

Briefing Paper:

Report on the Public Consultation on School Handbooks and Better Information for Parents 2011.

Background to the consultation

Under the Education (School and Placing Information) (Scotland) Regulations 1982 (the 1982 Regulations) Local Authorities have to provide certain information to parents and carers about their child's school (usually known as 'the school handbook'). The Regulations cover a range of information such as transport facilities, school meal provision, post-school destinations, discipline and school rules, enforcement of attendance, specialist provision, examination achievement in National Qualifications and placing requests. Schools can supplement this information and choose how they present it (e.g. hard copy and/or electronic, different formats and styles).

The Scottish Government considers that school handbooks need to be refreshed and updated to be more relevant and helpful for parents. Information needs to be consistent with the values, purposes and principles of Curriculum for Excellence, as well as reflect the changes to the new National Qualifications.

Conclusion

In summary, school information is valued and serves a number of purposes. Respondents want a wide variety of information presented in a variety of ways to best meet their needs. Information should be accessible and parent friendly. Sign-posting to further information is appreciated. Information is wanted when it is relevant and needs to be up-to-date. Respondents are most interested in their own school, but there is some interest in comparisons with other schools within the LA. Parents and Parent Councils want to get involved in producing information, but also see a role for the SG or LA in providing guidance, as long as this is combined with flexibility for schools to add their own information.

The link below is the Overall Report for the Public Consultation on School Handbooks and Better Information for Parents:

www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/06/10134353/7

Implications for East Renfrewshire

- Given that legislation will not come into effect till around August 2012, there will be no change to guidance on the provision of School Handbooks before then.
- Scottish Government will consult with ADES and SPION so we will have further input through these networks in session 2011/12.
- It is desirable that schools provide more detailed guidance on how parents can support their children's learning at home in-line with curriculum development.
- Extra information might be signposted from the main text of the handbook to LA or School Policies for example.
- Until we know what legislation will come from the consultation, our good practice will be maintained.