

# PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING

## CLYDEVIEW ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL



Clydeview Academy Parent Council play an integral role in the decision-making process of their school community. This cased study will highlight the processes they have in place for effective parental involvement in school decision-making.

### Consultation

Questionnaires and focus groups were used by the Parent Council (PC) and school to find out what parents wanted from their school, what they were concerned about and how they would like to be communicated with. The results of these consultations formed the basis for the PC plans.

The PC support the management and leadership structures of the school. There is a member of the PC on the school development group to oversee the school improvement plan. The PC and staff together consider key questions linked to the improvement plan, identifying strengths and what needs improvement and most importantly what they can do in order to improve. This has given the PC a clear role in school improvement.

The Parent Council are involved in transitions, at P7 information evenings and support the S1 tours of the school during class time for parents. There are links to the pupil council and the PC continues to survey the views of the parent forum at school events and act on the results.

Input and advice from the PC from evaluations has, for example, seen the format of information evenings changing. Rather than theatre style, rooms are set up with round tables, giving parents and staff more opportunity to talk. School SMT consult with the PC and take advice with presentations to parents and wider community.

### A Clear Focus

Within the PC there are focus groups for Communication, Learning and Teaching and Fund-raising. There are clear remits, with the communication group engaging others, via the website, newsletters, questionnaires, parent call for example. The Fund Raising group has provided a substantial amount of money for the annual prizegiving.

The Teaching and Learning Group considered how information about teaching and learning could be shared with all parents and how this would support parental engagement and parents understanding of education and pupil achievement. This has led to some unique opportunities for PC members who have been given

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unprecedented access to the workings of the school and have shared this with the wider parent forum.

### Shadowing

The Chair of the PC, spent a day shadowing the Headteacher. He attended the morning management meeting, observed the HT take 6th year assembly, sat in on a development group meeting and liaison meeting with trade unions. He also attended a resource management meeting and saw how funding is allocated – everything from pencils to computers.

He observed how the HT interacts with pupils on a daily basis, including dealing with lunch hall supervision and providing support for pupils. This gave Ian and the PC an understanding of the complexities of the HT's remit and his personal involvement and support for pupils

Another member from the Parent Council followed an S1 class for the day. He focused on how students were settling into school as part of the transition programme attending all of their classes and spending interval and lunchtime with them.

A third member of the PC shadowed S4 students in the run up to their SQA May exams and became aware of the level of pastoral and curricular support available for all students. She also joined with staff after school for a Principal Teachers meeting focused on attainment.

All 3 members of the PC were able to feedback their very positive school experiences to the wider parent forum at the first ever "Teach the Parents' evening which the Parent Council organised.

### Teach the Parents

Almost 250 parents attended an evening of information from the PC and were able to engage in a series of lessons on cooperative learning, peer and self assessment, active learning and a variety of AifL techniques as demonstrated by students who became the teachers for the evening.

The way ahead: 'Back to the Future' afternoon. 40 parents will join lessons in nine departments. Parents will be primed to look for AIFL, the language of skills, cooperative and active learning.

The PC and the school are driving these initiatives together. Pupils have been given the opportunity to share their understanding of the learning process with their parents; the whole school community has benefited, barriers broken down as teachers open up their classrooms, parents more knowledgeable about the 'workings' of the school

Using these reflective questions will support you to consider your own approach to engaging and supporting children and their families:

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- Do we begin any specific targeting for parental engagement from day one of (primary, secondary) school or do we wait until there appears to be a problem or struggle with the student's achievements?
- How effectively do we use current available data about levels of poverty in our community to help us target our interventions?
- How effectively do you encourage parents to support their child's learning in literacy? In what ways could this be developed further?
- How effectively do you encourage parents to support their child's learning in numeracy? In what ways could this be developed further?
- To what extent do staff understand GIRFEC, the wellbeing indicators and how these can have a positive impact on children and families?
- How effectively do we monitor programmes?
- What evidence do we have that family learning is improving the life chances of the families involved?
- Are outcomes for children improving as a result of their participation in family learning? How do we know?

Documents: -

### **How Good is Our Third Sector (2015)**

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Pages/frwk3hgiothirdsector.aspx>

### **How Good is Our Schools 4 (2015)**

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Pages/frwk2hgios.aspx>

### **How good is the learning and development in our community? (2016)**

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Pages/frwk4hgiocommunitylearning.aspx>