

AGREED DRAFT

EMPOWERING PARENTS AND CARERS

Introduction

Parents and families must be valued, supported and empowered to be engaged in their children's lifelong learning journey.

Ensuring that there is a wide range of creative, meaningful and successful approaches to engage with parents can help to improve outcomes for children and young people.

Empowering parents means improving and strengthening the ways in which education staff engage with parents and families; ensuring they are at the centre of decision making processes about their children's learning.

'Our guiding vision is that every parent and family should be supported to be involved and engaged in their child's education throughout their learning journey'

'Learning Together' National Action Plan

Parental involvement in school decision making means education staff collaborating with parents from the beginning to the end of key decision making and other processes. Parents are also involved in matters such as school improvement planning as well as ongoing and effective two-way communication between home and school.

Schools should create cultures where ongoing collaboration with parents is accepted as the norm and not the exception. This is crucial to building a system where parents are truly empowered.

'Early learning and childcare settings, schools and communities can play a key part in recognising, developing and resourcing parents' vital role in their child's learning, and supporting learning at home.'

Education Scotland Review of Learning at Home

Clear, ongoing, two-way communication between home and school is a vital part of engaging parents and families in their child(ren)'s learner journey.

Acknowledging and supporting parents in their key role as the primary educators of their children and in influencing the life and work of schools, is enshrined in law in the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006. The Act provides a framework for supporting parental involvement in education and learning and crucially it aims to help schools, local authorities and partners to engage meaningfully with parents in the learning of their children.

'Parents are the first and ongoing educators of their children and know them best'

Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006

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Parental engagement is one of the six drivers in Scotland's National Improvement Framework. The framework recognises that parental and family engagement is a key factor in helping all children achieve the positive outcomes whilst reducing inequity and narrowing the attainment gap.

We have a strong foundation for our work, building on a firm understanding of what we must do to build a truly empowered system which fully involves, engages and values the critical role of parents and carers.

Principles

In an empowered system, parents and carers:

- are recognised as the primary educators of their children and get the right support at the right times to enable them to engage with their children's learning journeys in ways which take account of their individual skills and capacities;
- have the resources that they need to assist them in engaging with their children's learning and in supporting their children through their learner journey, removing additional barriers to this where they exist;
- are engaged in ongoing and effective dialogue regarding their children's learning and progress and have opportunities to access practitioners around how their child can be best supported, creating opportunities to build good relationships, using innovative and creative methods that fit the learning needs of individual parents and families;
- have access to family learning opportunities which meet their needs, reflect their circumstances and include shared approaches and tools to support continued learning at home, removing additional barriers to these where they exist;
- are involved collaboratively from the beginning of key policies and processes, to help lead improvements in learning;
- are supported to be fully involved in the life and work of their child's early learning and childcare setting/school and in key decisions affecting their early learning and childcare setting/school in ways that work effectively for them;
- are recognised as a parent forum who have a statutory right to be involved in school decision making; and
- are an integral part of early learning and childcare setting/school decision making and in supporting the wider parent body, while also acknowledging that formal meetings and structures are not going to work for everyone and flexible and creative approaches may be needed.

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Resources

- 'Learning Together' National Action Plan:
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/learning-together-scotlands-national-action-plan-parental-involvement-parental-engagement/>
- Engaging Parents and Families Toolkit:
<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/engaging-parents-and-families-a-toolkit-for-practitioners>
- National Parent Forum of Scotland '...in a Nutshell' series:
<https://www.npfs.org.uk/downloads/>
- Parentzone Scotland: <https://education.gov.scot/parentzone>
- How good is our school? (HGIOS) 4:
<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/self-evaluation/HGIOS4>