

Reporting to Parents and Involving / Engaging Parent Councils during COVID-19

Background

Reporting and communicating with parents helps them to understand and be able to discuss their child's progress and share in their learning. COVID-19 measures currently in place prevent parents, in most cases, from physically accessing school buildings and educational settings to allow face-to-face conversations with staff. Reporting to and communicating with parents, families, Parent Councils and other parent groups during COVID-19 may therefore look different to previous approaches and will be dependent on local contexts and individual needs. However, ongoing supportive communication between parents and staff is more important than ever.

It is important to identify and develop effective methods of reporting and communicating with parents and the wider parent forum in all Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings and schools ([Scottish Schools \(parental Involvement\) Act 2006 guidance](#)). This should be part of a regular ongoing cycle whereby practitioners use a range of methods and approaches. At this time it will be particularly important to consider a broad range of tools, methods and approaches which can help to facilitate effective, ongoing two way communication between settings / schools and parents. Further information on approaches which have worked effectively in a range of settings during COVID-19: [Examples from ELC settings, schools and local authority guidance during COVID-19](#).

Communicating with and Reporting to parents

The purpose of communicating and reporting is to support and improve learning and ensure parents have the information necessary to support their children / young people. It should be an ongoing dialogue which provides clear information on a learner's strengths, areas for development and specifically what needs to be done to ensure continued progress, achievement and agreement of strategies which include parental input.

Headteachers and managers will be working to ensure their setting / school is continuing to involve and engage parents and families at this time. Approaches such as physical, face to face parents evenings, which may be the norm for many settings / schools, will not take place in the usual format due to COVID-19 restrictions. Alternative methods and approaches to reporting will need to be used and will differ depending on local contexts and the needs of individual families, settings / schools. Strong communications and collaboration between home and school will remain key to ensure that parents have the information they need to support their children / young people.

Working with Parent Councils and Committees

While the challenges facing many Parent Councils and committees are significant, COVID-19 has also presented many opportunities to continue engaging with and supporting parents. Parent Councils and committees may wish to consider using digital and online approaches to engage with members of their parent forum. It is important to note that some local authorities may have restrictions in place which prevent staff from using certain online platforms and that these exist to protect staff, the public and to ensure compliance with their statutory duties. Parent Council members should work with their child's school and local authority to find pragmatic ways to fulfil their statutory duties and hold formal meetings with representatives and the Headteacher.

Further information

Practitioners should refer to the links below for further information.

- [Engaging parents and families: A toolkit for practitioners](#)
- [Communicating effectively with parents and families](#)
- [Realising the Ambition](#)
- [How Good is our Early Learning and Childcare?](#)
- [How Good is our School?](#) (Fourth Edition)
- [How Good is our Third Sector Organisation](#)