

What Scotland Learned Exemplar

What specific activities did you do over lockdown that you wish to highlight? (max 200 words)

During lockdown we were keen to engage with parents of P7 pupils who were coming into S1. We usually do this in partnership with the school to provide support and helpful information for families new to our academy. We're always pleased if this leads to an interest in becoming involved with our Parent Council. Because of the lockdown, we couldn't use our usual meet and greet sessions as part of transition meetings to do this. So we worked with our rector to enlist the help of headteachers from the local primaries to set up a new S1 parent digital forum.

Who did it involve, including partners or other community organisations? (max 50 words)

The headteachers from the primary schools and our rector. Parent Council Chairs from the local primaries, as well as our own PC members. The wider parent body in the local area.

What difference did this make? (max 200 words)

We initially thought we could meet virtually with Parent Council Chairs from the primaries to try and arrange virtual events for new S1 parents. This worked as a starting point and we discussed what would be useful to know if your child was just starting secondary school. We were able to provide support to the headteachers of all the schools by producing a set of hints, tips and FAQs for parents in terms of the practicalities. The original plan was to try and have Zoom meetings and we did organise one of these, but we realised that not everyone could attend those and there were too many people and not everyone was comfortable speaking. We ended up creating a dedicated page on Facebook which shared information and provided a space for parents to have their own conversations. We could signpost useful resources and flag up things like our uniform recycling service. Most parents had access to FB on their phones and any who didn't were supported with updates from the relevant Parent Council members of their own school. We received positive feedback on how these approaches helped to build connections at a time when transition visits couldn't take place.

How has this changed your outlook, practice, work and how might this have an impact long term? (max 200 words)

The lockdown situation gave us a concrete reason to work together with the Parent Councils from the primary schools, which we hadn't really done before. Staff in the schools work together, especially to support transition and this experience has made us realise there's a benefit to our parent bodies maintaining this contact too. We have discussed areas that might be useful to maintain contact over and that

we can work on together to strengthen links between the schools and there is a plan to maintain the shared FB page to support this. Obviously each parent body has a focus on their own school community but there are a number of areas where it would make sense to share ideas or work together going forward. For example, in filling out forms for funding applications.