Parents as Partners

An introductory guide for Parent Councils in South Ayrshire

Closing the Gap

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Definitions and Terms

The term 'parents' in this document refers to people with parental responsibilities (within the meaning of section 1(3) of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995) and others who care for or look after children or young people. A person with 'parental responsibilities' refers to someone with the rights and responsibilities that parents have in law for their child. Individual family units will comprise a wider range of people who might also contribute to a child's learning at home.

For the purposes of support for children and families, 'child' means a person under the age of 18 years. 'Family', in relation to a child, includes any person who has parental responsibility for a child and any other person with whom the child has been living (Children (Scotland) Regulations, 1995).

Parental Involvement

'Parental involvement is about supporting pupils and their learning. It is about parents and teachers working together in partnership to help children become more confident learners'. (Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act Guidance, 2006.)

Parental Engagement

Parental engagement can be considered as active involvement in learning. Such learning can take place in a variety of settings including early learning and childcare settings (ELC) or schools, the community, through family learning and at home. (Goodall and Montgomery, 2014)

Defining what is parental involvement and what is parental engagement is not always easy. Regardless of whether parents are involved with the wider life of the school or engaged in their children's learning, they can make a positive difference. Learning begins, and continues, at home. Parents and families are children's first educators and continue to make a difference to children's learning as they grow older. Schools are most effective when they develop positive relationships with parents and the community they serve. The involvement of parents in supporting their child's education at home and in providing encouragement are all factors which help to raise attainment and make learning something to celebrate.



Introduction from Chair of each Parent Council

This guide has been produced by parents to provide information on the role of a Parent Council. We are a group of parents who are also members of the Chair of Parent Council Forum within South Ayrshire. The aim of the forum is to give parents a voice and enable them to share information with the Director of Education on matters that relate to parents.

The Chair of each Parent Council will work in partnership with Educational Services to support the wider parent forum and work collaboratively with schools, head teachers and managers.

One way of showing support is by becoming a member of each Parent Council, which is a sub-group of the wider Parent Forum (all parents/carers of children at a school/ early years centre). We also want to provide parents/carers with the support they need to become more involved in their children's learning, and learning at home. The main functions of your Parent Council are to:

- Support the school in its work with pupils and parents
- Represent the views of parents
- Promote contact and communication between the school, parents, pupils, the community, early years centre and other providers
- Report to the Parent Forum.

Giving parents a voice:-The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 gives parents the right to receive information about their children's education and to be represented and have their views expressed through the parent council.

Parents and Schools as Partners

There are lots of ways in which schools, parents, families and the community can work together to give children and young people the best possible education. There can be many ways of gaining the views of parents and finding out what is important to them. There is a Toolkit to help your Parent Council discover parents' views and think about what the important issues are for your school.

How often do we meet

The Parent Council normally meets once per term. The Parent Council Chair will also attend the South Ayrshire Chairs of Parent Council Forum, also normally held once per term. There is also a Parent Council Representative who sits on South Ayrshire Council Leadership Panel when it meets for education.

Parent Councils in South Ayrshire

In South Ayrshire we wish to see Parent Councils feeling empowered to take forward their role in working in partnership with the school to support children's learning. Good clear communication and the sharing of information are essential components to achieving this, as is the building of positive relationships, actively celebrating the achievements and success of children, young people and their school.

By working together we can all help our children and young people through the encouragement and support we give them. 'It's well proven that children do better when parents and schools work together. However, not all parents find it easy to be involved in their child's learning. We want to help parents lay strong foundations for the loving, nurturing relationships that we know are integral to children's emotional, physical, socio-economic and educational wellbeing'. (National Parenting Strategy, 2012)

We extend a warm welcome to you, as partners as we work together to raise attainment, close the poverty related attainment gap and celebrate the achievements of our children and young people.



What is the Parent Forum?

Every parent with a child in school is automatically a member of the Parent Forum which enables you to volunteer to join your school's Parent Council or Parent Group. The Parent Council is a formal group with a constitution and acts as the parent voice for your school. The fact that you are a parent forum member means your voice matters to education in South Ayrshire.

All Parents should:

- receive information about the educational progress and wellbeing of your child;
- know about events and activities at the school;

- be given advice or help on how you can support your child's learning both at home and in school;
- be able to discuss how funding is spent.
- know how to be involved or volunteer within the school;
- be provided with an opportunity to comment on Scottish Government and South Ayrshire Education policies and procedures which matter to parents and families;
- know that Parent Council volunteers will work on behalf of all parents at your school.



What is a Parent Council?

The Parent Council is the formal body, made up of parent volunteers from the wider Parent Forum. A Parent Council is not run by the school or local authority but by the parents. Although formal, your school's Parent Council will be very parent-friendly and the first priority is partnership with the school. A Parent Council is a great opportunity to become more involved and get to know more about your child's school and the environment for learning. Some key features are as follows:

- the Parent Council must be chaired by a member of the Parent Forum.
- a Parent Council is a separately constituted group who are expected to work in close partnership with the school and the local authority.
- they must ensure that they have a constitution, parents will decide what goes into their constitution and how the Parent Council will be organised (see Appendix 2)
- the Parent Council represents the views of all parents and encourages links between the school, parents, pupils, pre-school groups and the wider community.
- they meet regularly to support the school.
- the relevant church or denominational body will be invited to nominate a representative to be part of the Parent Council.
- the Parent Council will work in partnership with the Head Teacher to discuss the School Improvement plan.
- the local authority will support a Parent Council and take account of the voice and views of parents.
- Parents Councils are required to report to all parents at least once a year (at the Annual General Meeting).

Agreeing your priorities:- If you haven't already done so, you may want to carry out a survey of parents' views to discover what their priorities are.

In discussions with the headteacher at the Parent Council meetings you can identify ways of working together to help parents to make the most out of learning opportunities in the home and community.



What a parent council could do.....

- work with the school to develop information that explains new developments in the curriculum and how children are being taught and how parents can be involved.
- discuss the homework policy with staff and think about ways in which it can be made more relevant to parents.
- organise workshops for parents to explain what they can do to help.
- support the school in the events that it holds for parents, e.g. parent meetings, concerts, seasonal events.

There can be differences in the focus of a primary and secondary parent council, it is important that parents are aware of the level and nature of engagement and the role they will play.

Fundraising

One very practical way to support the school and which can involve a larger number of parents is through fundraising activities. These can be as much about involvement and providing an opportunity for parents and staff to work together as they are about raising funds. They are also good fun!

Confidentiality

In general, all meetings of the Parent Council are open to the public. The Parent Council may also meet in private to discuss matters which they consider should be dealt with on a confidential basis. Individual cases relating to pupils, teachers or parents at the school are not matters for direct Parent Council involvement.

GDPR

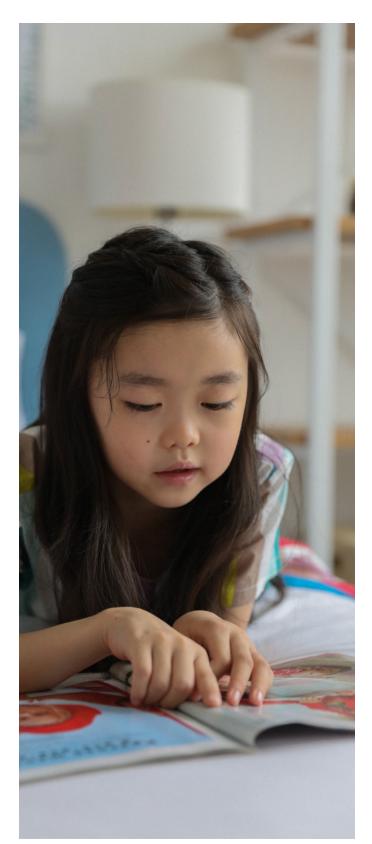
Data Protection and Confidentiality

The Parent Council has a responsibility to ensure we deal with processing personal data in a manner that complies with Data Protection legislation and ensures confidentiality.

Constitution

The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 sets out arrangements for the membership and functions of a Parent Council. Whilst there is no need to repeat them in the constitution, they will remain legal requirements. How your Parent Council works is determined by what is set down in its constitution. The constitution will set out how changes should be made to the constitution. Usually, this requires a certain notice period to all parent forum members with information about the proposed changes. Changes can usually be made at the Annual General Meeting or at an Extraordinary General Meeting. Arrangements for calling an Extraordinary General Meeting and for voting on motions e.g. to change the constitution

are usually set out in the constitution (See appendix 2).



Parent Council Meetings – a guide

Everyone on the Parent Council will bring something different and something useful to help it be successful. There may also be others; parents, grandparents, relatives, community members and local authority staff who can help.

Parents:-

- are experts on their own children and bring this information and knowledge about their children's needs
- have unique and varied skills, interests, knowledge and experience
- are members of their local community and have links (e.g. with businesses, shops and services) that the school may not have
- are in touch with other parents (members of the Parent Forum) and can represent a wider range of views.

The Head Teacher, or someone standing in for the Head Teacher:- will always attend Parent Council meetings and be there to give encouragement and guidance. The Head Teacher has both a right and a duty to attend or be represented at Parent Council meetings. The Head Teacher will provide an annual report to the Parent Council covering what has been achieved through working together, e.g. taking forward actions in the school improvement plan, the use of Pupil Equity Funding, celebrating the achievements and success of the school, learners and staff and other things that matter to parents and families.

The Head Teacher:

- will keep the Parent Council informed on what is happening in the school and what plans there are for development and improvement
- can support the involvement of pupils in the activities of the Parent Council and make the links to learning and the curriculum
- can provide opportunities for parents to join in school activities
- will work alongside the Parent Council to support the school
- provides a link with other staff in the school and the authority.



Co-opted Members:

The parent forum can decide if they wish to invite co-opted members onto the Parent Council. In addition to teachers, pupils and support staff onto the Parent Council. There may be people who can bring a particular area of expertise and skills or someone might be able to help develop strong links with the local community. The parent forum can decide if they wish to invite co-opted members onto the Parent Council.

A person does not always require to be coopted to benefit from their experience. The parent forum or Parent Council can decide to invite people with particular expertise to attend meetings as and when it is necessary. Consideration could be given to inviting local councillors, community councillors, MSPs etc as guests and to support the work of the Parent Council.

Arrangements for involvement of co opted members should be set out in the Parent Council constitution. It will be important to consider the impact co-optees will have on the overall size of the Parent Council and on the balance of membership.

Invited Guests:-

It is at the discretion of the chair as to who is invited to attend. The Parent Council can invite

- members of staff to attend the Parent Council.
- local elected members as co opted members if they feel this is appropriate.
- Members of the local community to talk about and share how they can support the school, families and children.
- Parents from the school EYC or feeder EYC who can support links and transition.
- Pupils, if appropriate
- prospective parents can provide continuity and ensure that there is a link to parents whose children will be attending in the near future.

Meeting Guide:

Parent Council meetings are generally open meetings and parents from the wider Parent Forum may attend. As a Parent Council you may want to decide how others attending meetings can participate in discussions.

- The Headteacher/Manager is the principal adviser to the Parent Council and will attend the meeting.
- Parents should be made to feel welcome, and to be able to listen and to talk about how they can support children's learning.
- Other people may be invited to join your meetings by co-opting, see above.
- It is also suggested that an invitation to your meetings is sent to the local councillors representing the multi-member ward area for your school (the school will help you with this).

The success of your group will depend on parents and school working together and getting to know each other.

It is important to remember that you are representing the views of parents, working with the school and sharing information to support family learning, learning at home and your child's education.

Some things to do:

- Look at the school improvement plan and standards and quality report
- Pupil Equity Funding get to know how your school is using this funding which is designed to close the poverty related attainment gap
- What's on is there a plan of events/ activities
- How are we going to support your children's learning and celebrate success
- Are there things you can do as a Parent Council together with pupils?

Office Bearers:- There is no requirement for Parent Councils to have office bearers although there are specific tasks that have to be carried out. For example meetings have to be chaired, agendas set, minutes taken, regular communications with all parents maintained and the finances managed. It is helpful to have some clear roles identified within the Parent Council and is recommended as good practice.

In the event that the child of a parent who chairs the meetings leaves the school, consideration should be given to possible interim procedures. For example, a vice-chair could act as chair for the time being, provided they are still a member of the parent forum. Alternatively the role of Chair could be shared among parent members of the Parent Council until the Annual General Meeting. **The Chairperson** must be a parent with a child/children at the school. It is normal to select a chair. This could be done on a rota basis. The chair should be voted in by the parent forum. The success of a meeting can depend upon how it is chaired but remember, the chairperson is the person who makes sure things get done, not the person who does everything. A parent new to the parent council cannot be appointed as chair, this can be included in your constitution.

Until a chair is agreed the Head Teacher of the school, or the chair of the working group that set up the Parent Council, may take the chair just to get things started. Once you have selected your office bearers the new chairperson for the Parent Council can run the rest of the meeting.



Role of the Chair is to:-

- Guide the Parent Council to achieve its aims (refer to school improvement plan).
- Raise awareness of the role of the Parent Council – to represent all the parents in the school.
- Speak to other parents or invited guests and the wider community, to highlight what the Parent Council is working towards or has successfully completed.
- Be visible and approachable to all parents.
- Be the main link that liaises with the Head Teacher/local authority/parent forum.
- Ensure decisions are carried out.
- Have the casting vote in the case of a tied decision.
- Present the annual report at the AGM.
- Be involved on school Inspections Your views as Chair and the Parent Council will be invited.
- Be involved in the interview process for Head Teacher/Depute Head Teachers (the Chair and up to another two representatives of the wider parent forum e.g denominational representative, will be invited to take part in the selection/interview process).

 Attend meetings with the Director of Education along with Chairs of other Parent Councils. These meetings are normally held termly.

Your constitution will set-out how long the chair will hold this role for. The post may be shared between two parents – Joint Chair, making it easier to share the workload.

Does your constitution allow for co-opted members?

Virtual meetings

There are a variety of virtual platforms that can be used to facilitate virtual meetings. Some of the platforms are free, however may be time limited. Parent Councils may wish to purchase the platform that is most appropriate for them.



Chairing a meeting

As Chair you are responsible for:

- Inviting parents and others in the school community to suggest items for the agenda, (this can be passed to the secretary for distribution).
- Setting the agenda.
- Agreeing in advance topics to be discussed at the meeting and giving notice to the wider parents and Parent Council members before the meeting.
- Ensuring the Agenda is made available to the wider parent forum and Parent Council members
- Collating any information required in advance and considering whether you need to distribute any information in advance of the meeting – e.g. the Head Teacher's report.

Getting through the agenda

- Have a clear agenda with timings against each item. Stick to the agenda item – acknowledge other issues and suggest it is added to the next agenda.
- Don't assume everyone understands what is being discussed.
- Facilitate don't dominate (you are the mediator!).
- Following discussions review the main points and if necessary take a vote.
- Ensure that everyone gets an opportunity to speak and make sure all views are heard.
- Encourage people to contribute

What needs to be done?

- How frequently do you want to meet?
- What sort of information do you want and when? What is it you as parents wish to do to support the school?
- Do you want to set up any sub-committees to look after particular aspects of the Parent Council's work? E.g a communication sub group.

- How are you going to communicate with other parents? (website, newsletter, e-mail, twitter, text etc.)
- In circumstances where a Parent Council is paying a clerk a link to the on line form will be sent once the New Start forms have been received. See Appendix 2.
- Payment is arranged by completing the Education WEB ADI spreadsheet uploaded into the payroll system. Clerical Staff in your School will action.



Annual Report

• You have to produce an annual report.

Check when you have said you will do this in your constitution.

- One very important point to remember: you can ask the Head Teacher for advice and invite her/him to respond to questions on any relevant subject except matters about individual pupils or members of staff.
- Post a copy of your agenda and minutes on the website, twitter or however you share information.
- If appropriate ensure an invitation and copy of the agenda for each meeting, along with any previous minutes, is sent to the local councillors in the multi-member ward for your school.

Role of the Vice Chair

The Vice Chair stands in for the Chair and supports the Chair with their role and duties.

Role of the Secretary/Clerk

The Secretary/Clerk plays an important role in keeping the Parent Council organised.

- They support the Chairperson and deal with all correspondence alongside the Chair.
- They send a notice of the meeting, venue and agenda to all Parent Council members in good time for the meeting.
- Keep a record of everyone attending the meeting and any apologies for absence.
- Take a minute of meetings, recording decisions and actions to be taken by who and when.
- Provide minutes for all Parent Council members prior to or at a meeting.
- Helps to ensure the school has organised a let for Parent Council meetings and if appropriate refreshments.

Minutes are the official record of the meeting. There is no need to record everything –bullet points are handy to capture the main points from the discussion. Make clear who agreed to do what and by when by creating 'Action Points' for the next meeting. Minutes are in draft until they are approved at the next meeting.

Clerks who are members of the Parent Council or the wider parent forum vannot be paid. Parents can of course volunteer for this role. The Parent Council should remind Clerks that it is their responsibility to submit details of any payments they receive to Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) for their personal tax purposes.

Role of the Treasurer

This role is one that can at first appear daunting. However it is important to acknowledge that it is about helping each other to look after any funds you may have. Although all Parent Council members are responsible for the management of funds, the Treasurer has the main role in helping to carry out these duties properly. The treasurer can be anyone on the Parent Council.

The main roles of a Treasurer:

- To keep accurate records of income and expenditure.
- To give an update to the Parent Council.
- Opening a bank account for any monies raised through fund raising or other means.
- Ensuring the proper counting and banking of money and making approved payments.
- Preparing an annual summary of income and expenditure and to have this checked before the AGM (audited and certified by independent person/e.g. accountant/book keeper).
- The accounts should always be available to any parent who asks to see them.



Budget

All Parent Councils are allocated a budget via the school which can be used to support the operation.

Primary	£410
Secondary	£600
Special	£410

Budget can be used for lets, postage, stationery and any travelling expenses. It may also be used to employ a clerk for meetings who is not a member of the parent forum. If there are any remaining funds the parent council can give approval for the school to use. This budget is allocated as part of the school budget.

Insurance

If meetings are held in South Ayrshire schools you are covered by the corporate insurance. Parent Councils will require to get their own insurance for any activities held or for any trips away.

LETs

Parent Council Meeting – free let where the building is open

Parent Council Fundraising – free let where the building is open

Where a let is required in the 100% subsidy category and there is no Janitor on shift, then the Janitor recharge rate will be required to cover the Janitor's costs.

The Lets team will be able to advise which buildings are open and accessible without paying a let charge. Our Lets team can be contacted on 01292 612655.

Please discuss with the headteacher any let requests.

Constitution

A constitution is an important framework for a Parent Council: The main function of a constitution is simply to describe your Parent Council and how it will carry out its objectives. Your constitution needs to be kept current and relevant to the business of the Parent Council. The constitution should be drafted and decided upon by parents in your school. Remember that the aim of a constitution is to help your Parent Council to run smoothly and to focus on how parents can best contribute to education and learning.

Your constitution sets out what you wish to achieve and some indication of the timescales for reporting back, at least once per year, to all members of the Parent Forum.



Once you have agreed your constitution and are happy to proceed then you need to share this with the parent forum and review it each year at the AGM.

It should be available on the school website as well as a hard printed copy from the school office. Your constitution must also be sent to <u>Learning.RaisingStandards@south-ayrshire.</u> <u>gov.uk</u> to be held on file for your school. A copy should also be retained with the Clerk/ Secretary and Chair of your Parent Council. An example of a constitution has been added to this guide at Appendix 2.

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting is a yearly gathering of the Parent Council members and the wider parent forum to discuss the things you have done over the last year and to set out what you would like to do next year. The opportunity exists to say thank you to everyone for their support and to celebrate the achievements of pupils, the school and the work of parents.

What you should cover at an AGM:

- Chairpersons report what we have done and achieved;
- Selection of members;
- Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising from previous minutes AGM;
- Treasurer report;
- Head teachers report (the use of Pupil Equity Funding/progress on the School Improvement Plan);
- Any proposed amendments to the constitution;
- Celebrating what you have achieved and pupil success.

What is an EGM?

If a meeting is required at short notice to deal with an urgent matter an Extraordinary General Meeting can be called. You need to let all the members of the Parent Forum know you are doing this. You must give at least two weeks' notice to all members of the parent forum.

Sub Groups

Sub groups are made up of a small group of parents who have volunteered to help discuss or take forward something you wish to do e.g.

- Communication develop a Communication Strategy/Plan.
- Transitions develop a strategy to help parents of children transferring from: Early Years to Primary and Primary to Secondary

- Fundraising/Events identify and organise new funding activities and events.
- Working with staff on new approaches to learning and teaching and how parents can be involved

Sub groups should be relatively short term but it is up to you to be clear about what you want to achieve (timescales are good to set as it helps us all to be focussed). Sub groups should be encouraged to take things forward and to share what they wish to achieve they should be given a clear remit with someone taking responsibility for organising the group and reporting back to the Parent Council.

A note of the action points arising from each meeting of the sub group should be sent to all sub group members, and to the chair of the Parent Council. This will help keep sub group members (and anyone who cannot make a meeting) up to date. A representative of the sub group should give a brief update of the sub group's work at each Parent Council meeting.

Fundraising

An important function of a Parent Council can be raising funds for the school whether it be for specialist equipment or resources, trips and outings or funds for charity donations. It is important to liaise with the HT and also pupils if appropriate. It may be helpful to keep a fundraising folder with all relevant information for future reference.

The Parent Council may also be eligible to apply for grants. The South Ayrshire Council External Funding newsletter will be shared with Parent Council chairs.

Communication – a key to the success of any Parent Council

Keeping in touch and sharing information is a key factor for any group. This can be carried out in a number of ways, including Social Media, School websites, Facebook, Instagram or Twitter. Social media can be a great help, as is face to face chats with parents, social events and a calendar for keeping people informed.

Communication with the Head Teacher:- It is important to build a respectful and positive relationship and keep lines of communication open. It may be helpful to set out some expectations for example use Head Teacher work e mail rather than personal one, contact in school hours unless agreement otherwise. Ideally, the Chair should meet with the Head Teacher at least once per month outside the usual meetings.

Communication with the parent forum:-this can be done through the school website with a specific area for Parent Council business e.g. posting meeting agendas, minutes, events etc. It is important that this is kept up to date. Ideally, a member of the Parent Council should have responsibility for this with the help of someone from the School office

There are also a range of apps e.g Expressions, which parent councils can access through the school. The creation and use of Apps either for Windows, Android and Apple devices have created alternative ways for schools to communicate with parents

Social media -Parent Councils have found new ways to communicate information to parents. A copy of the Social Media Policy can be found in appendix 5

It is important that Parent Councils and parents use social media responsibly. The Social media policy will help to put in place the appropriate connections and protocols to safeguard personal information and prevent any misuse.



What happens if I incur expenses?

Any member of the Parent Council who is away on or representing the Parent Council on Parent Council business can claim travelling expenses by contacting the school/local authority.

PVG (Protection of Vulnerable Groups)

There is currently no requirement for parents to be registered with Disclosure Scotland PVG. Parents will never be left unsupervised with children or have sole responsibility for a group/ activity.

Sorting out differences

No matter how well your Parent Council is running there may be occasions when differences of opinion occur. These may be between individual members of the Parent Council or between the Parent Council and the Head Teacher. In either case it will be important to listen to the different views being expressed and to try to find areas of agreement. Focus on the issue and trying to find a way forward.

If there is disagreement about what the Parent Council should be doing, you could put the issue to the wider Parent Forum to gain their views.

Sometimes the Parent Council and the Head Teacher may have different opinions on an issue. It is important that discussion focuses on reaching agreement in the interests of the well being of all children and the school, for whom the Head Teacher is ultimately responsible. If you cannot reach agreement with the Head Teacher you can make your case to the education authority who may ask one of their staff to help resolve the issue. In exceptional circumstances, if after involving the education authority you still have concerns, it may be possible to refer the issue to Education Scotland.

Useful Information

National policies

Statutory guidance Scottish School

National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan

Engaging parents and families toolkit

Learning Together – National Action Plan on parental involvement, engagement, family learning and learning at home 2018 – 2021



Useful Information



The National Parent Forum of Scotland is the independent voice of parents in Scotland which has a membership made up of parent volunteer representatives from each Local Authority area in Scotland. The forum supports parental involvement in Education by:

- Providing a parents perspective both to a National and Local level.
- Supporting parents to play an active role in their child's education.
- Working in partnership with National and Local governments and other organisations involved in education and child wellbeing issues, to ensure that parents play a full and equal role in education
- Giving a true parents perspective at local and national level by identifying common educational issues and highlighting the views of parents from across Scotland.
- Communicating through parent representatives to the wider educational community helping to shape and influence policy at a national and local level.

The work of the NPFS helps parents by: Running focus groups and online survey, holding national and local events, keeping parents and parent councils up to date with any changes to educational policy and legislation and providing parent friendly information, by translating the education jargon and writing into clear, transparent parent friendly information through publications such as the 'Nutshell' series. <u>www.npfs.org.uk/</u>

Susan Bell is our NPFS rep for South Ayrshire E-mail: south.ayrshire@npfs.org.uk



Connect work with parents and educators, providing information, advice and training. PC's can sign up for eNewsletters. Find out about our Members' Information sessions here. <u>www.connect.scot</u>

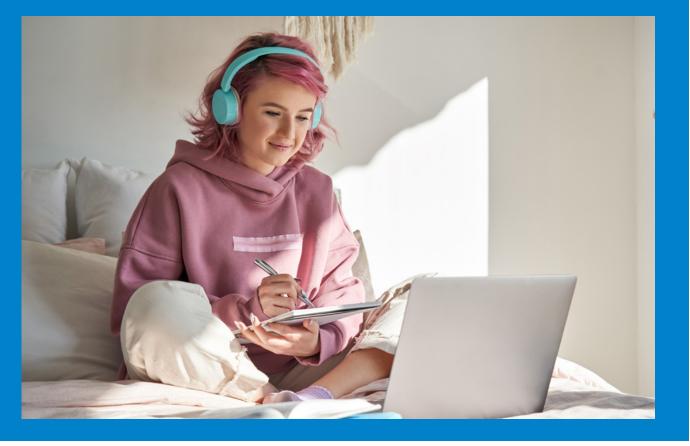
. Parent Club

Parentclub Scotland provides useful links and tips for parents/carers of all ages of children. Information on anything from baby boxes to money matters. <u>https://www.parentclub.scot/</u>

Educational Services Vision Statement

Closing the gap while challenging every learner

- Our vision and ambition in South Ayrshire Educational Services is to achieve excellence and equity.
- We have the highest expectations for all learners so that they achieve their potential regardless of their circumstances.
- We want to achieve this in a context where we act with integrity in a climate of mutual trust and respect and have the highest ambition for every learner.
- It is our ambition to close the attainment gap while constantly stretching and challenging children and young people who are attaining at the highest levels to achieve more.
- Closing the gap while challenging every learner will guide and define the work of educational services



Useful link

Information about schools and learning in South Ayrshire <u>https://beta.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/schools</u>

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Meeting Agenda

Attendance

The Clerk/Secretary will take note of who is present, and pass on the apologies.

Minutes of previous meeting-The Parent Council is asked to confirm that the minutes are an accurate record. Any necessary changes to the record are agreed by the Parent Council.

Matters arising from minutes-It is usual only to hear reports on, or have further discussions about, matters which are not already down on the agenda for discussion later in the meeting.

(Draft) agenda

- School Improvement Plan;
- Supporting children's learning/family learning;
- Celebrating success;
- Fundraising; and
- Business (e.g. Pupil Equity Funding).

A good idea is to agree at the end of the meeting what is to be discussed and reported on at the next meeting. (There will need to be agreement about how and when matters are placed on the agenda). The agenda should be sent to members, with at least three days' notice of the meeting, and clearly showing the venue and time along with the minutes of the previous meeting.

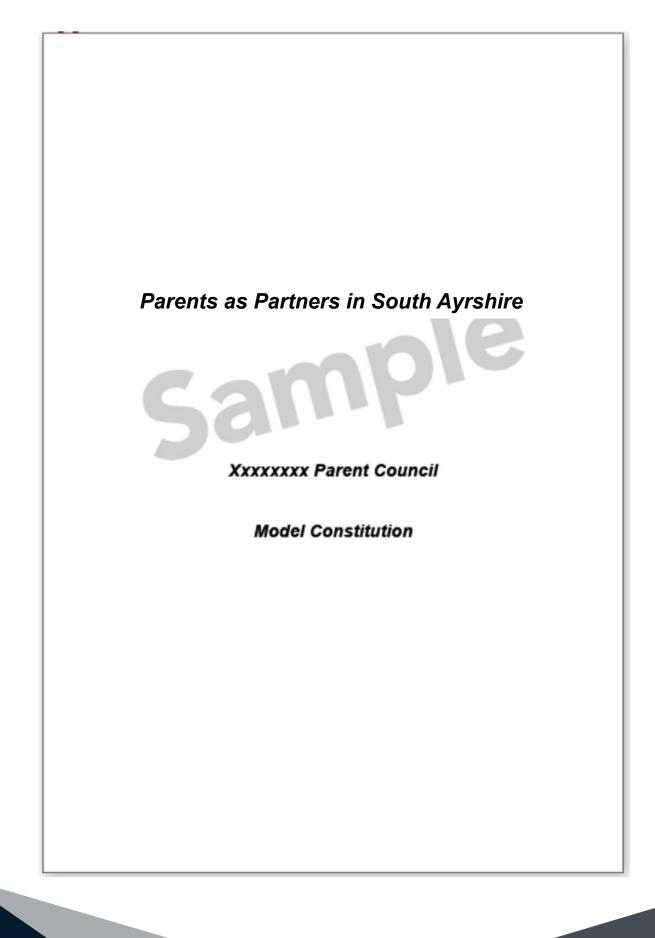
Any other competent business (AOCB)

The Parent Council can discuss "any other competent business" raised at this time. If a matter is raised which is important but not urgent, the chair may rule that it should be held over, and placed on the agenda of the next meeting. Parents may ask the chair to include additional items on the agenda and the advice is to carry forward these items to a future meeting.

Next meeting-The Chair usually consults the members about the date, time and place of the next meeting. (This is a duty which can be delegated to the clerk of the Parent Council).

Lets-If Lets are required a let should be made for your meeting dates with South Ayrshire Council to ensure the venue is booked in advance (it is good to set out the dates for your meetings for the year).

Appendix 2 – Constitution



An example of a constitution This is the constitution for xxxxxxx Parent Council.

1. Objectives of the Parent Council

- 1.1 The objectives of the Parent Council are:
 - To work in partnership with the school to create a welcoming school which is inclusive for all parents.
 - Help the school to take forward its plans.
 - To promote partnership between the school, its pupils and all its parents.
 - To develop and engage in activities which support the education and wellbeing of pupils.
 - To identify and represent the views of parents on the education provided by the school and other matters of interest to parents.

2. Membership of the Parent Council

- 2.1 The membership will be a minimum of xxxxx parents of children attending the school.
 - The maximum size is [insert a figure according to size of school and as agreed by members of the Parent Forum – proposed maximum xx].
 - The Parent Council will be made up of one/two representatives from each year group (seek volunteers or nominations from the parents of children in those year groups).
 - Any parent of a child at the school can volunteer to be a member of the Parent Council. In the event that the number of volunteers exceeds the number of places set out in the constitution, members will be selected by [insert chosen method of selection].

3. Co-option

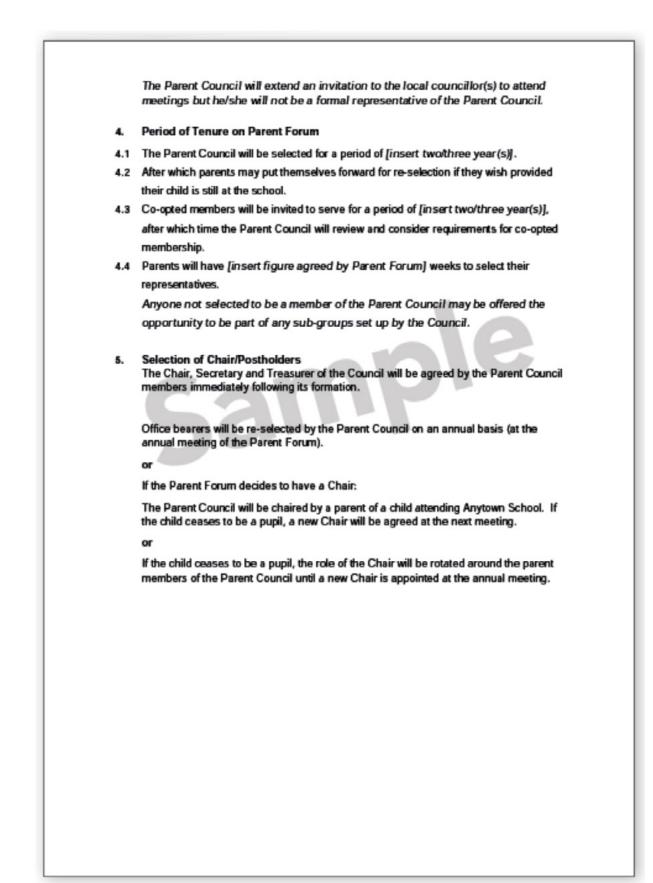
- 3.1 A Parent Council may co-opt up to [insert figure as agreed by members of the Parent Forum*] to assist it with carrying out its functions.
- 3.2 The number of parent members on the Parent Council must always be greater than coopted members.

*Add in respect of a denominational school, "of which at least one must be a member of the church or denominational body in whose interest the school is conducted."

or

Two-thirds of the Parent Council will be made up of Parent Forum members and one-

third of the membership will be reserved for other co-opted members including teaching and support staff in the school.



6.	Reporting/Meeting Arrangements
6.1	The Parent Council is accountable to the Parent Forum for Anytown School and will make a report to it at least once each year on its activities on behalf of all the parents.
6.2	If [x] number [or %] of members of the Parent Forum request a special general meeting to discuss issues falling within the Council's remit, the Parent Council shall arrange this. The Parent Council shall give all members of the Forum at least [2 weeks] notice of the meeting and, at the same time, circulate notice of the matter, or matters, to be discussed at the meeting.
6.3	The Annual Meeting will be held in April of each year. A notice of the meeting including date, time, and place will be sent to all members of the Parent Forum at least 2 weeks in advance. The meeting will include:
	 a report on the work of the Parent Council and its committee(s) selection of the new Parent Council discussion of issues that members of the Parent Forum may wish to raise approval of the accounts and appointment of the auditor.
6.4	The Parent Council will meet at least once in every school term. Should a vote be necessary to make a decision, each parent member at the meeting will have one vote, with the Chair having a casting vote in the event of a tie.
6.5	Any two members of the Parent Council can request that an additional meeting be held, and all members of the Parent Council will be given at least one week's notice of date, time and place of the meeting.
6.6	If a Parent Council member acts in a way that is considered by other members to undermine the objectives of the Parent Council, their membership of the Parent Council shall be terminated if the majority of parent members agree. Termination of membership would be confirmed in writing by the Chair or designated representative to the member.
7.	Minutes/Procedures of Meetings
7.1	Copies of the minutes of all meetings will be available to all parents of children at Anytown School and to all teachers/staff at the school. Copies will be available from the Secretary of the Parent Council/Clerk to the Parent Council and from the school office.
7.2	Meetings of the Parent Council shall be open to the public, unless the Parent Council is discussing an issue which it considers should be dealt with on a confidential basis. In such circumstances, only members of the Parent Council and the headteacher, or his or her representative, can attend.
8.	Funds
8.1	The Treasurer will open a bank or building society account in the name of the Parent Council for all Parent Council funds. Withdrawals will require the signature of the Treasurer and one other Parent Council member.

- 8.2 The Treasurer will keep an accurate record of all income and expenditure, and will provide a summary of this for each Parent Council meeting and a full account for the Annual Meeting. The Parent Council accounts will be audited by the auditor appointed at the previous Annual Meeting.
- 8.3 The Parent Council shall be responsible for ensuring that all monies are used in accordance with the objectives of the Parent Council.
- 8.4 Should the Parent Council cease to exist, any remaining funds will be passed to the education authority to be used for the benefit of the school (or schools), where this continues.

9. Changes to the Constitution

9.1 The Parent Council may change its constitution after obtaining consent from members of the Parent Forum. Members of the Parent Forum will be sent a copy of any proposed amendment and given reasonable time to respond to the proposal.

A copy of the revised constitution must be sent the local education authority along with a list of Parent Council members. HR November 2018



Equalities Form

South Ayrshire Council is committed to ensuring fair practices are adhered to throughout the recruitment process and that no applicant should be treated less favourably on any grounds including gender, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, disability, sexuality or age.

Your assistance would be appreciated in providing information which will be treated in the strictest of confidence and information will not be made available to any person who is involved in the selection process.

Please note, the provision of information on this form is entirely voluntary and if you choose not to do so, this will not be held against you when considering your suitability for the job.

Please fill out the following form:

What is your sexual orientation?	How would you describe your gender?			
Bisexual Gay Heterosexual/Straight Lesbian Other Prefer not to answer	Female			
What is your legal marital status? What is your national identity?				
Single Separated Married/ Civil Partnership Widowed Living with Partner Divorced Prefer not to answer	Scottish English Welsh			
Disability				
Under the terms of the Equality Act 2010, a disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out day to day tasks.				
Do you consider that you have a disability? Yes No Prefer not to answer				
Caring responsibilities				
Do you have caring responsib	Itities? Yes (children under 18) Yes, other No Prefer not to answer			

hat is your religion or elief? Buddhist Church of Scotland	What is your ethnic group?
Hindu Jewish Muslim None Other Christian Sikh Roman Catholic Other Religion or Belief Prefer not to answer Pagan Humanist Other	White: Irish White: Gypsy/ Traveller White: Eastern European (e.g. Polish) White: Other White Ethnic Group Any Mixed or Multiple Asian - Pakistani (Inc. Scottish/British) Asian - Indian (Inc. Scottish/British) Asian - Bangladeshi (Inc. Scottish/British) Asian - Chinese (Inc. Scottish/British) Asian - Other (Inc. Scottish/British) Asian - Other (Inc. Scottish/British) African - (Inc. Scottish/British) African - Other Caribbean (Inc. Scottish/British) Black (Inc. Scottish/British) Caribbean or Black (Other) Other, please specify Prefer not to answer



NEWSTART PARENT COUNCIL FORM

Please complete this form and send to <u>employeeservices@south-ayrshire.gov.uk</u> prior to start date in accordance with the payroll cut off dates

	Start Date			
	School			
	NI Number			
	Title Councillor / Doctor / Father/ Miss / Mr / Mrs / Ms / Profe Reverend / Sister (Delete as appropriate)			s / Professor /
First Name				
DETAILS:	Surname			
	Date of Birth			
Home Address				
	Town		Postcode	
	Home Phone No		Mobile No.	
	Email Address		·	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·

	Title	Councillor / Doctor / Father/ Miss / Mr / Mrs / Ms / Professor / Reverend / Sister (Delete as appropriate)				
	First Name					
EMERGENCY CONTACT:	Surname					
	Relationship					
	Home Phone No		Mobile No		Work Phone No	

Signature:	Date:	

Appendix 3 – Social Media Policy

Introduction

The Parent Council recognises the value of social media in supporting the work of the school. As parents we know that social media represents a fundamental shift in the way we communicate with each other at work, home and school. However, it is important that we, as parents using social media, also understand the consequences as well as the benefits.

The Parent Council also recognises that individuals are entitled to express themselves freely and that there are enormous benefits associated with parents using social media in support of the school. Social media can:

- Facilitate parental involvement in the life and work of the school
- Enhance communication between the school and parents
- Challenge traditional models of communication, making contact and dialogue easier
- Enable parents to collaborate online

Considerations

When communicating, posting or agreeing to comments electronically, parents should consider the impact this may have on children, staff and other parents. If parents identify themselves as members of the school community they should not act in a manner which might unintentionally bring the school or the Parent Council into disrepute. Parents should also be aware that posting certain information or comments about the school, other parents, staff or children, may have unforeseen negative consequences for individuals and for the reputation of the School. The Parent Council respectfully asks parents not to make comments of an abusive, harmful or offensive nature about individuals. Please consider the following questions before posting materials online:

- Might this comment reflect poorly on you, the children who attend the school, teaching staff or other parents in the local community?
- Are you confident that the comment, if accessed by others (parents, teachers, young people) would be considered reasonable and appropriate?
- Is your intention to post this material driven by personal reasons?

It is important to bear in mind that electronic messages are not anonymous and can be tracked and remain indefinitely on the internet. Social media sites archive content posted, even when deleted from online profiles. Once information is placed online, the author no longer controls it.

Thank you for your continued support in using social media appropriately to maintain the highest standards of communication in relation to the work of the school

Appendix 4 – Finance information

Parent Council Treasurers Guide to Finance and good financial record keeping

These guidelines are provided to help Parent Councils follow good practice and enable it to operate and carry out its function under the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006. The aim is to ensure there are proper records and procedures in place to protect everyone.

Bank Account

- All Parent Councils should open a bank account in the name of the Parent Council. The bank will need a copy of the constitution/minute establishing the Parent Council and names of office bearers. The bank account is most likely to be a club and Societies account. The Bank account should never be in an individual's personal name.
- The Account should be addressed to the Parent Council care of the school and not a personal address.
- All accounts must be set to operate with a minimum of 3 signatories, normally the treasurer and 2 other members of the Parent Council (with any two signatories required to make a withdrawal or transfer). Both cheque signatories are responsible for the cheques that they sign.
- All bank account accounts figures must also be presented at the Parent Council meeting to ensure openness and transparency.
- Where possible, payments should be by cheque rather than cash. This provides evidence of individual transactions on the bank statement.
- If paying any money in or out with cash, then a receipt of payment to and from must be provided signed off by two members of the Parent Council, one of which must be the treasurer.
- Parent Councils must not borrow money or use overdraft facilities.
- Blank cheques should never be signed and all cheques must be fully completed.
- Cancelled cheques should be held in the cheque book and 'cancelled' written across

the cheque.

- All income received should be banked intact without delay and a brief description should be recorded on the pay-in slip stub.
- A bank statement should be requested in advance of the AGM date. The bank statement should be checked for: bank charges, bank interest received, valid direct debits and standing orders, cheques issued, deposits/banking's made.
- Any item on the bank statement, but not in the cash book will need to be written into the cash book before undertaking the bank reconciliation. The Treasurer should compare the bank statement with the cash book to make sure the figures agree.

Cash Book

- If you operate a cash book there may only be a few transactions per year but they must all be recorded.
- Keep a running balance of the amount of money available and each transaction cross referenced to supporting documentation e.g. cheque numbers, pay-in slips, invoices or receipts.

Income

- A Parent Council can raise funds by any means other than borrowing.
- A Parent Council can decide how it expends any sums it has received by way of fund raising or gifts although this will normally be done working in close partnership with the school or parent forum.
- Larger donations such as Lottery funding/ Grants or similar may have conditions

attached to the donation (i.e. funding for a specific purchase or spent within a limited time). Parent Councils should be in agreement of these and ensure any conditions can be properly met before applying for funding.

• The Treasurer should hold a receipt for all income collected or received. Receipts should be retained. Any cash banked without delay.

Expenditure

- Payments for goods and services should be supported by a supplier's invoice. Invoices should be addressed to the Parent Council and not to the school.
- The invoice should be retained and filed in date order.
- Other expenditure payments for which an invoice is not available should be supported by an expenditure voucher and signed as received.

Petty Cash

- If cash is required for petty cash expenditure a cheque should be cashed and signed with a brief note to say what it is being spent on. This can be added as a note on the statement when cashing in the cheque.
- Any expenditure should be recorded and have supporting vouchers e.g. till receipts.
- Petty cash floats should be kept to a minimum (£30 maximum).
- The Treasurer is responsible for the petty cash which should be kept in a locked, secure location.
- If cash is handed over in advance to a person to make a purchase, a record should be kept of such advances and be receipted by the person advanced the money.
- Two signatories are required.

Payments to Parent Council

- A Parent Council can decide how it spends any sums it has received by way of fund raising or gifts in partnership with the school. As such a Parent Council can choose to make payments to the school at any time out of this income.
- If a Parent Council chooses to do this they should make a cheque payable to the School and pass this to the School Office for this to be banked in the School Fund Account.
- The audited statement of accounts should be formally approved at the Annual Parent Council Meeting (this should be minuted) and confirmed by the Chairperson.
- A record showing the accounts have been audited, signed by the Treasurer, the person who did the audit and Chairperson should accompany the Statement of Accounts.
- A copy Bank statement, covering the year end up to AGM should also be provided.

It is the role of the Parent Council to ensure their accounts are checked (audited) each year. The persons doing the audit must:

- Check that the money spent by the Parent Council is within the terms of the Council's role, rights and responsibilities (you may need to refer to the Parent Council's constitution).
- Ensure that adequate records are in place.
- Check that all money received has been banked.
- Check that all payments are recorded.
- That all income and expenditure is correctly analysed in the cash book.
- Sign the accounts checklist.
- Report any findings to the Parent Council and make recommendations for improving the Parent Council's record keeping.

Your Bank Account Taxation Implications

The guidance to the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 (paragraph 24) advises that it is not anticipated that any tax will be payable on any fundraising activities carried out by the Parent Council as they are not considered to be a trading entity. You may be able to benefit from tax-free interest from your Bank but this may be dependent on the type of account held. Please contact your Bank for further information.

Retention of Records

Parent Councils should retain all financial records for a minimum of seven years.

This information can be made available, on request, in braille, large print or audio formats and can be translated into a range of languages. Contact details are provided below.

در خواست کرنے پرید معلومات نابینا افراد کے لئے اُبھرے حروف ، بڑے حروف یا آڈیویں مہیا کی جاسکتی ہے اور اسکا مختلف زبانوں میں ترجمہ بھی کیا جاسکتا ہے۔ رابطہ کی تفصیلات پنچے فراہم کی گی ہیں۔

本信息可应要求提供盲文,大字印刷或音频格式,以及可翻译成多种语 言。以下是详细联系方式。

本信息可慮應要求提供盲文,大字印刷或音頻格式,以及可翻譯成多种 語言。以下是詳細聯系方式。

ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਮੰਗ ਕੇ ਬੇਲ, ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਣਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਰਪ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਲਈ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ, ਅਤੇ ਇਹਦਾ ਤਰਜਮਾ ਹੋਰ ਬੋਲੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਕਰਵਾਇਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ।

Niniejsze informacje mogą zostać udostępnione na życzenie, w alfabecie Braille'a, w druku powiększonym lub w formacie audio oraz mogą zostać przetłumaczone na wiele języków obcych. Dane kontaktowe znajdują się poniżej.

Faodar am fiosrachadh seo fhaighinn, le iarrtas, ann am braille, clò mòr no clàr fuaim agus tha e comasach eadar-theangachadh gu grunn chànanan. Tha fiosrachadh gu h-ìosal mu bhith a' cur fios a-steach.

South Ayrshire Council Contact Centre 0300123 0900



Making a Difference Every Day 🌑