

# Parental Engagement Strategy



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# Who do we mean, where do we mean & what do we mean?

## Who do we mean?

When we refer to parents, this is the mother or father of the child or young person, or anyone who has been given the parental responsibility of looking after and raising the child or young person such as a foster carer, relative or friend.

## Where do we mean?

When we refer to schools, this is our school settings (primary, secondary, special, provision) as well as our partner providers in our early learning and childcare settings throughout Midlothian.

## What do we mean?

This is the difference between **parental engagement** and **parental involvement**.

Parental engagement in learning	Parental involvement in education
<b>Parental engagement</b> is about parents and family's interaction with their child's learning at home, in school and also within the wider community. The important factor is the quality of the parents engagement with their child's learning and the positive impact that this can have.	<b>Parental involvement</b> is the various ways that parents can get involved in the life and work of the school and education. These include parent representation in the development of policy, improvement planning and being consulted in key decision making on a local and national scale. Involvement can also include being part of Parent Council, attending events/activities and parents evenings.

## Parents as partners

The [Scottish Schools \(Parental Involvement\) Act 2006](#) gives parents the right to receive information about their children's learning, to be represented and have their views heard and expressed. It places a responsibility on local authorities to improve parental involvement in three ways - parental representation, home-school partnerships and learning at home.

**Parental Engagement:** Parental engagement is recognised in the National Improvement Framework as one of the 7 key drivers in achieving excellence and equity in Scottish Education. 'Parental engagement can be considered as active involvement in learning. Such learning can take place in a variety of settings including early learning and childcare settings (ELC) or schools, community, through family learning and at home.' (Goodall and Montgomery, 2014)

**Parental Involvement:** 'Parental involvement is about supporting pupils and their learning. It is about parents and teachers working together in partnership to help children become more confident learners'. (Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act Guidance, 2006)

**Learning at home:** 'Learning at home is the learning which happens in the home, outdoors or in the community. It can take place through everyday activities that families already do and can overlap with aspects of organised or active learning activities'. (Scottish Parental Involvement Officers Network, 2018)

**Family Learning:** Family learning encourages family members to learn together as a family with a focus on intergenerational learning. It is an approach to engaging families in learning that has an impact on the whole family. Family learning activities can also be designed to enable parents to learn how to support their own child's learning

## Parents as partners with school

In Midlothian we aim to ensure that parents will:

- Be welcomed into school and feel respected and equal
- Be aware of where to find key information about school
- Know how to contact school and access support
- Receive clear and regular communication from school
- Have opportunities to contribute to planning and policy making in school
- Be able to be part of school life and the wider school community

## Parents as partners with learning

In Midlothian we aim to ensure that parents are included in their child's learning by:

- Valuing the importance of parents as their child's first educator
- Helping parents to understand how their child learns at school and how they are assessed
- Making parents aware of how to support their child's learning at school and at home
- Updating parents regularly on their child's learning, reporting on their progress and discussion on next steps
- Support parents during key transition times
- Ensuring parents are aware of the importance of family learning and offer a range of opportunities for all

## Parents as partners and being represented

In Midlothian we aim to ensure that parents are informed and involved in issues affecting the education of their child or of interest to them by:

- Ensuring parents are aware that they are members of the Parent Forum
- Promoting the establishment of Parent Councils in schools and supporting them
- Involving parents in the recruitment of senior leaders in our schools
- Ensuring that our parents have a platform to consider an issue of interest to them and come up with proposals, suggestions or recommendations for a specific course of action for Senior Officers to consider

## What we know about current good practice in our settings

This strategy sets out a clear expectation and sense of direction for all settings in delivering high quality opportunities for parental engagement and involvement. It sits alongside our Family Learning Strategy.

We carried out the Scottish Government's Parental Involvement and Engagement survey (PIE) in May 2022. All parents/carers of Midlothian's primary and secondary pupils were invited to take part. As well as sharing the data gathered Nationally, the information gained has allowed us to plan effectively to ensure that we are working with parents collaboratively to be involved in their child's learning.

The data we gathered highlighted the following as areas that parents overall were satisfied:

- School staff are approachable and well informed about their child's progress
- Communication within school communities is good and parents are aware about what's going on in school
- Parents feel like their opinions are taken into account with their child's learning and they have an awareness of what learning is going on

The survey also highlighted the following as areas that parents overall feel that more could be done:

- Parents want to be more involved in the life of the school
- They want to play a greater part in their child's learning
- Greater awareness of improvement planning with active involvement



## Action plan

As a result of the data we gathered from the Parental Involvement and Engagement survey as well as feedback from our Parent Council network, we have created an action plan.

What are we going to do?	How are we going to do it?	What is the impact of this for parents?
Support home and school partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with our Head Teachers and other Education staff to ensure that parents receive regular communications and updates on relevant information – school holidays, trips, events in school and signposting to helpful and useful supports</li> <li>• Offer opportunities for parents to be involved in the life of the school in a meaningful way – meet the teacher, information sessions, bring your parent to school day</li> <li>• Ensure school senior leadership teams are involving parents in the improvement planning for the school</li> <li>• Continue to offer welcoming environments in our settings for parents and families and build and strengthen positive relationships with staff so that they can feel schools are approachable and inclusive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Parents will feel welcome, respected and included in our school communities</li> </ul>
Support parents with learning at home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide parents with opportunities to develop their understanding of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) and National frameworks by offering sessions to share information and encourage ways they can be involved.</li> <li>• Share learning opportunities for parents in areas of interest to support their child's learning – digital learning sessions, how to support study, numeracy and literacy foundations</li> <li>• Work with school senior leadership teams to ensure parents are aware of school policies such as homework, learning and teaching, positive behaviour</li> <li>• Offer quality and meaningful family learning opportunities across Midlothian via our Family Learning Co-ordinator</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Parents will feel confident to support their child's learning and feel more included in their development</li> </ul>
Remove barriers for parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that we offer a wider range of opportunities for parental involvement – deliver in person as well as online, offer flexibility in timing such in the evening as well as the school day</li> <li>• Use language that is accessible for all – no jargon, plain English</li> <li>• Continue to offer supports such as translation and interpretation when appropriate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Parents will feel schools are approachable and be more encouraged and involved in their child's learning and the school community</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with our Head Teachers and school staff to know their families and promote a welcoming and comfortable environment for all, monitor parental engagement and evaluate regularly to ensure improvements and genuine accessibility for our families</li> </ul>	
Promote greater parental involvement in improvement planning and process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More communication to all parents from our Parental Learner Liaison Officer to ensure they are aware of work within the wider Education Service and not just within their school community</li> <li>• Introduction of parent/carer working groups where they can be involved in specific areas of interest related to their child's needs or their own skills – Parental Engagement &amp; Communication, Digital Learning and Inclusion, Children's Rights, Equity &amp; Excellence, Additional Support Needs &amp; Wellbeing. These groups will ensure parents voice and experiences are shared with Senior Officers and influence and inform policy and improvement planning</li> <li>• Work with School Senior Leadership teams to ensure parents are involved in improvement planning and are aware and regularly updated on the school's plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Parents will have a greater understanding of improvement planning and play an active part</li> </ul>
Ensure parents are represented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure our schools welcome and encourage parents to be involved in Parent Council and their sub groups</li> <li>• Continue to support our Parent Council networks with good and meaningful communication as well as support from our Parental &amp; Learner Liaison Officer</li> <li>• Provide training opportunities for parents to be effective and fulfil their roles</li> <li>• Ensure parents/carers are involved in the recruitment and selection process for Senior Leadership roles in our settings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Parents will be engaged and feel involved and empowered to share their thoughts and experiences</li> </ul>

## How will we know we are successful with our plan?

Midlothian Council will know that our Parental Involvement and Engagement Strategy is successful by the following measures:

- Carry out an annual survey with parents to seek their views on school's parental involvement and engagement. Results will be shared with schools, clusters and the local authority to share good practices and influence changes in procedures and strategy where necessary
- Feedback from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) and Care Inspectorate pre-inspection questionnaires
- Findings from Quality Improvement visits carried out in schools by Quality Improvement Managers (QIM) and Officers (QIO)
- Feedback and evaluation from Parent Councils

## Complaints procedure

In Midlothian we endeavour to ensure that parents are reassured that we will address their concern appropriately and professionally by:

- Ensuring parents are aware of how to raise a concern within their child's school
- Making clear to parents how they can make a complaint to the Council
- Investigating concerns and responding accordingly

Parents can raise individual concerns with Senior Leadership teams within our schools in a variety of different ways. Schools will share this information in their school handbooks and on their websites.

Where a parent would like to raise a concern out-with the school, Midlothian Council has a clear Complaints Process for reporting, recording, investigating and responding. More information can be found on the Council's website - [Complaints procedure | Midlothian Council](#)

## Useful links

- Scottish Schools Parental Involvement Act (2006) - [Scottish Schools \(Parental Involvement\) Act | Getting involved | Parent Zone \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- Children & Young People Act Scotland (2014) – [Part One: Services In Relation To Children At Risk Of Becoming Looked After And The Legal Framework - Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014: National Guidance on Part 12: Services in relation to Children at Risk of Becoming Looked After, etc - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)
- How Good Is Our School - [How good is our school? - HGIOS 4 | Self-evaluation | National Improvement Hub \(education.gov.scot\)](#)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child - [Incorporation of the UNCRC - The Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland \(cypcs.org.uk\)](#)
- Connect - [Home :: Connect](#)
- National Parent Forum of Scotland - [National Parent Forum of Scotland \(npfs.org.uk\)](#)
- ParentZone - [Parentzone Scotland | Parent Zone \(education.gov.scot\)](#)