

Parents as partners

An introductory guide for Parent Councils



Inspire | Transform | Strengthen

Our Education Resource Plan

In our Education Resource Plan we have set out how we are taking forward the Council's vision to 'improve the quality of life for everyone' We have set out what it is we wish to achieve:



Our Vision
Improve the quality of life of everyone in South Lanarkshire

Our Values
Focused on people and their needs
Working with and respecting others
Accountable, effective, efficient and transparent
Ambitious, self aware and improving
Fair, open and sustainable
Excellent employer

inspire transform strengthen

Our Purpose: To raise achievement and attainment, inspire learners, transform learning, and work in partnership to strengthen our communities.

Our priorities are to:

- Raise standards in literacy and numeracy and close the poverty-related attainment gap.
- Improve health and wellbeing to enable children and families to flourish.
- Support children and young people to develop their skills for learning, life and work.
- Ensure inclusion and equality are at the heart of what we do.

- To take forward our priorities we will:**
- > Provide high-quality learning experiences for all
 - > Deliver a meaningful curriculum to support the learner journey
 - > Use evidence to effect improvement
 - > Build leadership capacity within a strong framework of governance
 - > Encourage innovation and creativity
 - > Strengthen our partnership working

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Introduction by parents

This guide has been produced by parents/carers to provide information on the role of a Parent Council. We are a group of parents who are also members of the "Parents as Partners" focus group within South Lanarkshire. The aim of the focus group is to give parents a voice and enable them to share information with the Executive Director of Education Resources on matters that relate to parents/carers. The views of parents have been instrumental in shaping this guide and we pass on our thanks to all who have helped us produce this.

The focus group works in partnership with Education Resources to support parents / Parent Councils.

We aim to:

- *support parental involvement, parental engagement, family learning and learning at home;*
- *provide guidance to parents and parent councils in relation to roles, responsibilities and that of the wider parent forum;*
- *provide advice, support and training;*
- *empower parents to be involved and engaged in family learning and contribute to local and national policy;*
- *highlight parents views to Education Resources.*

Parents have a vital role to play in their children's education.

We hope this document, 'An introductory guide for Parent Councils' is helpful to parents and carers.

Research shows

that between the ages of **5** and **16** children spend only **15%** of their time in school. Parents, carers and family members are by far the most important influences on children's lives.

Welcome

The Parental Involvement Act sets out in legislation the desire to improve both the quality and extent of parents' involvement in their own child's learning.

Through our parental involvement and engagement strategy we wish to build on the effective partnership we have with our early years childcare settings, schools, parents and carers.

"The importance of parents as partners in the education of their child is widely recognised as helping to achieve better outcomes for children and young people."

The involvement of parents in supporting their child's education at home and in providing encouragement are all factors which help to raise attainment and make learning something to celebrate.

One way of showing support is by becoming a member of a Parent Council, which is a sub-group of the wider Parent Forum (all parents/carers of children at a school/nursery). We also want to provide parents/carers with the support they need to become more involved in their children's learning, and learning at home.

We wish to see Parent Councils feeling empowered to take forward their role in working in partnership with the school to support children's learning. Good clear communication and the sharing of information are essential components to achieving this, as is the building of positive relationships, actively celebrating the achievements and success of children, young people and their school.

Parents and schools have a shared a common aim – to prepare children as best we can for happy, useful and fulfilling adult lives. Parents are key players in helping to achieve this aim by listening, encouraging and supporting their children at home and at school. By working together we can all help children to become successful learners, through the encouragement and support we give them.

We extend a warm welcome to you, as partners as we work together to raise attainment, close the poverty related attainment gap and celebrate the achievements of our children and young people.



What is the Parent Forum?

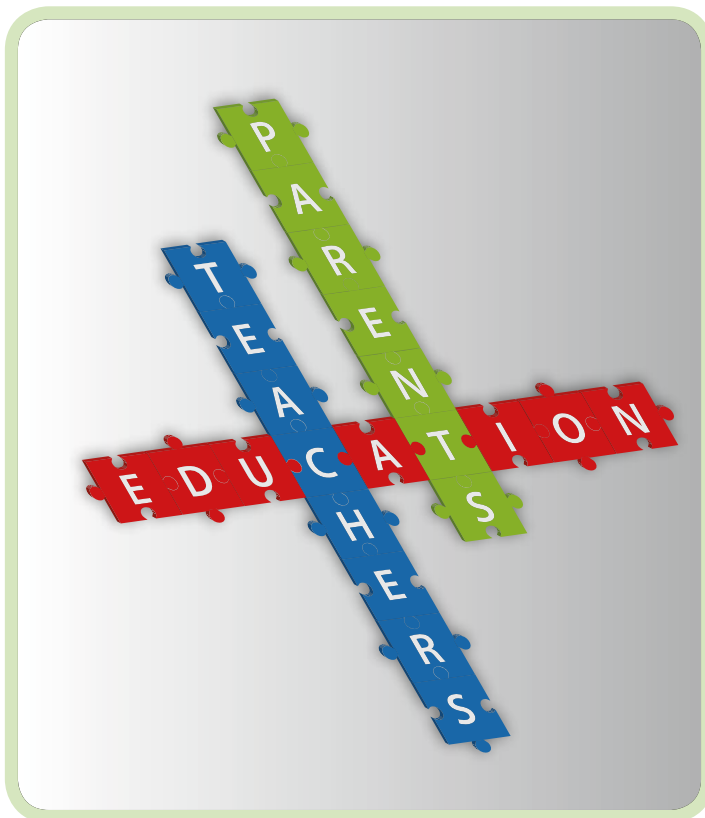
Every parent with a child in school is automatically a member of the Parent Forum.

All parents/carers are members of the Parent Forum enabling you to volunteer to join your school's Parent Council or Parent Group. The Parent Council is a formal group with a constitution and acts as a Parent Voice for your school.

The fact that you are a parent forum member means your voice matters in Education.

Parents/carers should:

- *receive information about the educational progress and wellbeing of your child,*
- *know about events and activities at the school, amazing achievements*
- *be given advice or help on how you can support your child's learning both at home and in school,*
- *be able to discuss how funding is spent. This includes Pupil Equity Funding or Scottish Attainment Challenge funding (this is explained further on in the guide) www.gov.scot/policies/schools/pupil-attainment/,*
- *know how to be involved or volunteer within the school,*
- *be provided with an opportunity to comment on Scottish Government and South Lanarkshire Education policy and procedures which matter to parents and families.*
- *Parent Council volunteers will work on behalf of all parents at your school.*



What is a Parent Council?

The Parent Council is the formal body, made up of parent volunteers from the wider Parent Forum. A Parent Council is not run by the school or local authority but by the parents. Although formal, your school's Parent Council will be very parent-friendly and partnership with the school is very important. A Parent Council is a great opportunity to become more involved and get to know more about your child's school.

Some key features are as follows:

- *the Parent Council must be chaired by a member of the Parent Forum.*
- *a Parent Council is a separately constituted group who are expected to work in close partnership with the school and the local authority.*
- *they must ensure that they have a constitution (further guidance is available within this document).*
- *parents in each school decide what goes into their constitution and how the Parent Council will be organised (we do provide examples).*
- *they represent the views of all parents/carers and encourage links between the school, parents, pupils, pre-school groups and the wider community.*
- *they meet regularly to support the school.*
- *the relevant church or denominational body will be invited to nominate a representative to be part of the Parent Council.*
- *one of the responsibilities of the Parent Council is to work in partnership with the Head Teacher to discuss the School Improvement plan. The school improvement plan is a road map that sets out the priorities the school wishes to take forward, for example, attainment, health and wellbeing and celebrating achievements.*
- *The local authority is required to support a Parent Council both through advice and support financially and to take account of the voice and views of parents.*
- *Parents Councils are required to report to all parents at least once a year (at the Annual General Meeting), but it makes more sense to do this on a regular basis.*

Some questions...

Do you have to be called a Parent Council?

Most do, but you can call your group anything you want (within reason!) (e.g. Friends of) However, South Lanarkshire Council, will recognise that you are the Parent Council.

What makes a good Parent Council?

The answer is: You do!

What should never be discussed at Parent Council meetings?

Any issues on an individual child or family circumstances cannot be discussed at the meeting.

Can you be a member of more than one Parent Council?

Yes, you can be, as long as you have a child who is a pupil at the school.

Do we need to be insured?

South Lanarkshire Council currently pays for insurance cover so you do not need to take out separate insurance cover.

Parent Council meeting - a guide

Beginners guide

You are beginning your term as a member of your Parent Council and you are about to attend your first meeting. If you are used to committees or working groups you may feel quite calm. If you are not, you may be suffering from first-night nerves and wondering what will happen.

This guide attempts to describe some of the things that should happen: who can you expect at the meeting? What do we wish and need to do?

The answer is not necessarily at the first meeting, as it is important for everyone to discuss/share what is likely to happen and what you would like to do working in partnership with the school.

Who will be there?

The Headteacher who is the principal adviser to the Parent Council and will attend the meeting.

Parents/carers - who should be made to feel welcome, and to be able to listen and to talk about how they can support children's learning.

Other people may be invited to join your meetings by co-opting for example, a member of the church or a community representative of your choosing (RC school – Church rep must be invited).

It is also suggested that an invitation to your meetings is sent to the local councillors representing the multi-member ward area for your school (the school will help you with this).

What do we do?

It is a good idea to spend some time getting to know each other.

Everyone's views are important. Equally important is the need to take the time to listen and consider the points of view of other members.

It is important to remember that you are representing the views of parents, working with the school and sharing information to support family learning, learning at home and your child's education.

Some things to do:

- *Look at the school improvement plan*
- *Pupil Equity Funding – get to know what your school is using this funding which is designed to close the poverty related attainment gap*
- *What's on – is there a plan of events / activities*
- *How are we going to support your children's learning and celebrate success*
- *Is there anything we can do together with pupils to look at 'climate change'?*

Your constitution sets out what you wish to achieve and some indication of the timescales for reporting back at least once per year to all members of the Parent Forum. What follows is a brief list of the things, to support your meetings.

A proposed agenda for a Parent Council meeting is provided in Appendix 1.

Choosing a Chair

It is normal to select a Chair. This could be done on a rota basis. The main thing is that each Parent Council is required to select someone to chair and guide their meetings.

The success of your group will depend on parents and schools working together and getting to know each other.

Role of the Chair

What happens if you suddenly find yourself nominated as Chair of your Parent council? Below is a comprehensive list of what you need to know to keep you on track.

The Chairperson

The Parent Council should always be chaired by a member of the Parent Forum. The success of a meeting can depend upon how it is chaired but remember, the chairperson is the person who makes sure things get done, not the person who does everything.

- *The Chairperson must be a parent with a child/children at the school.*
- *Your constitution will set-out how long you may hold this role for.*
- *The post may be shared between two parents – Joint Chair making it easier to share the workload, especially if this suits your Parent Council.*
- *It's a good idea to have a Vice-Chair who could shadow the Chair before they take over.*
- *Liaise with the Secretary / Clerk on the agenda and meeting arrangements.*
- *Work with the treasurer to ensure that proper financial accounts are prepared for meetings, including the Annual General Meeting.*
- *Make sure your meetings are focussed and consider inviting pupils along to hear about their learning and view.*

The main roles of a Chairperson

As a Chair your role is to:

- *Guide the Parent Council to achieve its aims (refer to school improvement plan).*
- *Raise awareness of the role of the Parent Council – to represent all the parents in the school.*
- *Speak to other parents or invited guests and the wider community, to highlight what the Parent Council is working towards or has successfully completed.*
- *Be visible and approachable to all parents.*
- *Be the main link that liaises with the headteacher / local authority / parent forum.*
- *Ensure decisions are carried out.*
- *Have the casting vote in the case of a tied decision.*
- *Present the annual report at the AGM.*
- *School Inspections - Your views as Chair and the Parent Council will be invited.*
- *Involved in the interview process for Head Teacher / DHTS (the chair and up to another two representatives of the wider parent forum will be invited to take part in the selection / interview process).*

Chairing a meeting

It's not as daunting as you may think! Help is always at hand. As Chair you are responsible for:

- *Inviting parents and others in the school community to suggest items for the agenda, (this can be passed to the secretary for distribution).*
- *Setting the agenda.*
- *Topics to be discussed at the meeting, need to be agreed in advance and notice given to the wider parents and PC members before the meeting.*
- *The Agenda is made available to the wider parent forum and Parent council members, (see template example).*
- *Information required in advance, we suggest two weeks (not night before).*
- *Consider whether you need to distribute information in advance of the meeting – e.g. the headteacher's report.*

Getting through the agenda

- *Have a clear agenda with timings against each item.*
- *Don't assume everyone understands what is being discussed.*
- *Keep an eye on time and move items on if necessary.*
- *Avoid private conversations as this can shift the focus and delay the agenda.*
- *Facilitate – don't dominate (you are the mediator!).*
- *Stick to the agenda item – acknowledge other issues and suggest it is added to the next agenda.*
- *Following discussions review the main points and if necessary take a vote.*
- *Ensure that everyone gets an opportunity to speak and make sure all views are heard.*
- *Encourage people to contribute: If lots of people want to speak take a note of who should speak next.*
- *Manage meeting time especially if people are talking for too long.*
- *Give preference to people who haven't spoken before.*
- *If appropriate go round the group to get everyone's view on a topic.*
- *Make sure those with different views are heard too.*

Forward planning

At an early meeting you'll probably have to discuss some of the forthcoming events, activities that parents want to organise, support or plan for. A forward plan/timetable is a good idea and one that helps everyone to focus on doing the things that you as a Parent Council want to achieve.

What follows is a checklist of some of the items that you may find helpful.

What needs to be done?

Checklist

- How frequently do you want to meet? (once a month / 10 meetings per year)
- What sort of information do you want and when? What is it you as parents wish to do to support the school? (Look at the School's Improvement Plan).
- Do you want to set up any sub-committees to look after particular aspects of the Parent Council's work? It all depends on your local circumstances, but if you have enough people sub-committees can spread the workload and save time.
- How are you going to communicate with other parents? (website, newsletter, email, twitter, text etc?)

Annual Report

Remember you have to produce an annual report so check when you have said you will do this in your constitution (provide a wee update on how the school has used it's Pupil Equity Funding).

One very important point to remember: you can ask the headteacher for advice and invite her/him to respond to questions on any relevant subject **except matters about individual pupils or members of staff.**

Handy hints

- *Post a copy of your agenda and minutes on the website, twitter or whatever means you have to share information.*
- *Ensure an invitation and copy of the agenda for each meeting, along with any previous minutes, is sent to the local councillors in the multi-member ward for your school.*

Ensure a copy of the minutes for each meeting are sent to:

Education Resources

Operations Service

Council Offices

Almada Street

Hamilton ML3 0AE

Email: parents@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Role of the Vice Chair

The Vice Chair stands in for the Chair and supports the Chair with their role and duties.

Role of the Secretary / Clerk

Main roles of the Secretary / Clerk

- *The Secretary / Clerk plays an important role in keeping the Parent Council organised.*
- *Supports the Chairperson.*
- *Handles and deals with all correspondence alongside the Chair.*
- *Send a notice of the meeting, venue and agenda to all Parent Council members so they receive them in good time for the meeting (by email, text etc).*
- *Keep a record of everyone attending the meeting and any apologies for absence.*
- *Take a minute of meetings, recording decisions and actions to be taken and by when.*
- *Provide minutes for all Parent Council members prior to or at a meeting.*
- *Helps to ensure the school has organised a let for Parent Council meetings and a 'wee cuppa'.*

Writing the minutes:

- *The official record of the meeting.*
- *Write a draft as soon as possible.*

No need to record everything – use bullet points for the main points from a discussion

- *Make clear who agreed to do what and by when by creating Action points for the next meeting.*
- *Minutes are in draft until they are approved at the next meeting.*

And finally

Why not split the role with one person to take the minutes and the other to handle correspondence.

Role of the Treasurer

This role is one that can at first appear to be daunting. However, it is about helping each other to look after any funds you may have.

Although all Parent Council members are responsible for the management of funds, the Treasurer has the main role in helping to carry out these duties properly.

The Treasurer can be anyone on the Parent Council.

The main roles of a Treasurer

1. *To keep accurate records of income and expenditure.*
2. *To give an update to the Parent Council.*
3. *Opening a bank account for any monies raised through fund raising or other means.*
4. *Ensuring the proper counting and banking of money and making approved payments.*
5. *Preparing an annual summary of income and expenditure and to have this checked before the AGM (audited and certified by independent person / e.g. accountant / book keeper).*

Handy hints

- *Set some time aside on a regular basis to keep the accounts up to date.*
- *Whichever method is chosen it is important to have a system which will be easy to pass on and used by future Treasurers.*
- *The accounts should always be available to any parent who asks to see them.*

For more information on financial guidelines please see Appendix 5.

Insurance

South Lanarkshire Council has made arrangements to provide and pay for insurance cover for Parent Councils and/or Parent Teacher Groups.

Cover is provided for Public Liability, Employers' liability, damage to property arising out of events/activities and fraud cover.

A Parent Council / Parent Teacher Association should not take out separate insurance cover.

A copy of the insurance cover which the Council has taken out will be issued on annual basis and should be held with the constitution for reference purposes and in light of any potential claims.

This approach is to provide re-assurance for parents/carers serving on Parent Councils and Parent Teacher Associations that insurance cover is provided.

Constitution

Each Parent Council must have a constitution – this helps to set out the purpose and aims of the Parent Council on behalf of the Parent Forum. Remember that the aim of a constitution is to help your Parent Council to run smoothly and to focus on how parents can best contribute to the education of children at the school.

An example of a constitution has been added to this guide at Appendix 2.

Further advice is available from the headteacher or from Education Resources.
Email parents@southlanarkshire.gov.uk.

What is a constitution?

A constitution is an important framework for a Parent Council/parent organisation.

- *The main function of a constitution is simply to describe your parent council and how it will carry out its objectives.*
- *It needs to be kept current and relevant to the business of the parent council.*
- *A constitution needs to be reviewed every year to make sure everyone involved is aware of the role of a Parent Council.*

The constitution should be drafted and decided upon by parents in your school.

What happens once you have agreed a constitution?

Once you have agreed your constitution and are happy to proceed then you need to share this with the parent forum and review it each year at the AGM.

Where is your constitution held?

It should be available on the school website as well as a hard printed copy from the school office. Your constitution must also be sent to parents@southlanarkshire.gov.uk to be held on file for your school. A copy should also be retained with the Clerk / Secretary and Chair of your parent council.



Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting is a yearly gathering of the parent council members and the wider parent forum to discuss the things you have done over the last year and to say what you would like to do next year. The opportunity exists to say thank you to everyone for their support and to celebrate the achievements of pupils, the school and the work of parents.

What you should cover at an AGM?

- *Chairpersons report- what we have done and achieved;*
- *Selection of members;*
- *Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising from previous minutes AGM;*
- *Treasurer report;*
- *Head teachers report (the use of Pupil Equity Funding / progress on the School Improvement Plan);*
- *Any proposed amendments to the constitution;*
- *Celebrating what you have achieved and pupil success.*

What is an EGM?

If a meeting is required at short notice to deal with an urgent matter an Extraordinary General Meeting can be called. You need to let all the members of the Parent Forum you are doing this.

How to call an EGM?

You must give at least two weeks' notice to all members of the Parent Forum.

Sub Groups

You may wish to form a Sub Group

Sub groups are made up of a small group of parents who have volunteered to help discuss, take forward something you wish to do (e.g. fund raising, survey, review homework policy, Communication Strategy, Transitions etc).

How do they work?

- *It is about sharing the things you want to do.*
- *Smaller, more manageable groups to organise events and activities.*
- *They should be relatively short term but it is up to you to be clear about what you want to achieve (timescales are good to set as it helps us all to be focussed).*

Decision making

- *Sub groups should be encouraged to take things forward and to share what they wish to achieve.*

Communication - a key to the success of any Parent Council

Communication is vital to success and in keeping people up to date on what is going on.

- *A note of the action points arising from each meeting of the sub group should be sent to all sub group members, and to the chair of the PC.*
- *This should not be extensive but be in the format of a list.*
- *This will help keep sub group members (and anyone who cannot make a meeting) up to date.*

A representative of the sub group should give a brief update of the sub group's work at each Parent Council meeting.

Communications

Keeping in touch and sharing information is a key factor for any group. This can be carried out in a number of ways:

- *Social media has evolved so fast. Parent Councils have found new ways to communicate information to parents. It also recognised that some parents may not have access to social media so there may also be a need to look at other means on how you communicate and engage with parents and families.*

Handy hints

Parent Councils and parent groups must complete a Local Authority Social Media application form and have it signed off by Head Teacher and sent to the Council. This will help to put in place the appropriate connections and protocols to safeguard personal information.

- *This can be established through the use of Social Media, School websites, Facebook, Instagram or Twitter.*
- *The creation and use of Apps either for Windows, Android and Apple devices have created an alternative way for schools to communicate with parents. Social media can be a great help, as is face to face chats with parents, social events and a PC calendar for keeping people informed - www.npfs.org.uk/downloads/*

Handy hints

Information on the Parent Council and contact details of the chair should be highlighted in the school handbook and school website/app. This is to raise awareness of the role of the Parent Council and information included is up to date. (Contact email to be included)

Suggested Sub Groups

- *Communication – develop a Communication Strategy / Plan.*
- *Transitions – develop a strategy to help parents of children transferring from:
Early years (Nursery) to Primary
Primary to Secondary schools*
- *Fundraising/events – identify and organise new funding activities and events.
e.g. Numbers club 50/50 club – Some Primary and Secondary parent councils may have a Number club that halves the prize money with the parent council fund and the winner. It may be deemed necessary to have a small sub group that would be established to promote and develop this club.*

Membership of your Parent Council (What you must do!)

A membership form for your Parent Council must be completed and kept up-to-date! (Appendix 4)

- *one copy to be held in the school*
- *one copy to be held by the Parent Council*
- *email a copy to parents@southlanarkshire.gov.uk*

Clerk/Minute taker

South Lanarkshire Council, fund a paid Clerk for each Parent council, this person cannot be a parent at the school, but may be a relation to a parent or a member of the school staff.

Payment to Parent Council Clerks

- *In South Lanarkshire there is a system for paying clerk fees.
A claim form is attached at Appendix 3.*
- *This must be signed by the claimant and chair.
It can be sent in by email to parents@southlanarkshire.gov.uk*
- *Clerks who are Parent Council members cannot be paid
(i.e. if you are a parent member you cannot be paid as a clerk).*

The Parent Council should remind Clerks that it is their responsibility to submit details of any payments they receive to Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) for their personal tax purposes.

You can access this by going on to the South Lanarkshire Council website, and type in Parent Council Forms Clerks Fees in to the search bar. This will bring up a form that will allow you to print it off and be signed by the Parent Council Chairperson.

Clerks Fees

South Lanarkshire Council, fund a paid Clerk for each Parent council. If the person is a rep on the Parent Council, payment cannot be made to this person, so we always suggest someone else to take on this role.

What happens if I incur expenses?

Any member of the Parent council who is away on or representing the Parent Council on Parent Council business can claim travelling expenses by contacting the school / local authority.

Role and responsibility of the Head Teacher

It should be noted that:

- *The Head Teacher has both a right and a duty to attend or be represented at Parent Council meetings.*
- *The Head Teacher is expected to provide an annual report to the Parent Council covering on what has been achieved through working together, eg taking forward actions in the school improvement plan, celebrating the achievements and success of the school, learners and staff, things that matter to parents and families.*
- *An update on the school improvement plan and the use of Pupil Equity Funding plus the views of what PEF could be used for in the coming year.*

Invited Guests

The Parent Council can invite members of the local community as well as members of staff to attend the Parent Council.

The Parent Council should also invite local councillors (all in the multi-ward for their area) with dates and times of their meetings.

Members of the local community to talk about and share how they can support the school, families and children.

Pupil Voice

It is always good to hear the voice of pupils. You may wish to plan with the Head Teacher opportunities for pupils to come along to share their experiences and what we can all do to support learning, make improvements and celebrate success. A link with the Pupil Council is a good starting point.

National Parent Forum for Scotland (NPFS)

The National Parent Forum of Scotland is the independent voice of parents in Scotland which has a membership made up of parent volunteer representatives from each Local Authority area in Scotland.

The forum supports parental involvement in Education by:

- *Providing a parents perspective both to a National and Local level.*
- *Supporting parents to play an active role in their child's education.*
- *The Forum works in Partnership with National and Local governments and other organisations, involved in education and child wellbeing issues, to ensure that parents play a full and equal role in education.*
- *The overall aim is to help every child to maximise their potential through their school life.*

The Link is www.npfs.org.uk/



the National Parent
Forum of Scotland

NPFS (National Parent Forum of Scotland)

- *Works in partnership with the Scottish Government.*
- *Gives a true parents perspective at local and national level - www.npfs.org.uk*
- *Works in partnership with all Education Authorities.*
- *Identifies common educational issues and highlights the views of parents from across Scotland.*
- *Communicates through the parent representatives to the wider educational community which is helping to shape and influence policy at a national and local level.*

NPFS (National Parent forum of Scotland) helps parents by:

- *Running focus groups and online surveys.*
- *Holding both National and local events.*
- *Keep parents and parent councils up to date with any changes to educational policy and legislation.*
- *Provide parent friendly information, by translating the education jargon and writing into clear, transparent parent friendly information. Though publications such as the Nutshell series.*

Who are your NPFS representatives?

South Lanarkshire representative:

Cheryl Burnett, Vice Chair NPFS (Rutherglen and Cambuslang parent)

Cheryl has represented South Lanarkshire for over four years both at Local and National Level.

Email: south.lanarkshire@npfs.org.uk or Phone: **07740984125**

Depute South Lanarkshire representative:

Margaret Brownell (Hamilton parent)

Email: depute.southlanarkshire@npfs.org.uk

Follow us on Facebook: **National Parent Forum of Scotland South Lanarkshire Area**
and Twitter: [@NpfsLanarkshire](https://twitter.com/NpfsLanarkshire) [@parentforumscot](https://twitter.com/parentforumscot)

Education Resources Committee

In South Lanarkshire we have two parent reps on the Education Resources Committee. They are:

Christine Hall, Glassford Primary School

Hilary Kirby, St Andrew's and St Bride's High School

They provide a voice for parents on the South Lanarkshire Education Committee along with trade union and church representatives.

If you are interested in hearing more about the NPFS or joining the Education Committee please email parents@southlanarkshire.gov.uk



Appendix 1 - Meeting Agenda

Agenda

1. Attendance

The Clerk / Secretary will take note of who is present, and pass on the apologies of any members who have sent word that they cannot attend.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

The Parent Council is asked to confirm that the minutes are an accurate record. Any necessary changes to the record are agreed by the Parent Council.

3. Matters arising from minutes

It is usual only to hear reports on, or have further discussions about, matters which are not already down on the agenda for discussion later in the meeting.

4. (Draft) agenda

- School Improvement Plan
- Supporting children's learning / family learning
- Celebrating success
- Fundraising
- Business (e.g. Pupil Equity Funding)

The items listed for the main agenda are taken in turn. A good idea is to agree at the end of the meeting what is to be discussed and reported on at the next meeting. (There will need to be agreement about how and when matters are placed on the agenda). The agenda should be sent to members, with at least three days notice of the meeting, and clearly showing the venue and time along with the minutes of the previous meeting.

5. Any other competent business (AOCB)

The Parent Council can discuss "any other competent business" raised at this time. If a matter is raised which is important but not urgent, the chair may rule that it should be held over, and placed on the agenda of the next meeting. Parents/carers may ask the chair to include additional items on the agenda and the advice is to carry forward these items to a future meeting.

6. Next meeting

The Chair usually consults the members about the date, time and place of the next meeting. (This is a duty which can be delegated to the clerk of the Parent Council)

7. Lets...

... a let should be made for your meeting dates with South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture to ensure the venue is booked in advance (It is good to set out the dates for your meetings for the year).



Appendix 2 - Constitution

Parents as Partners in South Lanarkshire

Sample

Xxxxxxxx Parent Council

Model Constitution

An example of a constitution

This is the constitution for xxxxxxxx Parent Council.

1. Objectives of the Parent Council

1.1 The objectives of the Parent Council are:

- To work in partnership with the school to create a welcoming school which is inclusive for all parents.
- Help the school to take forward its plans.
- To promote partnership between the school, its pupils and all its parents.
- To develop and engage in activities which support the education and wellbeing of pupils.
- To identify and represent the views of parents on the education provided by the school and other matters of interest to parents.

2. Membership of the Parent Council

2.1 The membership will be a minimum of xxxxx parents of children attending the school.

- ***The maximum size is [insert a figure according to size of school and as agreed by members of the Parent Forum – proposed maximum xx].***
- The Parent Council will be made up of one/two representatives from each year group (seek volunteers or nominations from the parents of children in those year groups).
- Any parent of a child at the school can volunteer to be a member of the Parent Council. In the event that the number of volunteers exceeds the number of places set out in the constitution, members will be selected by *[insert chosen method of selection]*.

3. Co-option

3.1 A Parent Council may co-opt up to *[insert figure as agreed by members of the Parent Forum*]* to assist it with carrying out its functions.

3.2 The number of parent members on the Parent Council must always be greater than co-opted members.

**Add in respect of a denominational school, "of which at least one must be a member of the church or denominational body in whose interest the school is conducted."*

or

Two-thirds of the Parent Council will be made up of Parent Forum members and one-third of the membership will be reserved for other co-opted members including teaching and support staff in the school.

The Parent Council will extend an invitation to the local councillor(s) to attend meetings but he/she will not be a formal representative of the Parent Council.

4. Period of Tenure on Parent Forum

- 4.1 The Parent Council will be selected for a period of ***[insert two/three year(s)]***.
- 4.2 After which parents may put themselves forward for re-selection if they wish provided their child is still at the school.
- 4.3 Co-opted members will be invited to serve for a period of ***[insert two/three year(s)]***, after which time the Parent Council will review and consider requirements for co-opted membership.
- 4.4 Parents will have ***[insert figure agreed by Parent Forum]*** weeks to select their representatives.

Anyone not selected to be a member of the Parent Council may be offered the opportunity to be part of any sub-groups set up by the Council.

5. Selection of Chair/Postholders

The Chair, Secretary and Treasurer of the Council will be agreed by the Parent Council members immediately following its formation.

Office bearers will be re-selected by the Parent Council on an annual basis (at the annual meeting of the Parent Forum).

or

If the Parent Forum decides to have a Chair:

The Parent Council will be chaired by a parent of a child attending Anytown School. If the child ceases to be a pupil, a new Chair will be agreed at the next meeting.

or

If the child ceases to be a pupil, the role of the Chair will be rotated around the parent members of the Parent Council until a new Chair is appointed at the annual meeting.

6. Reporting/Meeting Arrangements

- 6.1 The Parent Council is accountable to the Parent Forum for Anytown School and will make a report to it at least once each year on its activities on behalf of all the parents.
- 6.2 If [x] number [or %] of members of the Parent Forum request a special general meeting to discuss issues falling within the Council's remit, the Parent Council shall arrange this. The Parent Council shall give all members of the Forum at least [2 weeks] notice of the meeting and, at the same time, circulate notice of the matter, or matters, to be discussed at the meeting.
- 6.3 The Annual Meeting will be held in April of each year. A notice of the meeting including date, time, and place will be sent to all members of the Parent Forum at least 2 weeks in advance. The meeting will include:
- a report on the work of the Parent Council and its committee(s)
 - selection of the new Parent Council
 - discussion of issues that members of the Parent Forum may wish to raise
 - approval of the accounts and appointment of the auditor.
- 6.4 The Parent Council will meet at least once in every school term. Should a vote be necessary to make a decision, each parent member at the meeting will have one vote, with the Chair having a casting vote in the event of a tie.
- 6.5 Any two members of the Parent Council can request that an additional meeting be held, and all members of the Parent Council will be given at least one week's notice of date, time and place of the meeting.
- 6.6 If a Parent Council member acts in a way that is considered by other members to undermine the objectives of the Parent Council, their membership of the Parent Council shall be terminated if the majority of parent members agree. Termination of membership would be confirmed in writing by the Chair or designated representative to the member.

7. Minutes/Procedures of Meetings

- 7.1 Copies of the minutes of all meetings will be available to all parents of children at Anytown School and to all teachers/staff at the school. Copies will be available from the Secretary of the Parent Council/Clerk to the Parent Council and from the school office.
- 7.2 Meetings of the Parent Council shall be open to the public, unless the Parent Council is discussing an issue which it considers should be dealt with on a confidential basis. In such circumstances, only members of the Parent Council and the headteacher, or his or her representative, can attend.

8. Funds

- 8.1 The Treasurer will open a bank or building society account in the name of the Parent Council for all Parent Council funds. Withdrawals will require the signature of the Treasurer and one other Parent Council member.

- 8.2 The Treasurer will keep an accurate record of all income and expenditure, and will provide a summary of this for each Parent Council meeting and a full account for the Annual Meeting. The Parent Council accounts will be audited by the auditor appointed at the previous Annual Meeting.
- 8.3 The Parent Council shall be responsible for ensuring that all monies are used in accordance with the objectives of the Parent Council.
- 8.4 Should the Parent Council cease to exist, any remaining funds will be passed to the education authority to be used for the benefit of the school (or schools), where this continues.

9. Changes to the Constitution

- 9.1 The Parent Council may change its constitution after obtaining consent from members of the Parent Forum. Members of the Parent Forum will be sent a copy of any proposed amendment and given reasonable time to respond to the proposal.

A copy of the revised constitution must be sent the local education authority along with a list of Parent Council members.

Sample

Appendix 3 - Parent Council Clerk's fees claim form

Please note: The privacy notice must be included every time you print this form.
This is attached to the electronic copy of each form.

PC Clerk 1



Education Resources

Parent Council Clerk's fees claim

Name of claimant

Home address

Parent Council

Email address

National Insurance number

(Please ensure that these two boxes are completed)

School Cost Centre Payrun no Dept 97

Date	Type of work e.g. preparation, meeting, follow-up	No of hours worked

Employee reference no

hours at £7.20 Head Code: 390 £

I certify that the above time has been incurred by me in respect of the Parent Council

Clerk's signature Date

Chairperson's certification

You can complete this fees form in Adobe Acrobat and print it out, or print it and complete it by hand, using block capital letters. Completed forms should be returned to the school office where it will be entered into the DMS system before being sent to Operations Service, Education Resources, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton ML3 0AE.

Signed on behalf of Executive Director

If you need this information in another language or format, please contact us to discuss how we can best meet your needs. Phone: 0303 123 1015 Email: equalities@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Appendix 4 - Parent Council membership form

Please note: The privacy notice must be included every time you print this form.
This is attached to the electronic copy of each form.



Education Resources

Parent Council Membership Form

What is your Parent Council called?

Name of chair of Parent Council

School

	Name	Address	Telephone number/ Email address
Chairperson			
Vice Chair			
Treasurer			
Secretary			
Other members – List name only			

This information will be held by Education Resources for reference purposes and will not be circulated.

Please return to: Operations Service, Education Resources, South Lanarkshire Council, Council Offices, Al mada Street, Hamilton ML3 0AE

Appendix 5 - Finance information

Parent Council Treasurers Guide to Finance and good financial record keeping

Introduction

These guidelines are to help Parent Councils follow good practice and enable it to operate and carry out its function under the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006. The aim is to ensure there are proper records and procedures in place to protect everyone.

These guidelines aim to provide advice on most aspects of Parent Council financial procedures. The guidelines may be reviewed and updated as necessary – if there is anything you feel would be a helpful addition, please don't hesitate to contact us so that we can help you.

Bank Account

- All Parent Councils should open a bank account in the name of the Parent Council. The bank will need a copy of the constitution / minute establishing the Parent Council and names of office bearers.
- The bank account is most likely to be a club and Societies account. The Bank account **should never** be in an individual's personal name.
- The Account should also be addressed to the Parent Council care of the school and **not** your personal address.
- All accounts must be set to operate with a minimum of 3 signatories, normally the treasurer and 2 other members of the Parent Council (with any two signatories required to make a withdrawal or transfer)
- All bank account accounts figures must also be presented at the Parent Council meeting to ensure openness and transparency.

Operating the Bank Account

- The bank mandate should specify that 2 of 3 signatories are required to authorise any transaction. The signatories should be members of the Parent Council. Both cheque signatories are responsible for the cheques that they sign.
- Where possible, payments should be by cheque rather than cash. This provides evidence of individual transactions on the bank statement. You should write details of the amount, date and payee on the cheque book stub.
- If paying any money in or out with cash, then a receipt of payment to and from must be provided signed off by two members of the Parent Council, one of which must be the treasurer.
- Parent Councils must not borrow money or use overdraft facilities.
- Blank cheques should never be signed and all cheques must be fully completed with the date, the payee and the amount in words and figures.
- Cancelled cheques should be held in the cheque book and 'cancelled' written across the cheque.
- All income received should be banked intact without delay and a brief description should be recorded on the pay-in slip stub.

Bank Statement

- A bank statement should be requested in advance of the AGM date.
- The bank statement should be checked for: bank charges, bank interest received, valid direct debits and standing orders, cheques issued, deposits /banking's made
- Any item on the bank statement, but not in the cash book will need to be written into the cash book before undertaking the bank reconciliation.

Bank Reconciliation

The Treasurer should compare the bank statement with the cash book to make sure the figures agree - that is each entry on the bank statement agrees to an entry in the cash book.

Book Keeping Procedures

Cash Book

- If you operate a cash book there may only be a few transactions per year but they must all be recorded.
- Keep a record of all transactions.
- Keep a running balance of the amount of money available and each transaction cross referenced to supporting documentation e.g. cheque numbers, pay-in slips, invoices or receipts.

Income

- A Parent Council can raise funds by any means other than borrowing.
- A Parent Council can decide how it expends any sums it has received by way of fund raising or gifts although this will normally be done working in close partnership with the school or parent forum.
- Larger donations such as Lottery funding or similar may have conditions attached to the donation (i.e. funding for a specific purchase or spent within a limited time). Parent Councils should be in agreement of these and ensure any conditions can be properly met before applying for funding.
- The Treasurer should hold a receipt for all income collected or received. Receipts should be retained. Any cash banked without delay.

Expenditure

- Payments for goods and services should be supported by a suppliers invoice. Invoices should be addressed to the Parent Council and not to the school.
- The invoice should be retained and filed in date order.
- Other expenditure payments for which an invoice is not available should be supported by an expenditure voucher and signed as received.

Petty Cash

- If cash is required for petty cash expenditure a cheque should be cashed and signed with a brief note to say what it is being spent on.
- This can be added as a note on the statement when cashing in the cheque.
- Any expenditure should be recorded and have supporting vouchers e.g. till receipts.
- Petty cash floats should be kept to a minimum (£30 maximum)
- The Treasurer is responsible for the petty cash which should be kept in a locked, secure location.
- If cash is handed over in advance to a person to make a purchase, a record should be kept of such advances and be receipted by the person advanced the money.
- Two signatories are required.

Payments to Parent Council

- A Parent Council can decide how it spends any sums it has received by way of fund raising or gifts in partnership with the school.
- As such a Parent Council can choose to make payments to the school at any time out of this income.
- If a Parent Council chooses to do this they should make a cheque payable to the School and pass this to the School Office for this to be banked in the School Fund Account.
- The Parent Council should produce a statement of accounts for presentation to the AGM.
- The statement of accounts should be checked by someone independent of the Parent Council with suitable financial knowledge (this is known as the audit of accounts).

- The audited statement of accounts should be formally approved at the Annual Parent Council Meeting (this should be minuted) and confirmed by the Chairperson.
- A record showing the accounts have been audited, signed by the Treasurer, the person who did the audit and Chairperson should accompany the Statement of Accounts.
- A copy Bank statement, covering the year end up to AGM should also be provided.

AGM (your accounts)

- It is the role of the Parent Council to ensure their accounts are checked (audited) each year. The persons doing the audit must:
 - Check that the money spent by the Parent Council is within the terms of the Council's role, rights and responsibilities (you may need to refer to the Parent Council's constitution).
 - Ensure that adequate records are in place
 - Check that all money received has been banked.
 - Check that all payments are recorded.
 - That all income and expenditure is correctly analysed in the cash book.
 - Sign the accounts checklist.
 - Report any findings to the Parent Council and make recommendations for improving the Parent Council's record keeping.

Your Bank Account Taxation Implications

The guidance to the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 (paragraph 24) advises that it is not anticipated that any tax will be payable on any fundraising activities carried out by the Parent Council as they are not considered to be a trading entity. You may be able to benefit from tax-free interest from your Bank but this may be dependent on the type of account held. Please contact your Bank for further information.

Retention of Records

Parent Councils should retain all financial records for a minimum of seven years.



Appendix 6 - proposed Parent Council calendar

Parent Council Calendar

Activities	Action	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June
Welcome to School	What can the PC do?										✓	
Parent Council Meetings	Monthly AGM										✓	
Annual Report	Prepare Annual Report Improvement priorities		✓									
Improvement priorities	What are the school Improvement priorities for the coming year?		Improve. Priorities									
Events and Activities • Achievements	Calendar with Head Teacher / Parents											
Parental Information	What do parents want to know?											
School Handbook	Parent Council Information					✓						
New Starts	Making a difference leaflets						✓					
Fund-raising	Option?											
Church / Charity activities	Plan with Head Teacher / Church											

Useful contacts

Bullying - www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/school_bullying

Parentzone Scotland - <https://education.gov.scot/parentzone>

National Parent Forum Scotland - www.npfs.org.uk

Connect (SPTC) - www.connect.scot

National policies

Statutory guidance Scottish Schools

www.gov.scot/publications/statutory-guidance-standards-scotlands-schools-etc-act-2000-9781786528759/

National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/2019-national-improvement-framework-improvement-plan/>

Engaging parents and families toolkit

https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/engaging-parents-and-families-a-toolkit-for-practitioners?dm_i=LQE,6AB9F,3LDQBH,OT5BB,1

Lets

To book a room in a school or to organise an event you will need to complete a let form. This can be obtained from South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture.

www.slleisureandculture.co.uk/info/13/community_halls_and_school_lets

It is worth noting the following:

Lets for schools (provided free)

- 10 Parent council/PTA group meetings (10 meetings x two hour let)
- Four free fund-raising events
- One free non-fundraising event
- The letting period is from 6.00pm – 9.30pm
(In line with the terms for janitorial services)

Lets will continue to be administered by SLLC

PVG (Protection of Vulnerable Groups)

- Disclosure Scotland forms can be obtained from any school office.
- The completed form should be returned to the school office along with three pieces of identification, including one photographic. The form is checked and sent to the SLC Personnel Department who in turn complete the process and forward to Disclosure Scotland.
- SLC pay for the PVG check for parent helpers.

Complaints

- The council has a complaints process known as Have your say.
- This can be accessed via the website www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/comments-complaints



National Policies

National Improvement Framework or NIF as its is referred to

www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/12/2207/0

Parentzone - <https://education.gov.scot/parentzone>

Learning Together - **National Action Plan**

'There are many reasons why children and young people may need support to help them learn.'



If you need this information in another format or language, please contact us to discuss how we can best meet your needs. Phone: 0303 123 1015 Email: equalities@southlanarkshire.gov.uk