

At Newfield Primary School parents and carers play a vital role in supporting their child’s education. We operate an open door policy where we welcome and encourage home-school links. Building positive relationships is imperative to each child’s success in developing their knowledge, understanding and skills for life, learning and work. We strive to ensure every family has equal opportunities to thrive.

Aims

- Children are supported in their learning through innovative methods to involve and engage parents and carers
- Parents and carers feel empowered to be fully involved in the life and work of the school
- Parents and carers feel confident engaging in their child’s learning and receive appropriate support for this if/when required
- Quality and effective communication is facilitated between home and school
- Teachers and support staff fully understand the role in supporting parents and carers to be involved and engaged in school life
- The SMT encourage and support collaborative partnerships between practitioners, parents, carers and families through adoption of varied and bespoke approaches.

Parental Involvement

“Parental involvement describes the ways in which parents can get involved in the life and work of the early learning and childcare setting or school or the ways that parents can get involved in ‘schooling’. Parental involvement includes family learning and activities such as parental representation in the development of policies, improvement plans and key decisions. It can include involvement in the life and work of the establishment, for instance through volunteering opportunities. Parental involvement can also help with homework or keeping track of children’s work and on-going, two-way communication between home and school or early learning and childcare setting” (South Lanarkshire Council, 2019, p.3).

At Newfield we are continuously looking for ways to strengthen parental representation in the life and work of the school, expanding opportunities for ALL parents and carers to get involved rather than the few. In order to achieve this, we focus on the following key priorities:

Parental Representation

- Parent Council meetings, involvement encouraged and minutes shared with wider parent body
- Parent Council events including pupil discos and fundraising events
- Steering group opportunities, eg RSHP and Relationship and Behaviour policy
- Parent consultations, evaluations and questionnaires regularly sent out after events in order to gather suggestions/feedback on decisions taken by the school

Parental Collaboration

- Involvement in theme week activities; STEM, Finance Week and World Of Work, Fairtrade, Week Of Action, Book Week Scotland, World Book Day.
- Opportunities to volunteer in classes and attend educational excursions

Communication

- Ongoing communication between families and school through informal chats, MySchoolApp, school website, emails, Twitter, newsletters, letters, School Handbook etc.
- Ready Steady Learn communication on a weekly basis

Staff awareness to barriers to Parental Involvement

- Importance of getting to know families in a meaningful way and looking at potential barriers.
- Consideration given to the Cost Of The School Day and the impact this may have on parental involvement
- Information shared with parents regarding Financial support and advice services alongside links with local Foodbank and referrals made where necessary
- Seek alternative arrangements for families with limited access to digital communication
- Provide support where a barrier is in place (EAL or disabilities) and work alongside families to facilitate communication and partnership

Parental Engagement

“Parental engagement is about parents’ and families’ interaction with their child’s learning. It can take place in the home, at school or in the community. Where it takes place is not important, but rather the quality of the parent’s engagement with their child’s learning, the positive impact that it can have and the interaction and mutual development that can occur as a result of that interaction” (South Lanarkshire Council, 2019, p.3).

Supporting Parents

- Through our interactions with parents, carers and families, we emphasise the key role that they play in supporting children’s learning.
- We work with families to identify specific needs and work collaboratively in order to support these.

Supporting Parents through Social Events and Activities

- Opportunities for parents to expand their support network and connect with other parents;
 - HWB Coffee Morning,
 - Class Showcases
 - Burns Supper

Opportunities for family learning

- For new families with children entering P1, we have a transition programme which, as well as introducing the children to the school, helps to develop key relationships with our new parents, carers and families. (Transitional events detailed in School Handbook)
- Family Craft nights held once a year with a specific theme; Christmas, Spring, Summer
- Ready Steady Learn target setting at the Open Afternoon event

Parental Engagement Events

- Throughout the school year, we provide regular opportunities to welcome families into the school in an informal and relaxed manner. Examples of such opportunities we run annually include: Learning Showcases, Open Afternoons, P7 Leavers Assembly, Christmas Service, P7 Burns Supper, Community Information Event

Reporting to Parents and Carers

Throughout the school year we embrace opportunities to share learning with our parents and carers. This is to ensure that reporting opportunities are regular throughout the school year and are meaningful and purposeful. Some examples are:

- Open days/events
- School concerts and shows
- Achievement wall displays and wall displays showcasing learning
- Parents' evenings where discussions take place around attainment and achievement
- Snapshot jotter weeks twice a year to share the learning of a typical school week
- Termly Newsletters outlining the learning taking place that term.
- Formal report distributed in June outlining the learning that has taken place and areas to work on
- Social Media (twitter, school website)
- Parent Council meetings

We continually evaluate the impact of our strategies and initiatives to ensure we achieve success and meet the needs of our wider school community.

Reference

South Lanarkshire Council. (2019). *Strategy for parental involvement and engagement: Working together to support children and family learning*. Hamilton: South Lanarkshire Council.

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Will be reviewed annually and updated where required.