raised by parents and ensure that parental consultation informs educational planning and delivery.
- Will support the establishment of Parent Councils and provide continuing advice and appropriate finance once they are established.
- Will through Link Education Officers (QI) offer appropriate support and challenge to headteachers to ensure continuous improvement in the interpretation and implementation of parental involvement in all schools.
- Will establish a complaints procedure and ensure that information on this is available to all parents.

### 2. Schools

- All members of staff should ensure that they treat parents as partners in the education of their child (ren).
- All members of staff have a responsibility to help to realise the potential of each individual child and to work in partnership with each child's parents to achieve that.
- Headteachers will ensure that an effective school Parental Involvement Policy is in place and that it has been developed in conjunction with the views of parents in their respective schools.
- As appropriate, pupils should be consulted regarding their views on parental involvement.

### 3. Parents

- Parents are entitled to respect and support in connection with issues relating to their child's education and welfare in school.
- Parents should have access to a specific member of staff who has an overall view of their child's individual progress and can give information relating to their child's levels of achievement, academic attainment and personal and social development.

- Parents are entitled to receive information and advice concerning their child's education either directly from the school or from the Local Authority.

### Responsibilities

- Parents should support their child(ren)'s education, and in doing so should endeavour to work in partnership with their child(ren)'s school.
- The Parent Councils should promote effective dialogue between school, staff and the Parent Forum.
- Parents should have an awareness of and access to support agencies and sources of information out with the school premises.





# Parental Involvement Strategy

## School Policy on Parental Involvement

Schools may already have an existing policy on Parental Involvement however, if not, schools should prepare one and it should be included in the cycle of policy reviews. A school policy on Parental Involvement should contain reference to;

- the commitments that the school is giving to parents
- the expectation that the school has of parents
- ways to access advice, further information and raise concerns and complaints
- arrangements for reporting to parents on their child's progress formally and informally including sharing information on their child's achievements and concerns
- the kinds of activities and approaches that are used to engage parents meaningfully in their child's education

A checklist is included in the Guidance section at the end of this document.

Schools will be expected to take account of parental involvement when preparing their School Improvement Plans.

## Scheme for the Introduction of Parent Councils

Schools Services produced and followed a Scheme for the introduction of Parent Councils. See Appendix 1

## Communication

Schools will hold copies of the Parental Involvement Strategy which will be available either through the Parent Council or directly from the school. Copies will also be available from the Authority.

The Authority will provide advice and communicate with parents as appropriate.

All schools should identify a mechanism for promoting their Parental Involvement Policy and should be encouraged to identify opportunities to raise awareness of it with parents.

Pupil Councils should be used as consultation bodies to obtain the views of young people regarding parental involvement in their school.

Schools Services will set up 4 Area Forums in order to encourage parental consultation. These will enable representatives from local Parent Councils to meet and discuss current issues. Senior staff from the Service will attend as appropriate.

The Authority and schools will make every effort to ensure that appropriate and diverse arrangements for home /school communication are in place.

The Authority will undertake to promote and disseminate examples of good practice in parental involvement.

## Training

Dumfries and Galloway Council is committed to offering whatever assistance it can to Parent Councils as requested.

Members of Parent Councils who are to be involved in the appointments procedures for headteachers and deputy headteachers will receive appropriate training prior to the commencement of the procedures.

Training for Parent Council members will be provided by the Authority in response to identified training needs.

The Authority will provide opportunities centrally for parents to enhance their knowledge of education and care and wellbeing issues.

As appropriate, schools may deliver ongoing programmes to assist parents in supporting their child's learning.

## Procedures for the appointment of head teachers and deputy head teachers.

The arrangements for Parental Involvement in the appointment of head teachers and deputy head teachers can be found in Appendix 2

### Complaints Procedure

The Schools Services Complaints procedure is set out in Appendix 3. An important feature of this procedure is that complaints are resolved most effectively at as local a level as possible. The Complaints Procedure will cover any complaints about the implementation of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006.

### Monitoring

#### 1. Authority level

Regular meetings of representatives from Parent Councils will enable operational issues and the progress of Parent Councils to be monitored. At these meetings the Parental Involvement Strategy should also be reviewed on a regular basis and revisions made as appropriate.

All officers of the Schools Service should have a role in ensuring parental involvement within their specific areas of responsibility.



# Parental Involvement Strategy

Link Education Officers should monitor the degree and quality of parental involvement within their schools. This should include the engagement of parents in their children's learning and the life of the school, consulting and communicating with learners and parents, and a dialogue with parents about the work of the school.

Parental Involvement questions will be included in the Quality in Education Stakeholders Surveys which is administered by all schools on a three yearly cycle. Comments from these will be factored into authority policy and procedures.

## 2. School level

Within each school the Parent Council (acting on behalf of the Parent Forum) should take responsibility for monitoring the school's policy on Parental Involvement.

Headteachers should report on the activities within their own school in their annual Standards and Quality Report. There should be regular consultation with pupils regarding parental involvement within the school.

## Evaluation

The criteria for success are that;

- Young people have high expectations and, through the curriculum and the contributions of families and communities, are enabled to develop as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.
- Parents are confident in, and comfortable with, their relationship with the school.

The quality indicators in How Good is Our School 3 (HGIOS 3) will be used as a starting point for self-evaluation within schools. However, for schools and partners to take a closer look they can use the advice in Partnership with parents in the HGIOS Self-Evaluation E Series.

The National Standards for Community Engagement which define key principles, behaviours and practical measures that underpin effective engagement can also be used to improve quality and the process.

Schools and parents should find ways to improve the quality of partnerships and the level of parental involvement. Through discussion and agreement of priorities for improvement, schools and parents

can ensure that children's learning and achievements are enhanced and that the school's overall effectiveness is increased. During the early stages of implementation informal discussions may need to take place over the understanding and practice of the Strategy. Therefore, from time to time, amendments to the Strategy may be necessary and desirable.

However, the monitoring reports described above should identify areas which require adjustment to support continuous improvement.

## Review

The Parental Involvement Strategy should be reviewed and updated on a three yearly cycle.

The Service Director Schools Services should prepare a progress report on Parental Involvement for the Education Committee every three years.





## Two-way communication between School and Parents

### Individual children

#### 1. Reports

Schools should be proactive in providing parents with advice about their child's progress since they received the last formal report. This advice should be jargon free and should cover as many curricular areas as possible.

It is important to encourage an atmosphere in which parents feel able to share their perceptions of their child's progress with teachers in as many different ways as possible. For example, parents should have the opportunity to influence the timing and format of parents' evenings and individual review and planning meetings.

#### 2. Pupil Support

##### a) Personal Support

Parents should have clearly defined procedures for communication relating to their child's general welfare and, in particular, at times of transition. Parents should receive regular information on their child's personal and social development. Home- school communication systems should be clear, made known to all

parties and published in the School Prospectus and should cover both written and verbal contact. All parents should be provided with a named contact person.

##### b) Additional Support for Learning

Parents of children with additional support needs should be made aware of any special arrangements that have been put in place for their child. Their attention should also be drawn to the parents support group Parents inclusion Network (PIN) and Parents Link Up Services (PLUS).

Strategies for communication could include;

- A school year calendar or planner distributed to all families each August.
- A home work diary provided for each pupil is a useful way of encouraging informal two-way communication between home and school.

- In nursery and pre-school contexts informal discussions can offer an exceptionally positive way initiating dialogue and this form of communication should be encouraged throughout primary and secondary schools.
- Parental and /or pupil response sections on Pupil Reports
- Parents should also be provided with a list of useful contacts including the range of support services who work with the school on a regular basis.
- Other ways of communicating could include;
- phone calls and text messaging emails
- parents section on school website parent workshops
- letters and newsletters written by parents and
- face to face informal contact

# Guidance

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## Whole school matters

Each school should regularly seek and consider the views of parents on the identification of priorities for their school. This may be achieved in a variety of ways which will, of course, vary from school to school and may include the use of focus groups and parental surveys in addition to the Parent Council.

Parental consultation should be included when developing major school policies and procedures.

While it is likely that parents will see the school staff as their principal point of contact the Authority wishes, in addition, to promote the concept of integrated community schools with a network of support services which can work together for the benefit of all parents and children. Parents should be encouraged to see partner agencies as part of the team who support the education of the whole child.

## Contents of School Policy on Parental Involvement.

The school policy should contain information relating to the items on the following list;

- advice on making contact with the school
- school's curriculum structure
- the role of the home/school partnership
- the range of opportunities for parental involvement
- parental consultation and representation
- homework: what parents might expect and how parents can help
- school strategies/documents to assist parents to support their child's learning

Links to other appropriate existing documents should be provided. Some examples of these are given in the list below.

- information on how children learn and different learning and teaching strategies
- the role of assessment as part of the learning cycle

- arrangements for reporting on pupil progress
- information on pupil support
- child protection
- children with additional support for learning needs
- positive behaviour and anti-bullying
- child sexual health, relationships and substance education
- pupil consultation
- attendance





## Parent Volunteers in schools

Parent volunteers can help to give pupils a visible indication of parents and staff working together in partnership to enhance the quality of learning. Dumfries and Galloway Council has an agreed set of procedures for any adults working in schools. These are set out in the "Participation in School Activities by Volunteers" Guidance. It is important that both parents and schools understand the need for these procedures and that the potential benefit of involving volunteers can be made available without undue stress.

Many parents are keen to offer assistance to their child (ren)'s school and schools find this assistance invaluable. Staff should encourage the involvement of parent volunteers and in doing so schools need to ensure consistent approaches to recruitment, selection procedures, deployment, training etc. The Schools Services policy relating to Disclosure Scotland checking of volunteers must be strictly followed.

Social and fundraising events take place in many schools on a regular basis. These events which involve parents and staff working together are to be commended and provide invaluable opportunities for building positive relationships.

## Examples of Parental Involvement

- Parents/Parent Council newsletter website
- Welcome sessions for new parents
- Social evenings for parents
- Curriculum workshops
- Formal parents evenings
- Informal parent/school opportunities
- Parental questionnaires
- Parental comment on pupil achievement and attainment
- Parent classroom/library helpers
- Assistance with school environment improvements
- Invigilating
- Musical events art and craft work sporting activities
- Other extra-curricular activities
- Adult supervision at discos/dances
- Working with specific group e.g. Young Enterprise, Eco and SNAG groups
- Educational visits
- Preparation of resources
- Support with homework/learning
- Family outings
- Careers Education
- Speakers

## Maximising the Benefits of Parental Involvement

- Effective parental involvement provides teachers with a clearer understanding of children's home circumstances and personal out of school achievements and increases parental understanding of what children are learning, how well they are achieving and how they can support learning in the home environment.
- Clear channels of communication will ensure that the school and parents can respond quickly and effectively to emerging issues and concerns.
- In the most effective partnerships parents will have a central role to play in supporting key aspects of the school's work and contributing to the decision-making process. Partnerships are most effective when schools treat parents fairly, regard their views as important take them into account and this is fully recognised and appreciated by parents. This will happen when parents and school staff are committed to partnership working and have a clear understanding of their respective roles.



- Parents should be given the opportunity to share their skills with the school and be able to approach parents' representative groups to discuss or raise issues.
- Parents can be reluctant, or find it difficult, to engage with schools for a wide variety of reasons.
  1. They may have had a negative experience of schools themselves or have language or sensory difficulties which prevent them from engaging easily with the children's school.
  2. Non- resident parents who have parental rights and responsibilities might not receive regular communications from schools.
  3. Parents can be busy people who have a raft of competing priorities in their lives. Schools need to provide a range of opportunities at different times for parents to engage in the life and work of the school.

Arrangements for parental involvement to meet the expectations of parents and the school are best when they emerge through full discussion. Decisions taken with the active involvement of parents will be based on an important shared understanding of the local situation. For example, it will enable parents to have the information they want, at the right time, in the right format and with the correct level of detail.





# Appendix 1

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## Scheme for the Introduction of Parent Councils

The implementation of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 means that the School Board (Scotland) Act 1988 will be repealed and School Boards will no longer exist. Schools will be asked to consult with their Parent Forum and decide on the type of Parent Council which will best suit the needs of their individual school.

September –December 2006 presentations on the Parental Involvement Act to ECS central staff and all headteachers.  
Letter issued, from the Corporate Director of Education and Community Services, to all parents notifying them of the implications of the Parental Involvement Act and “make the difference parental involvement” leaflet issued to all Parent Forum members.  
3 meetings of Schools Board, PTA chairs and representatives to discuss the authority’s scheme for the introduction of Parent Councils including the setting up of steering groups within schools.  
Communication strategy

1. Articles on Act in winter edition of the “First Link” magazine and School Board newsletter
2. Home Link workers asked to highlight consultation on make up of Parent Councils during their routine home visits
3. Press release was circulated to all local papers and interview on local radio informing parents that they were about to be consulted on the format of the Parent Council for their school
4. Posters encouraging parents to becoming involved in their Parent Council issued to all schools.

### January –March

Guidance issued from the Local Authority re the introduction of Parent Councils. Schools set up their own steering groups and strategies to seek parents’ views re their Parent Council. Parental Involvement Development Officer visited parents groups to give guidance on forming their Parent Council.  
School requested to submit draft Parent Council Constitutions by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007.

### April

Review group scrutinised draft constitutions and made recommendations if appropriate.

### May onwards

Parent Council Constitutions approved by individual Parent Forums.  
Members identified and Parent Councils operational.

### August

Operational Guidance for Parent Councils sent to all schools.



### Protocols for Parental Involvement in the appointments of Headteachers and Deputies.

#### 1. The Vacancy

Once a vacancy has arisen the Quality Improvement Manager (Resources) will contact the Parent Council and the Link Education Officer for the school and arrange a meeting of both parties.

#### 2. Meeting with the Parent Council

2.1 At this meeting the Link Education Officer will outline the framework of the appointments process to the Parent Council. Parent Councils are entitled to be involved at all stages of the appointments process. Following discussion the Parent Council should decide on their desired level of input to the key stages of the process.

The proposed national advert, job and person specification should be discussed and agreed. Adverts should contain key information about; the school, the job, the requirements, the remuneration and the contact point for applicants. Should the Parent Council wish substantial changes to the advert they must discuss these with the Quality Improvement Manager (Resources). Adverts should have a closing date of 2 weeks from publication.

The Parent Council should also identify their desired level of involvement in the sifting process.

The Parent Council should nominate a named contact for the appointments process and their members for the interview selection panel.

Following this meeting the Link Education Officer will report back to the Quality Improvement Manager (Resources).

For a deputy headteacher post the headteacher should discuss the advert (if applicable), job description and person specification with the Parent Council prior to them being submitted to the Quality Improvement Manager (Resources).

In the case of posts needing to be re-advertised the Quality Improvement Manager (Resources) should consult with the Parent Council Chair or the named contact for the appointments process.

#### 3. Leeting

3.1 Once applications have been received the Quality Improvement Manager (Resources) will discuss with the Directorate and Link Education Officer the way forward in terms of long/short leets and recommended candidates.

3.2 The Link Education Officer will meet with either the full Parent Council or their representatives to discuss the recommendations for the long/short leet.

3.3 The Parent Council is consulted about the leet and the Link Education Officer reports back to the Quality Improvement Manager (Resources).

3.4 If a long leet has been drawn up the Parent Council may have one representative on the interview and selection panel.

3.5 If a long leet has been held the recommendations for the short leet require to be ratified by the Directorate. If there has been no Parent Council representative on the long leet or if the process has moved directly to short leet the Parent Council require to be given an opportunity to comment on the make up of the short leet.

The Parent Council can request a person, other than a member of the Parent Council, to assist with the leeting process.

If the appointment is for a deputy headteacher post the headteacher must be fully involved in the process.

## Appendix 2

If there are no suitable applicants the Parent Council representative should be consulted prior to the vacancy being re-advertised.

### 4. The interview panel

4.1 The interview panel for headteacher short leet interviews will be made up of 3 representatives from the Parent Council, 3 Councillors (including the Chair of The Education Committee) and 3 members from the Directorate of School Services all with equal voting rights. The Chair of the Education Committee or his/her representative will chair this panel.

In the case of a deputy headteacher there will be 2 representatives from each group all with equal voting rights. This panel will normally be chaired by the headteacher or acting headteacher of the school to which the appointment is to be made.

In the case of appointments to a Roman Catholic school, a Church representative and a further Parent Council member should also be present.

If there is no Parent Council at the school the Parent Forum may nominate a representative to serve on the interview panel.

4.2 In the case of both headteacher and depute headteacher appointments the chairperson shall have the casting vote.

4.3 All information relating to the interview should be treated as confidential.

4.4 If no candidate is deemed suitable for appointment the Parent Council should be consulted prior to the vacancy being re-advertised.

### 5. Training

1.1 A Link Education Officer will offer training to the Parent Council members prior to the commencement of the appointments process. This training will cover any contact with interviewees prior to the formal interviews and conduct as a member of the interview panel.





## Schools Services Policy and Procedures for addressing and resolving complaints

### Policy

1.1 The Council's aim is to raise standards and improve the quality of our services. The Executive Committee has recognised that handling any complaints from the public quickly and effectively is an integral part of good customer care and also helps us to review our performance and monitor our standards. Failure to deal with complaints in a positive and structured way can, in the long run, cause more stress for staff and certainly gives a poor impression of the Service.

### 1.2 What is a complaint?

The Local Government Ombudsman has said:

*"A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, which alleges failure on the part of the council to perform a function or provide a service in line with stated Council policy and practices".*

While we have adopted this as a working definition it is important that when issues are raised they should not all be considered automatically to be complaints. Complaints would not normally include general enquiries, requests for a service or the reporting of faults. In addition complaints do not include matters covered by statutory procedures, for example pupil placement requests and exclusion appeals.

### 1.3 Entitlement

- All families and teachers are part of a school community and they have responsibilities as well as rights.
- Parents/carers have the right to expect, and all members of staff have the responsibility to provide a high standard of education, care and guidance to children and young people.
- Members of staff have the right to set rules, policies and procedures. Parents/carers have the responsibility to support these by working with the school.
- Parents and staff have to find a balance between the rights and responsibilities of everyone involved.

### 1.4 If someone wants to complain?

1.4.1. First of all, try to avoid the need for entering into the formal complaints procedure. It certainly should not be needed in every case and most people with a complaint can be treated with a sympathetic ear, an offer to find out and, hopefully, an explanation of why things went wrong, if indeed, they did! The formal complaints procedure is there to deal with those people who are not satisfied with this.

### 1.4.2. General guidelines

- Under normal circumstances, if possible, deal with the complaint on the spot in a polite, calm and reasonable way. Parents and staff should have realistic expectations and need to keep looking forward and search for solutions without blaming each other.
- Handle the complaints locally and personally and move matters forward as quickly and sensibly as possible. Do not let the parent/carer feel that the issue has been trivialised or passed from person to person.
- Many complainants will appreciate that you are taking an interest in their problem and that in itself may make the need for formal registration of the complaint unnecessary.

## Appendix 3

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- If you can see that you and the complainant are getting nowhere, then it is time to offer him/her the chance to register a formal complaint, which again, should be handled at a local level if at all possible.
- Staff should not be involved in the handling of a complaint where there is any possibility of a conflict of interest.
- If the complaint is not resolved at school level it should be directed to the Schools Services Complaints Co-ordinator. Contact details:- **Janie Riddet Woodbank 30 Edinburgh Road Dumfries DG1 1NW tel 01387 260405 e-mail [Janie.Riddet@dumgal.gov.uk](mailto:Janie.Riddet@dumgal.gov.uk)**
- Complaints which are sent directly to Schools Services will, in the first instance, be referred back to the school or, if a resolution has not been possible at a local level, be passed to the Complaints Co-ordinator to co-ordinate the action and response.

### 2. Complaints Procedure: Schools

- 2.1 Each school will keep a register of complaints and this will comprise completed complaints forms, including those unresolved locally (**Appendix 1**). At the resolution of a complaint or if it is being progressed to a higher level, schools are required to submit the Complaints Form electronically to the Management and Information Services (MIS) Team at Lochside Education Centre, then an e-mail should be sent to [SchoolDataReturns@dumgal.gov.uk](mailto:SchoolDataReturns@dumgal.gov.uk). and this will be recorded on a complaints database.
- 2.2 Complaints received by telephone should be recorded on the form, read back, and sent to the complainant for signature and returned to the school.
- 2.3 Complaints received in writing (by letter or e mail) should be summarised onto the complaints form (**Appendix 1**), with original attached, and returned to the complainant to insert the desired outcome and signature and returned to the school.
- 2.4 All formal complaints should be acknowledged within 5 working days. Sample letter (**Appendix 2**).
- 2.5 An investigation should be carried out and a resolution sought within a maximum period of 20 working days.
- 2.6 Parents should be informed of the outcome which should be recorded on the complaints form and signed off by both parents and head teacher.
- 2.7 It is advisable that all complaints be recorded through the school's incident manager system
- 2.8 If unresolved, the complaint will be forwarded to the Complaints Co-ordinator within Schools Services by the Head Teacher.





## Appendix 3

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### 3. Complaints Procedure: Schools Services

- 3.1 Complaints/concerns should be forwarded to the Complaints Co-ordinator.
- 3.2 All complaints should be centrally logged on the Customer Relations Management System. This log should show the dates of receipt and acknowledgement, the nature of the complaint and the ultimate outcome.
- 3.3 If the complaint is received by telephone, the Complaints Co-ordinator will check with the school that the issue has been ultimately unresolved at school level, contact the parents, complete a complaints form and request that they put their complaint in writing.
- 3.4 If the complaint has been submitted in writing, the Complaints Co-ordinator should ensure that the complainant has stated the nature of the complaint and their desired outcome.
- 3.5 The Complaints Co-ordinator should acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 working days.
- 3.6 The Complaints Co-ordinator will direct the complaint to the appropriate officer. For example this may be an Operations Manager or an Education Officer.
- 3.7 The investigating officer conducts the investigation normally within 20 working days and submits their investigation report (Appendix 3) to the Operations Manager, copied to the Complaints Co-ordinator, who will respond to the parents/ carers, inform the school and when appropriate close the complaint.
- 3.8 If the investigation is going to take more than 20 working days the investigating officer should keep the Complaints Co-ordinator informed of the progress. The Co-ordinator will maintain contact with the complainant during the period of the investigation.
- 3.9 Should the complaint remain unresolved, a copy of the paperwork will be forwarded to members of the Senior Management Team and other appropriate personnel.
- 3.10 The Complaints Co-ordinator will oversee the progress of complaints and ensure that appropriate records are maintained.

### 4. Disciplinary Procedures

It is essential that the complaints procedures are stopped immediately where it becomes apparent that the investigation is raising issues regarding staff conduct which must be dealt with under the disciplinary procedures.





## Further Information

Parents/carers may be accompanied by a supporter or advocate when they attend meetings at the school or with representatives of the Schools Services. Parents/Carers have a right to appeal against decisions made within the Service. Specific procedures for young people with additional support for learning needs are set out in the Additional Support for Learning Act which entitles parents / carers to refer to mediation services, an independent adjudicator or Tribunal. The details are given in the "Additional Support for Learning Authority Guidelines" Resolving Differences section.

Parents/carers who are not happy with the Council's handling of their complaint can refer it to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman at:

4 Melville Street  
Edinburgh EH3 7NS  
Phone 0800 377 7330  
E-mail: [ask@spso.org.uk](mailto:ask@spso.org.uk)  
Website: [www.spso.org.uk](http://www.spso.org.uk)

In Dumfries and Galloway "The People's Advocacy Service" offers free independent, confidential, person-centred, advocacy. They can be contacted at:

11 Buccleuch Street,  
Dumfries  
DG1 2AT  
Tel: 01387 247237





# Delivering a Curriculum for Excellence in Dumfries and Galloway

## The Big Picture and where we all fit

All of us influence and have an impact on young people, whether our role is in class, in school or to provide support.

Schools are encouraged to identify their own priorities, with national and local developments providing a framework.

### National Context

To create a more successful country, with opportunities for Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth.

There are five national strategic objectives which then link our Council's Corporate Plan to our Education Improvement Plan

- Wealthier and Fairer
- Healthier
- Greener
- Safer and Stronger
- Smarter

The themes for Scotland's Children are for them to be

- Achieving
- Active
- Healthy
- Included
- Responsible
- Respected
- Safe
- Nurtured

### Leading to

- Successful learners
- Confident individuals
- Responsible citizens
- Effective contributors

### Delivered locally through

- Journey to Excellence
- Education Improvement Plan
- The Concordat
- School/Cluster Plans
- Single Outcome Agreement

### Beyond school through

- Integrated Children and Young Peoples' Services Planning (ICSP)
- Keeping children safe
  - Early intervention
  - Engagement of children, young people and families
  - Integrated assessment
  - Workforce planning and development

### In partnership through Getting it Right for Every Child

### And through Shared Services

Opportunities to standardise / simplify / share to support services in an effective and efficient way.

## A Clear Vision A Clear Purpose

### To raise levels of:

**Achievement  
Attainment  
Participation**  
in all of our children and young people

Successful learners

Effective contributors

Confident individuals

Responsible citizens

Focussing on Success

### To encourage:

**Innovation and Creativity  
Collaboration and  
a culture of Sharing and Learning**  
in all of our staff and with our parents as partners

## Supporting the Vision

Education continues to be at the heart of our communities. People make a difference to pupils' lives through good teaching, through caring and through positive relationships

Dumfries and Galloway has a rural economy. Our geography and configuration of schools offer both challenges and opportunities. It is critical that scarce resources are not diverted from where they will have most impact.

To increase the opportunities for schools and staff to make this positive difference our strategies and approaches need to be

### Innovative

### Sustainable

and support

### Attainment, Achievement and Participation

We can best deliver A Curriculum for Excellence and have a powerful impact through us all working in partnership with a shared understanding of vision, values, aims and purposes.

## Organising Priorities

### Ambitious Excellent Schools Group



## Innovative and Sustainable

### Framework for local solutions

- Restructure of Central Support Teams to support local delivery and build capacity
- School focussed improvement planning
- District based cluster arrangements

### Working and learning with each other

- Ongoing innovation in curricular design, in line with principles of Curriculum for Excellence
- Teacher Learning Communities
- Leadership programmes
- Development of GLOW
- Behaviour Matters Action Plan

### With partners

- Demonstration sites
- Additional Support for Learning Review
- Integrated Childrens Service Plan
- Community Learning Development and College links

### With the best provision

- New builds in progress
  - 13 new schools (Primary and Secondary)
- Prioritising
  - Agreed investment priorities and reviews of provision covering the length and breadth of the authority
- Long Term
  - Through the development of a School Estate Policy which will support sustainable provision in our rural authority

Colin Grant, Director, School Services



