

August 2020



# Parent Councils Know How



## What is a Parent Council?

The main job of a Parent Council is to represent the views of the parents at the school so that all parents know that their views matter, and where they feel confident and comfortable putting them forward. All parents in the school are referred to as the Parent Forum.

## How does a Parent Council work?

To run a Parent Council, it is best to have the following roles, these are referred to as Office or Role Bearers.

**Chairperson** - this person **MUST**, by law, be a parent or carer of a child currently attending the school to be the main contact/representative for the Parent Council.

**Vice-Chairperson** - to support the Chairperson and to take on their duties in their absence if needed.

**Secretary or Clerk** - to arrange meetings, communications, minute taker.

**Treasurer** - to keep financial records, receive monies and pay agreed costs

*\*All roles apart from Chairperson can be split if that helps your parent council*

Parents nominate and vote for Role/ Office Bearers of the Parent Council to speak on their behalf. They can also decide on their Constitution. The Constitution are the rules and regulations set by each Parent Council for how they want to run things. Both things should be done at an Annual General Meeting (AGM)

**Non office bearer** role/ordinary members but voted on members of the Parent Council. These parents have the right to a vote on any matters raised by the Parent Council.

**Parent Forum:** All other parents and carers that can attend any meeting to have opinions/suggestions heard, be part of the discussion but have no voting powers. Some people without a child attending the school but with an interest in the well-being of the school as a whole, such as local councillors, or past parents who wish to continue to support can be voted in as a Co-opted Member.

It is helpful for the Chairperson to meet with the Headteacher (HT) beforehand to discuss agenda items the Parent Council want to set and give both time to prepare any additional information required. It is normal practice to give the HT space on the agenda to report on issues/events in school but this may not be a formal report or not appropriate for each meeting.

## What does a Parent Council do?

The duties of a Parent Council are not laid down in legislation, so it is up to the parents/carers at each school to decide what they want their Parent Council to do.

These can be found at: <http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/17608/Parental-Involvement>

In your school this might involve:

- Advising the school on its policies, contributing to the school's handbook and School Improvement plan
- Promoting contact between all parents and the rest of the school community
- Organising social and fundraising events
- Discussing anything that's of interest to parents
- Being involved in the appointment of the Headteacher

Parent Councils can also include subgroups for fundraising and specific projects.

For Insurances purposes it is important that if you have subgroups that all proposed events/expenditure are recorded in official minutes.

Dumfries and Galloway Council, Education and Learning Directorate have a dedicated Officer to support Parent Councils. Please email [vanessa.morris@dumgal.gov.uk](mailto:vanessa.morris@dumgal.gov.uk) if you have an enquiry or need support for your parent council.



**The Chair** is the main link between the Parent Council and the Headteacher/ School; any correspondence from Educations and Learning Directorate will usually come direct to the Parent Council Chair, therefore it is important we have up-to-date contact information for your Parent Council. This should be emailed to:

**[EducationSupport@dumgal.gov.uk](mailto:EducationSupport@dumgal.gov.uk)**

**The Chair** is responsible for responding or reporting back to the Parent Council. The Chair's job at meetings is to make sure all agenda items are dealt with effectively - i.e. to ensure meetings run smoothly, giving everyone a chance to speak and making sure discussions are appropriate for the group, i.e. individual cases should be dealt with privately before deciding whether there is a matter for the Parent Council to take on board.

**The Secretary** takes notes at the meetings and to turn them into minutes (an official record of the meeting to allow everyone to be reminded of what was discussed at each meeting and the things they said they would do) and prepares them for circulation to members once they have been approved by the Chair. Two weeks' notice should be given for meetings as appropriate and all parents and carers at the school have an open invitation to all meetings.

**The Treasurer's** role is to be one of at least 2 signatories on the bank account(s) to handle the money for the Parent Council's fundraising activities and the grant from the Local Authority, and to keep financial records that can be audited at the end of the year.

For more information on your Insurance and Parent Council Support from Connect Scotland – For more information visit <https://connect.scot/> Or helpline 0131 474 6199 or email [info@connect.scot](mailto:info@connect.scot).

visit: <http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/17608/Parental-Involvement> for the Scheme of Establishment for Parent Councils for more detail.

## **Other leaflets in this series**

Education and Learning Directorate and Parent Councils - How We Work Together

Ask Us to Look Again - Comments and Complaints

Parents as Partners in School Improvement Plans

School Parental Involvement and Engagement - What is This

Positive Behaviours in School

Understanding Jargon

Parental Partners - Local and National Partners Supporting Parents

Parent Councils Know How

Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

Parents as Volunteers in Schools

**Education and Learning Directorate**

**Tel. 030 33 33 3000**

**Email. [EducationSupport@dumgal.gov.uk](mailto:EducationSupport@dumgal.gov.uk)**