
Report To:	Education and Communities Committee	Date:	4 September 2018
Report By:	Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development	Report No:	EDUCOM/74/18/NG/RB
Contact Officer:	Norman Greenshields	Contact No:	01475 712816
Subject:	Inverclyde Education Services: Parental Engagement Strategy 2018 – 2021		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to ask members of the Education and Communities Committee to approve the use of this Parental Engagement Strategy, across all areas of Education.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Inverclyde Council Education Services Parental Engagement Strategy 2018 – 2021 provides a clear base line measure of parents views of the level of service that our Early Years establishments, Primary and Secondary Schools currently provide. The strategy includes a clear commitment by Inverclyde Education Services to seek and review parental views/opinions on an annual basis. The format of this information gathering process will vary to respond to the aspects of our service that are being reviewed.
- 2.2 The strategy identifies areas for further improvement for both the Education Authority and all of our educational establishments, reflecting the current development of family learning strategies as part of the Inverclyde Attainment Challenge and the introduction and use of pupil equity funding to help support family engagement.
- 2.3 The strategy highlights to school leaders four key drivers for improvement, these being:
- The strengthening of parental partnerships
 - Effective communication
 - Learning at home
 - Family learning
- 2.4 The strategy recognises that parental engagement is currently being reviewed as part of the work of Scottish Government and that the recent announcement of a COSLA/Scottish Government agreement, includes a clear statement for headteachers and local authorities towards the development of a parental engagement strategy.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members of the Education and Communities Committee are asked to approve the proposed Parental Engagement Strategy 2018 – 2021, as outlined in the accompanying papers.

Ruth Binks
Corporate Director
Education, Communities & Organisational Development

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Inverclyde Education Services reviewed their arrangements for the involvement of parents and identified a strategy for the period lasting 2012 – 2015. This plan has been successful in ensuring that Inverclyde schools have successfully established Parent Councils within each establishment. The strategy has also enabled parents to be actively involved in the appointment of senior school managers and to ensure that parental views are openly communicated to these managers.
- 4.2 In 2015, the introduction of the Inverclyde Attainment Challenge, identified four key drivers for this programme, including one focused upon improving / increasing engagement and capacity of all families and communities to support the learning of young people living in areas identified as being within the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles 1 & 2. 2015 also saw the publication of the updated version of 'How Good is our School?', version 4, with specific quality indicators focusing on family learning and partnerships, both of which identify the need to have a clear strategy for working with parents and families.
- 4.3 The development of the Inverclyde Attainment Challenge coincided with the publication of the Scottish Government's new National Improvement Framework, which also identified parental engagement as a driver for school and Education Services improvement.
- 4.4 In 2016 The National Parent Forum of Scotland were tasked by the Scottish Government to carry out a review of the impact of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006. Their report which was published in 2017 identified 38 recommendations for Scottish Government, national agencies, local authorities and schools to consider. Many of these recommendations are expected to be included the Scottish Government's 'Action Plan on Parental Involvement and Engagement' scheduled to be published during the next few months of 2018.
- 4.5 In April 2018, Inverclyde Education Services carried out a wide scale survey of parents and families to identify their views and opinions of our current educational provision and their opportunities to become engaged in their child's learning and school improvement. Other discussions with representatives of the Parent Councils and school leadership had been carried over the previous year, including their involvement in shaping this updated Parental Engagement Strategy paper.
- 4.6 The recent agreement between COSLA/Scottish Government contains a commitment to ensure that "Headteachers work collaboratively with their Parent Council, and wider parent forum and wider community on substantive matters of school policy and improvement...based on the principle of co-production". The agreement also includes further commitments to the development of a Local Authority parental engagement strategy and the extension of these principles to early learning and childcare settings.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

Finance

- 5.1 There are no direct financial costs associated with the information provided in this paper. Inverclyde Council do currently provide a small budget to support the running of Parent Councils.

Financial Implications:

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report £000	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact £000	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					

Legal

- 5.2 There are no direct financial costs associated with the information provided in this paper. Inverclyde Council do currently provide a small budget to support the running of Parent Councils.

Human Resources

- 5.3 There are no personnel implications.

Equalities

- 5.4 Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

The proposed strategy highlights actions which need to be taken to support all children and their families.

Yes

No

Repopulation

- 5.5 N/A

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 6.1 Inverclyde Education Services: 'Ask the Family' survey April 2018. The results of this are contained in the strategy paper.
- 6.2 Consultation was held with the Parent Council Representatives Group over the course of the last session.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Inverclyde Education Services, Parental Engagement Strategy 2018 – 2021: Parents and Families as Partners.

7.2 Parental Engagement Strategy 2018 -2021: Summary Guide for Parents.

PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2018 - 2021

Parents and Families as Partners

Inverclyde
council

Inverclyde Education Services

1. Background

Inverclyde Council recognises that young people develop greater self-confidence and achieve more within their learning when supported by schools¹ and families working effectively together in partnership. The importance of parental engagement within the education process is acknowledged in current 3-18 educational research and is a central focus of recent Scottish Government education thinking.

At the time of writing this strategy, reviews of existing legislation around the governance structures surrounding Scottish Education² and the duties placed on schools and the local authority contained within the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2016³, are ongoing. This strategy can only be based upon current legislation and therefore will be subject to change in the near future.

Parental engagement is one of the key drivers for educational change identified in the National Improvement Framework (NIF)⁴, containing expectations of increased opportunities for parents⁵ and families to engage with teachers and other community partners to support their children and an increased voice of the parents in school improvement processes. This strategy provides advice to both schools and parents on the expectations from Inverclyde Council Education services of a strengthened partnership between schools and parents.

2. Parental Engagement: What is it?

Parental engagement focuses on ways in which parents, carers and families support and encourage their children's learning in school and in everyday life. Schools and partners can play a vital role in supporting families to do this effectively and with confidence. Schools involve parents and carers by enabling ongoing, two-way communications between home and school; supporting parents and carers to contribute to school improvement and making decisions that affect the school; and using the skills of parents and carers to enrich the curriculum.

2018 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan for Scottish Education⁶

Inverclyde Education Services produce an annual authority improvement plan which outlines the focus for the improvement and strengthening of parental engagement and seek to ensure that all schools reflect these priorities in their own annual school improvement plans and in the self-evaluation processes used. As part of their review processes, schools are then able to gather evidence to support their evaluation of HGIOS4?⁷ Quality Indicators of 2.5 - Family Learning and 2.7 - Partnerships.

Schools are expected to report the progress being made in this aspect within their annual Standards and Quality reports. Copies of the school Standards and Quality Report and School Improvement

¹ Throughout this document; the term 'school' should be taken to include, early learning and childcare centres, primary, secondary and special schools.

² Education (Scotland) Act 2016 Scottish Parliament February 2016

³ The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 Scottish Parliament 2006

⁴ 2018 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan for Scottish Education, Scottish Government 2018

⁵ Throughout this document; the term 'parent' should be taken to include, foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

⁶ 2018 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan for Scottish Education, Scottish Government 2018

⁷ How Good is our School? 4th Edition, Education Scotland 2015

Plans are published on our school websites. A number of our schools also produce family friendly versions of this report. The authority plans and report are placed online on the Inverclyde Council website to maximise access to this information.

Inverclyde Community Learning and Development also carry out evaluation of provision within Learning Communities using the quality indicators within How good is the learning and development in our community? (HGILDIOC?). These indicators reflect the context within which community learning and development partners operate. The quality indicators focus specifically on the impact of community learning and development provision and will include work with young people, adults and communities. As part of ongoing evaluation, evidence is gathered from a number of partners to support the evaluation of HGILDIOC? Quality indicators of 2.1 Impact on Learners, 5.1 Delivering the learning offer and 8.1 Partnership working.

3. Our aims

It is clear that parents often indicate that the language used within education can be difficult to access and, in some cases, deter communication. The 2006 Act highlights a number of duties that schools and local authorities must respond to. These, however, can be summarised easily by focusing on the three main aspects identified in the Act:

- **Home-school Partnerships:** Schools should encourage the open involvement of parents in their work and provide information that helps parents engage with the school and their child's education.
- **Learning at home:** Schools should encourage parents to help their child's learning at home, in the community and at school.
- **Parental representation:** Parents are automatically regarded as members of the Parent Forum at a school and have the right to have their views considered and reflected through a representative Parent Council⁸ for the school.

Inverclyde Education Services' aims reflect these three key priorities.

Through the development of strengthened school and parent partnerships across all of our educational establishments, our authority aims seek to ensure that parents are:

- Fully informed about their children's education and learning.
- Welcomed and involved in the life of their child's school.
- Able to support learning at home and to participate fully in family learning activities.
- Encouraged to express their views and take part in decision making.
- Involved in forums for discussion and debate on education policy.

In order to achieve these aims, Inverclyde schools are encouraged to revisit and review their understanding of each of the three key aspects above and to ensure that the legislative duties contained in the Scottish Schools Parental Involvement Act 2006 are also maintained.

Developments within Education, including the introduction of the Scottish Attainment Challenge and the allocation of Pupil Equity Funding directly to schools, has provided new opportunities for schools to further strengthen involvement with parents, in partnership with other agencies and in providing

⁸ The term Parent Council is contained within the 2006 Act. Recently schools across Inverclyde have found it beneficial, in consultation with the Parent Forum, to rename this group in order to encourage wider parent participation.

new resources. The Inverclyde Attainment Challenge has clear references to the importance of family learning and parental engagement within the key drivers of the project.

Evidence gathered in response to the consultation on the review of The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 Scottish Parliament 2006⁹ suggests that ‘there was confusion and a general lack of understanding among parents and staff about the difference between homework and the concept of learning at home’. Similarly, parents’ own educational experiences, knowledge, skills and abilities are a major influence on the development of their own children’s learning. This strategy seeks therefore to clarify definitions of both ‘Learning at Home’ and ‘Family learning’.

3.1 Learning at Home

‘Parents are the first and on-going educators of their own children and, as such, should receive information and support to help develop their child’s learning at home, in the community and at school’.

(Scottish Schools Parental Involvement Act 2006, Guidance)

‘...early learning experiences at home are crucial in creating strong foundations for nursery, school and beyond. Parents are the first educators and as such, the biggest single influence on a child’s educational aspirations and attainment throughout life’.

(National Parenting Strategy, 2012)

A definition of ‘learning at home’ is given as.....

‘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 across aspects of active learning undertaken with parents, family members or peers.

(Scottish Parental Involvement Officers Network, 2018)

Learning at home does not necessarily relate only to curriculum activities or homework tasks and can also include aspects of play, leisure events, fun activities, sports, trips, cultural and/or volunteering experiences. Indeed, activities which provide opportunities for the strengthening of relationships, positive improvements in the child’s wellbeing and development of self-confidence ultimately lead to better learning and achievement, and so are encouraged.

Many examples of effective ‘Learning at Home’ activities can be found across the education establishments in Inverclyde, and school staff and Parent Councils are encouraged to come together to share ideas and practice. Regular discussion of these strategies are also shared at school leadership meetings and will continue to be built upon in the future.

Education Scotland has recently shared examples of good practice gathered through consultation with parents, education professionals and identified in recent Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education (HMIe) school inspections. These are highlighted in Appendix 1.

⁹ Review of Learning at Home, Education Scotland 2018

The authority will continue to work with parents, Parent Councils and schools to support the development of home learning activities and organise workshops which allow families to explore how they can best support their child's learning. We will continue to support the development of learning materials specifically targeting home learning opportunities.

3.2 Family Learning

The authority recognises the importance of the role of parents in their child's learning.

Children in Scotland spend approximately 15% of their waking hours in school (OECD, 2014). The remaining 85% of children's time is spent at home or in their communities and this presents a potentially significant opportunity for learning. Equipping, supporting and building the capacity of Scotland's parents to maximise children's opportunities for learning is key to raising attainment.

Review of Family Learning 2017¹⁰

Family learning encourages family members to learn together as and within a family, with a focus on intergenerational learning. Family learning activities can also be specifically designed to enable parents to learn how to support their children's learning.

'Family learning is a powerful method of engagement and learning which can foster positive attitudes towards life-long learning, promote socio-economic resilience and challenge educational disadvantage.'

(Scottish Family Learning Network, 2016)

In partnership with colleagues from Barnardo's, Community Learning and Development employees and other agencies, Inverclyde Council will continue to develop and support activities which allow parents to be involved in family learning, including Adult Learning and Literacies learning opportunities and training. Examples of good practices found across the Inverclyde area include:

- Parental involvement in the processes to secure college placements, foundation apprenticeships, personal learning plans and work placements.
- Clear signposting towards the 'Topics in a nutshell' and other appropriate literature in order to help parents understand and support their child's learning. <https://www.npfs.org.uk/downloads/>
- Parental involvement in non-curricular out of school activities to build relationships and inform parents of methods to become involved in their children's learning through programmes such as Families Connect, Newark Tea Club, Family Cooking, Family Learning Clubs
- Continued Parental Involvement in children learning during the holiday period through Family Fun Clubs across various communities in Inverclyde.
- Building parental confidence and self-esteem to encourage them to engage in their children's learning is offered through the Steps to Excellence Programme. This is in the process of being evaluated to assess impact and continued support of the parents who engaged in the programme.
- Encouraging parents to participate in reading to their children for enjoyment, through accessing the pop up libraries that are available in some schools and encouraging parents to join the library and participate in Bookbug activities, including volunteering to deliver Bookbug.

¹⁰ Review of Family Learning, Education Scotland December 2017

- The Inverclyde Community Learning and Development Youth and Adult Literacies teams offer on-site delivery within school settings across Inverclyde. These embed learning opportunities in literacies for young people and parents, helping to maximise the development of skills, outcomes and accreditation opportunities.

'The entitlement to a continuous focus on literacy and numeracy is echoed in the Scottish Government's Literacy Action Plan. This plan provides a strategic commitment to improving standards of literacy across the continuum of learning. It also ensures there is better co-ordination and partnership across Government and its partners, to focus on learner priorities and encourage collaborative working'.

(Adult Literacies in Scotland 2020: Strategic Guidance)

4. Parental representation

In order to encourage and support parental representation, Inverclyde Education Services have identified one of their Quality Improvement Officers (QIO) who has responsibility for parental engagement. This QIO, Norman Greenshields, can be contacted at the education offices on 01475 712850.

In addition, the authority also provides opportunities for representatives of the Parent Council to come together in regular discussions around education developments, operational issues, the spending of Pupil Equity Funding and other community issues. This forum is regarded as the parent consultative group for Inverclyde Education Services.

A parent representative is included on the Inverclyde Council Education Committee, consulting with and providing feedback to the representatives of our Parent Councils. There is an open and transparent process used in the selection of this representative. Information on this can be obtained by contacting Inverclyde's Education Services.

The authority also have representation on the National Parent Forum of Scotland. Parent Councils are also members of Connect (formerly known as the Scottish Parent Teacher Council), providing advice and training to parents across Inverclyde.

This QIO will continue to promote effective parental engagement, encourage the sharing of good practice across the authority, organise parents' events and activities and provide support for the Parent Councils. The QIO will also ensure that ongoing parental surveys are carried out to ensure that parental views are reflected in the development of education policy.

5. Gathering parental views and removing barriers to parental engagement

Previous Inverclyde Parental Strategies have had a primary focus on the involvement of parents in children's learning, school events and the Parent Council.

Throughout this time, Inverclyde schools and the education Quality Improvement Team have sought to gather parental opinion and views in a number of different ways. These have included parent meetings and discussion groups, surveys and questionnaires, parental involvement working groups, Parent Council meetings and parental involvement in Education Scotland school inspections and authority school reviews.

In addition, Inverclyde Education Services follow government guidelines regarding consultation with parents on aspects which have a major impact upon families. In recent years, this has included aspects such as timings of the school day, school catchment areas, placing request processes, school estate rebuilding/refurbishment and the temporary decant of schools.

Improvements in the availability and access to social media and use of online communications systems now present schools and Inverclyde Education Services with the ability to widen and strengthen the consultation processes.

In March 2018, a large scale parental engagement consultation involving parents across all of our educational establishments was carried out. The results of this survey are contained in Appendix 2.

The outcome of this consultation highlighted the following areas for development:

- Parents from different socio economic areas across Inverclyde indicated varying experiences around the encouragement given to be part of the Parent Council and/or Parent Partnership. They also indicated differences on how well informed they were of the work of the Parent Council.
- Parents welcome activities that allow families to learn together. This was more strongly indicated in some schools than in others. Opportunities for schools to share examples of best practice and bring a more consistent experience for parents needs should therefore to be encouraged.
- When asked if schools took on board their views when making changes, parents scored this less highly.

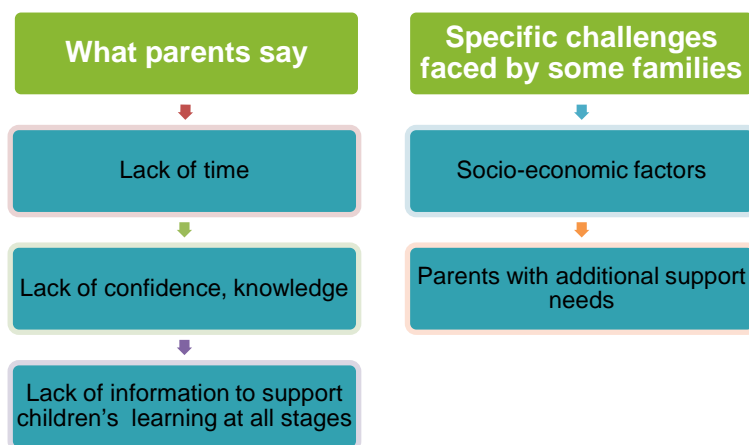
Inverclyde Education Services will support these areas for development by:

- Encouraging school Parent Councils to review their operational structures and communication strategies and to revisit their constitutions. This should be completed in response to future changes that may be made to the Scottish Government Parental Involvement Act and regional governance structures.
- Encouraging Parent Councils to share successful recruitment processes with other Parent Council groups. Inverclyde Education Services and schools will assist with direct communication to parents, through their newsletters, use of social media and the development of new school websites.
- Identifying successful activities which promote family learning, learning together and community learning. These will be shared with all schools and Parent Councils to encourage the extension of these learning opportunities.
- Consulting with school leaders and Parent Councils on the involvement of parents in school improvement planning processes. Advice will then be drafted and shared more widely.
- Continuing to deliver regular training to school staff and parents which support and encourage strengthened parental engagement.
- Inverclyde Community Learning and Development, Adult Learning and Literacies, and the Youth Team will work in partnership with school colleagues, partners, parents and young people to identify needs that will impact on all areas of life, to support achievement and attainment. Learning opportunities will be developed from parent, young person, school and partner feedback. These learning opportunities will be contextualised to maximise upskilling of both parent and young person, leading to increase in self-confidence, self-belief and self-esteem as well as equipping both parents and young people with functional literacies skill sets that support them to make informed decisions, engage with lifelong learning opportunities, that will lead to successful, active and achieving individuals, family members and citizens.

- Inverclyde Council will carry out similar parental evaluations on an annual basis with a summary of the key messages being included in future Standards and Quality reports.

A series of key questions were discussed at a recent conference, involving parents, school leaders, partners and agencies. These questions focused upon the four areas which link to our overall strategy. The feedback is identified in Appendix 2. These are highlighted as aspects for managers of Early Years establishments and schools to consider when seeking to strengthen partnerships with parents and families.

Educational research evidences that parents identify a range of barriers which hinder or discourage their involvement with their child’s school. These encompass a complex mix of issues, some related to their own negative experiences of school, low self-esteem or lack of confidence. Others relate to specific difficulties around the organisation of school activities, such as timing within the day, clashes with work commitments, challenging family circumstances or physical barriers to accessing the activities due to disability issues.



The authority is committed to working with schools and Parent Councils to develop effective strategies which overcome these barriers.

Central to our response is the following aspects:



Information and support

Key to ensuring that parents are engaged with their child's school is effective communication.

Parents require information on:

- School activities and events.
- The curriculum and home learning activities.
- The progress being made by their own child in their learning.

Schools provide this information in many ways, through newsletters, telephone, text and email messaging, the use of school websites and other social media. Inverclyde schools also provide opportunities for parents to be involved in parent workshops, information events and curriculum discussions.

Parents' evenings and pupil reports provide parents the opportunity to ensure that they have a clear understanding of the progress that their child is making in their learning and provide a focus for direct discussions. The authority is committed to ensuring that parents receive, on a regular basis, information which allows them to best support their child's learning. Changes to the format and frequency of the pupil reports are currently being trialled across our schools. These developments have been carried out following consultation with parents. The authority is committed to ensuring that the reports better meet the needs of parents.

Support Strategies

Examples of the strategies which can be used are:

- Providing opportunities for parents to meet with staff at a venue which is accessible to parents with a disability.
- Reviewing and adapting the language used by staff when linking and communicating with parents.
- Offering positive parenting courses.
- Welcoming families into family based activities and events.
- Providing a range of family learning activities during school holiday periods.
- Linking closely with Inverclyde Library Services to provide other family learning opportunities.
- Offering alternative opportunities for parents to meet with school staff in response to specific work commitments.
- Communicating effectively with parents by providing information in a variety of formats.
- Encouraging parental volunteering opportunities.
- Recognising parents' involvement in supporting their child.
- How do parents communicate their involvement in home learning, for the school to recognise this?
- Providing communication with bilingual parents through the development of the Groupcall Messenger system.
- Providing language support wherever possible at parents' evenings for those with language communication difficulties.
- Use community learning and development workers and home school partnership workers to support the development of family engagement and family learning opportunities.
- Work with other agencies to support families with specific issues.
- Providing access for school staff to workshops and courses which support the development of strengthened parental partnerships and which focus on breaking down barriers for parents.

6. Support for parents of early years children

Although current legislation does not necessitate the formation of a Parents' Council for early years' establishments, the authority will continue to ensure that parents are involved in their child's education and learning. We recognise the many examples of strong parental partnerships which have been established in our early years' establishments and will continue to support the home learning strategies being used. The authority gathers parental opinion as part of their establishment reviews. We aim in future to extend parental involvement by including parents of early years' children as part of our Parent Council representatives meeting. In doing so, we will be seeking to change the name and consultative focus of this group.

7. Supporting families with children who have additional needs

Inverclyde Council is committed to supporting and involving parents

Under the Education (Additional Support for Learning) Scotland Act 2009, parents of a child with additional support needs can request assessment of and information about their child's needs and how these are to be met. Inverclyde Council is committed to supporting and involving parents in these processes and schools will ensure that parents receive a response to any such requests.

The authority also acknowledges that parents have a pivotal role if looked after and accommodated children are to have the opportunity to succeed. Inverclyde Council will continue to work together with parents of looked after children, foster carers and others with parental responsibilities to encourage them to support their children's education. As a normal part of these processes, the authority will also ensure that all relevant information relating to the child is provided to both parent and carer unless the care plan specifically states otherwise.

8. Parent Councils

Parents Councils are established in all of the Inverclyde primary and secondary schools.

Following guidance set out in the Scottish Schools Parental Involvement Act 2016, these vary in size and organisational structure but each has established their own constitution. The membership involves representatives of the wider parent forum and in some cases also includes nominated representatives of the wider school community and linked early years' establishments.

A Parent Council will include some or all of the following:

- Supporting the work of the school.
- Involvement in the school improvement and planning processes.
- Gathering and representing parents' views to the head teacher, local authority and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE).
- Promoting contact between the school and their local community.
- Involvement in the appointment of head teachers and depute head teachers.
- Fundraising and organising events.
- Encouraging parental volunteers to come forward to support the work of the school.

Inverclyde Council supports the Parent Councils by providing them with:

- Annual financial support to enable the Parent Council to operate.
- Membership of Connect (formerly known as the Scottish Parent Teacher Council) which in turn provides insurance for the activities of the council.
- Ensuring that Inverclyde has a parental representative on the National Parent Forum of Scotland and that this representative has the opportunity to liaise with Parent Councils.
- Access to additional funding to support cluster activities which build and encourage parental engagement.
- Advice on the operation of the Parent Council and any related matters.
- Regular training events and opportunities to meet with senior officers from Education.
- Advice on how best to communicate with their Parent Forum, including information on the use of social media.
- Opportunities to meet and share good practices.

9. Involvement in the appointment of senior staff in schools

Inverclyde Council fully involve representatives of the Parent Council in the appointment of head teachers and depute head teachers. As part of this process, the Quality Improvement Team provides training for parents in the specific guidance involved in the appointment of Inverclyde Council employees.

The authority also encourages the wider involvement of the parent forum when candidates are being given an opportunity to visit the school prior to interview.

10. Complaints procedure

Inverclyde Council has a clearly defined process for responding to complaints which can be viewed on the council website. <https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/complaint>

Inverclyde Council recognises that there may be occasions when parents wish to indicate concerns about the level and quality of the education service provided. Many of these concerns can be dealt with at a school level and parents are encouraged to contact the school in the first instance to try to overcome the difficulty. In the event of the issue not being resolved or of a parent contacting the council directly, the processes indicated on the website will be followed and the parent will be contacted by an officer of the council.

The nature and frequency of complaints are monitored by the Council and the information gathered is used to improve the service.

11. Equal Opportunities

The authority has policies in place to ensure that no parent is discriminated against on grounds of race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, language, faith or belief or age. Wherever possible, the authority will put in place positive measures to remove any discrimination either direct or indirect, intentional or unintentional.

12. Links to Inverclyde Council Parenting Strategy

Inverclyde Council Education Services is committed to working with partners to strengthen support for families. The 2015 – 2017 Inverclyde Health and Social Care Partnership review and subsequent report on 'Parenting and Family Support Services', identifies a range of universal and targeted supports which have been developed over many years. The authority recognises the importance of these activities continuing to be developed and expanded.

One important aspect in the Early Years and Child Care setting is the development of the '**Five to Thrive**' approaches. Other supportive activities include:

- Bookbug Initiative.
- NHS Play@home Programme.
- Families Connect Programme operating in conjunction with Save the Children.
- Barnardo's – Parenting Programmes.

Appendix 1: Examples of ‘Learning at Home’ Activities

Examples of Learning at Home –from practitioners	
<p>Learning at home / homework activities:</p> <p>Family challenges/challenge cards, adventures with Teddy, board games, shopping, Lego building, STEM challenge, pick and mix homework, sacrament preparation, model making, newsletter, PowerPoints on favourite/interesting things, cake decorating – taking photographs, 100 things to do before you’re 13, transition teddy, trips, woodland walks, numeracy/literacy bags, cook at home bags.</p>	<p>Sharing learning:</p> <p>Nurture groups, Maths recovery lessons (with children), child led workshops, outdoor learning, stay and play, open afternoons, homework fun challenges, primary 1 home learning reading block, class assemblies, careers day, talk time homework, shared learning exercises (Art/IT – practical), open days, home visits, celebrating what parents already do - sharing across the wider school community, directory of parental skills.</p>
<p>Families learning together:</p> <p>Family learning events or homework club, PEEP/ Bookbug, parental reading programme, photography club, outdoor learning, cooking, crafts, work with fathers, Gardening groups, family nurture projects.</p>	<p>Decision making:</p> <p>Reviewed reading policies, review and planner, tracking achievements, personal learning planning, target setting, GIRFEC review meetings.</p>
<p>Helping parents:</p> <p>ESOL, L@H guidance – leaflets, parent packs, workshops, videos, cafes, home-link worker, parent mail/text messages, homework clubs, notes of intended learning.</p>	<p>Communication methods:</p> <p>Show my homework, website, Twitter app, homework app, Glow, RM Easimaths, leaflets, learning logs, e-portfolios, learning letters, learning logs, e-portfolios, learning letters, consultations, social media, e-learning journals.</p>

Examples of Learning at Home – School Inspection Findings	
<p>Learning at home / homework activities:</p> <p>Home learning bags, building on achievements from home, homework tasks with family members, Ted’s adventures at home, home-link initiatives, STEM, travelling dolls, lending library.</p>	<p>Sharing learning:</p> <p>Class reward system, home-school sharing of achievements, child led workshops – informative learning opportunities provided by teachers.</p>
<p>Families learning together:</p> <p>Family homework group, Parent-child homework club.</p>	<p>Decision making:</p> <p>Parents are encouraged to support learning through parents meetings, working with the school to address issues, target setting in user friendly language.</p>
<p>Helping parents:</p> <p>Stay and play sessions, parental workshops, open days, special events, planned support for parents on supporting reading at home, written materials on what child is learning, information booklet on supporting at home.</p>	<p>Communication methods:</p> <p>Online learning journals, daily conversations, interactive online resources, blog, learning profiles, home-school diaries, text messages, noticeboards and photographs.</p>

Appendix 2: Parental Engagement Survey

1. My child likes being at their school

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Agree	90.34%	963
Disagree	5.72%	61
Strongly Disagree	2.25%	24
Don't know	1.69%	18
TOTAL		1,066

2. The school gives me advice on how to support my child's learning at home.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	28.24%	301
Agree	49.44%	527
Disagree	16.42%	175
Strongly Disagree	3.85%	41
Don't know	2.06%	22
TOTAL		1,066

3. I receive helpful information about how my child is doing e.g. informal feedback, reports etc.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	32.93%	351
Agree	47.00%	501
Disagree	15.85%	169
Strongly Disagree	3.85%	41
Don't know	0.38%	4
TOTAL		1,066

4. Staff treat my child fairly and with respect.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	49.44%	527
Agree	39.96%	426
Disagree	5.35%	57
Strongly Disagree	2.16%	23
Don't know	3.10%	33
TOTAL		1,066

5. I understand how my child is assessed.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	27.20%	290
Agree	45.78%	488
Disagree	17.92%	191
Strongly Disagree	3.94%	42
Don't Know	5.16%	55
TOTAL		1,066

9. The school helps my child to feel confident.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	40.81%	435
Agree	42.40%	452
Disagree	8.44%	90
Strongly Disagree	3.47%	37
Don't know	4.88%	52
TOTAL		1,066

10. The information I receive about how my child is doing, reaches me at the right time.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	26.64%	284
Agree	45.40%	484
Disagree	18.48%	197
Strongly Disagree	5.35%	57
Don't know	4.13%	44
TOTAL		1,066

11. My child receives the help they need to do well.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	37.71%	402
Agree	44.37%	473
Disagree	9.94%	106
Strongly Disagree	3.28%	35
Don't know	4.69%	50
TOTAL		1,066

12. The school gives me advice on how to support my child's learning at home.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	25.05%	267
Agree	47.47%	506
Disagree	19.79%	211
Strongly Disagree	4.50%	48
Don't know	3.19%	34
TOTAL		1,066

13. The school organise activities where my child and I can learn together.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	23.08%	246
Agree	39.68%	423
Disagree	24.02%	256
Strongly Disagree	5.63%	60
Don't know	7.60%	81
TOTAL		1,066

14. I feel comfortable approaching the school with questions and suggestions about my child's learning.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	43.06%	459
Agree	43.25%	461
Disagree	7.60%	81
Strongly Disagree	3.94%	42
Don't know	2.16%	23
TOTAL		1,066

15. I feel encouraged to be involved in the work of the Parent Council and/or Parent Partnership.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	28.33%	302
Agree	42.03%	448
Disagree	15.67%	167
Strongly Disagree	5.35%	57
Don't know	8.63%	92
TOTAL		1,066

16. I am kept informed about the work of the Parent Council and/or the Parent Partnership.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	25.33%	270
Agree	46.44%	495
Disagree	18.39%	196
Strongly Disagree	4.32%	46
Don't know	5.53%	59
TOTAL		1,066

17. I feel that the school takes my view into account when making changes.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	17.73%	189
Agree	40.06%	427
Disagree	16.70%	178
Strongly Disagree	6.00%	64
Don't know	19.51%	208
TOTAL		1,066

18. Are you aware of any extra support, in school, available for your family if needed?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly Agree	21.58%	230
Agree	35.83%	382
Disagree	18.20%	194
Strongly Disagree	4.88%	52
Don't know	19.51%	208
TOTAL		1,066

Appendix 3: Feedback form Parental Engagement Conference (May 2018)

Action Planning Workshop – Discussions

The 'Ask the Family' – Parental Consultation provided information around 4 key themes for improvement around engagement, participation, communication and involvement of parents in their children's learning. Based on these 4 key themes were the 4 action planning workshops that took place at the Parental Engagement Strategy Launch event. A range of discussion and development around the questions and the outcomes and actions were;

1. *How do we encourage Parents to become involved in parent council/parent partnerships?*

- **Who is involved and what do they do?**

Participants indicated that it was the same parents that are involved in everything, that always help out and that there might be a large parental group but only a minority actually speak out at meetings.

"(It) feels like the invitation isn't getting to those who could benefit most or bring a new perspective."

- **Who could be involved?**

Suggestions were made around the make-up of the Parent Council with participants indicating that an invitation should go out to all parents and carers and wider representation of the community (including non-teaching staff in Libraries, Housing Association, Church Representative, local voluntary uniformed groups, Barnardo's and CLD)

It was also suggested that the school representatives could include pupils across the school, School SMT, administration support.

There could be co-opted members for specific working groups.

"People who want to help from community not only parents"

- **Challenges to engagement – what prevents some families getting involved in the school / Parent Council?**

Stigma of name – could this be reconsidered as part of any rewriting of the constitution of the Parent Council.

Timing/work commitment/ childcare

Venue/Transport

Not feeling welcome/cliques – Could this be overcome with appropriate training for Parent Councils?

Lack of confidence/Bad experience of school/perception of what to expect
Jargon – Can schools provide parents with the Connect information sheet which explains the terminology being used?

“Some parents may have skills to share in school but not as part of Parent Council”

- **Overcoming barriers and actions**

Could schools provide an advocate for parents with no voice?

School should identify what parents want to know and make no preconceived judgements on this.

Parent Council could be more visible by telling parents what they do (Consider communication)

Specific working groups – which allow parents to be involved in aspects of school improvement where they feel they can contribute or provide skills.

2. *How can we support families in delivering strategies which lead to positive relationship, better learning and better behaviour?*

- Better partnership working with the community, family, school and the Regional Improvement Collaborative.
- Work with the whole family together and with the school cluster but ensure that the engagement and participation is relevant to the families who attend.
- Service providers should know the demographics of the school community and cluster areas, including the primary and secondary school to enable them to work together.
- Create more informal opportunities in and around the school community to engage families and celebrate achievements together.
- Keep families informed and communicate in plain English the Parental Engagement Strategy and the actions and outcomes from the strategy.

3. *How can we empower families to become more aware and informed of developments within the school and within their community?*

- Create a parent friendly ethos (flexibility, open minded and non-judgemental) at the earliest stages within the school/nursery environment.
- Provide space and time for parents to study and learn when children are at school/nursery.
- Help families find the right information that suits their needs and the needs of their children.
- Provide parents with support and direction.
- Create a parent support group where parents with similar needs can learn from each other and be supported by the school community, including accessing child care if required.
- Provide pathways to other services to meet the needs and expectations of parents.

4. *How can we improve communication practice between the school and families?*

- Provide families with information that they need to know about their children at the right time and in advance of parents evenings.
- Provide parents with more information of Curriculum of Excellence with advance warning of what is coming next.
- Provide a quarterly breakdown of subject areas with target statements.
- Communicate using social media especially Facebook, Twitter, also include newsletters and Groupcall Messenger to keep parents informed of events and activities. Allow parents to choose which form of communication works best for them and use various forms to meet their communication needs.

Appendix 4: Examples of effective family learning within Inverclyde schools.

Case Study 1: Aileymill Primary School

Scottish Attainment Challenge Practice Exemplar - Family Learning

Aileymill Primary School, Inverclyde

Parents, as prime educators, have a strong and important role to play in their children's education. Family learning broadly refers to approaches which engage parents/carers and children jointly in learning. This can include family learning opportunities in literacy and numeracy, to support improvement in basic skills. Family learning can provide a range of benefits for parents and children, including increased attainment for children, improved parenting skills and greater parental confidence in supporting their children's learning at home.

The Family Learning approach at Aileymill Primary School has been developed with these principles at its core. Staff are ambitious and aspirational for their children and families. It is intended the club will bring parents and families into the school to learn with their children, its principal focus on supporting children and families in primary 1 and 2. This work has also been extended to older siblings in the school to remove as many barriers as possible for families to attend and engage in the Family Learning Club. Through this type of work, the school plan to equip parents with skills/tools to support their children's learning at home. Ultimately, the school aim to raise attainment and reduce inequity.

As a direct result of The Scottish Attainment Challenge, Aileymill Primary School has a full-time Barnardo's Family Support Worker. She plays a key role in the overall leadership and organisation of the Family Learning Club, whilst maintaining a 'hands on' role in the work of the club. Aileymill Primary School's Family Learning Club has been operational since November 2015. Initially, this club was set up and led by a Newly Qualified Teacher, and is now supported by a permanent Class Teacher and the Family Support Worker.

In the beginning, parents had their own expectations of the family learning club, in that children would bring homework out of bags and teachers would help them to complete tasks. Working collaboratively, families, the school and Barnardo's have co-created a successful model whereby there is a clear structure to each session, and parents engage in and support their children's learning in a relaxed environment. There is a snack area where families enjoy healthy food before beginning home learning activities in the learning zone. When home learning activities are completed, families then move into play-based learning zone, and choose from a range of educational games which have been provided thorough funding from The Scottish Attainment Challenge. A mixture of school staff support the family learning club, contributing to its success.

Early signs of impact/positive progress

Parents and children have the opportunity to develop social and problem-solving skills, through play-based learning, working with highly trained staff, in a relaxed environment.

Barnardo's Family Support Worker and school staff continue to develop effective working relationships with school, whilst improving ways of sharing information to support families in the whole school community context.

There are regular, planned drop-in sessions for families where they can meet with the Barnardo's Family Support Worker to discuss any aspect of support required.

Case Study 2: King's Oak Primary School

Family Learning

King's Oak Primary School, Inverclyde

The Family Hub at King's Oak Primary School has adopted a CLD Social Practice model to learning which supports the development of a stronger, more resilient, supportive, influential and inclusive school community.

The model empowers parents, carers and the wider school community to make positive changes in their lives and their communities, through learning.

The planned outcome for all programmes within the Family Hub is upskilling parents/carers to do for themselves, instead of having it done, or for them. For example, parents have been trained to deliver Bookbug sessions within the Family Hub. The school facilitates the development of peer networks of support

Another key priority for the Family Hub is to become a One Stop Shop for families. The place which provides access/signposting within the school community – For example, Welfare Rights have come into the Family Hub to deliver information sessions on Universal Credit, and the potential impact on families within the school community. In addition to the basic information, all parents have now have a referral pathway for additional personal support.

Examples of what the school are doing

Partnerships & Planning

Attainment Team:

- Working with Barnardo's, CLD & Inverclyde Libraries on all twelve of the Attainment Challenge Families & Communities outcomes.
- Particular focus on identifying and removing barriers to participation & strengthening positive relations within families.
- Meeting regularly with Barnardo's & CLD to plan, evaluate and improve partnership offer.
- Provides an opportunity for spider-web partnerships across the all strands of the each organisation, for example, Community Empowerment Teams and Barnardo's specialist issues/condition support.

Parent Circle:

- Working with the parent circle to ensure all parents/carers have a voice in the programme planning.
- Working with the parent circle to support pupil projects, for example, Safe Parking Campaign.
- King's Oak Primary School parent circle provide opportunities for training and practice sharing across the authority, for example, Scottish Parent Teacher Council (SPTC) training and Curry Networking Night.

SQA & CLD (SQA Centre):

- Working in partnership with Community Learning and Development and the SQA to offer SQA wider achievement accreditation to the whole primary 7 year group. This provides an opportunity to introduce accredited learning in an accessible way.
- This model ensures that on transition to high school, pupils are more aware of SQA qualifications and have had a positive experience of completing them. Therefore, more likely to engage with accredited learning in high school.
- Contextualising the awards/units has provided an opportunity to engage parents/carers in the process as assessors. This results in the discussion extending to the home.
- Awards/units currently being offered dovetail into the awards/units currently being delivered in feeder high school.
- Parents/Carers are now approaching the school asking for more information on accredited learning. Parents are now coming into the Family Hub to work on their own first steps accreditation – with support.

Active Schools:

- Providing opportunities to expand on family health & wellbeing, for example, lower school athletics clubs where the parents get to make low cost, healthy family meals while watching the children participate. They then come together to eat the meal.

- This model provides fitness for the children, skills development for the parents (cooking & budgeting) and opportunities to engage with peers, a focal point for discussion around a family life.
- It also removes financial barriers to participation by providing all resources, ingredients.

Morton FC Community Trust:

- A programme designed in partnership to outreach and engage with male parents, carers, family members. Designed the 'triple FFF' league - The Family Friendly Football League. Each team is made from an equal number of children and adults thus encouraging male engagement in school life. Progression will be to other groups and opportunities within the school.

West College Scotland - P7 Film Club:

- College working with primary 7 pupils to develop media skills. Also providing an opportunity to engage primary 7 pupils in discussion about future college options as well as progression to further education.

Other partnerships include Belville Community Garden, Auchmountain Glen, the Parenting Network Scotland.

Equity, equality, diversity and inclusion.

Save the Children Partnership – Families Connect:

- An eight week early years to primary 1 transition, curriculum based transition programme. This involved working in partnership with the Community Learning and Development ESOL team to support 2 families for whom English wasn't their first language. The ESOL tutor would use the same resources within the ESOL class to re-enforce learning and support parents to engage with peers, and support integration within the school community.

Other examples include:

- School holiday lunch clubs.
- Literacy and numeracy based fun family activities.
- Opportunities for parents/carers peer support.
- Providing free lunches for families during the school holidays.

Wider Community Impact

Safe Parking / Road Safety:

- A campaign was developed in partnership with Strathclyde Police and the local road safety team. As a result, roads round the school are now safer for all.

Child poverty:

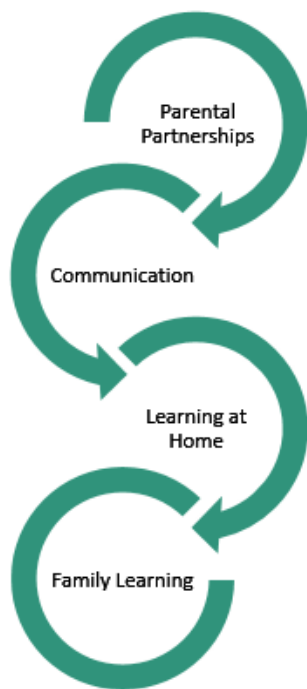
- Launching the King's Oak Primary School branch of the Tail O'The Bank Credit union took place. Primary 7 pupils will be running this branch. Parents, carers and the wider community will all have opportunities to join and save money and develop budgeting skills.
- The clothing bank has been established thus removing the potential stigma associated with charity shops and donations as it is open to all school families.

Parental Engagement 2018 – 2021

A summary guide for parents

What is parental engagement?

Parental engagement focuses on ways in which parents, carers and families support and encourage their children's learning in school and in everyday life. Schools and partners can play a vital role in supporting families to do this effectively and with confidence. Schools involve parents and carers by enabling ongoing, two-way communications between home and school; supporting parents and carers to contribute to school improvement and making decisions that affect the school; and using the skills of parents and carers to enrich the curriculum.



What are our aims?

We aim to seek to ensure that parents are:

- fully informed about their children's education and learning
- welcomed and involved in the life of their child's school
- able to support learning at home and to participate fully in family learning activities
- encouraged to express their views and take part in decision making
- involved in forums for discussion and debate on education policy

How can parents get involved?

Help support school events and activities.

Support the work of the school, either as a volunteer or a contributor....everyone has skills and talents to bring to the school or nursery!

Become a member of the Parent Council.

Share your ideas and views by responding to school surveys and questionnaires.

Contact us

Inverclyde Council Education Services
Wallace Place
Greenock
PA15 1JB
Telephone: 01475712850

'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 involve parents, family members or peers.

Learning at home is not only about curriculum activities or homework tasks. It can also include aspects of play, leisure events, fun activities, sports, trips, cultural and/or volunteering experiences. Indeed activities which provide opportunities for the strengthening of relationships, positive improvements in the child's wellbeing and development of self-confidence ultimately lead to better learning and achievement and so are encouraged.

Family learning encourages family members to learn together. Family learning activities can also be specifically designed to enable parents to learn how to support their children's learning.

Our schools and nurseries offer a wide range of support for family learning, including activities run jointly with our partners in Community Learning and Development, Skills Development Scotland, Inverclyde Library services and Barnardo's.

Contact your child's school for more details of what is happening in your area.



Communicating with Parents

Inverclyde schools and nurseries use a wide variety of methods to ensure that parents are kept up to date with what is happening in their child's learning. Newsletters, emails, Text messaging, Tweets and Facebook postings help ensure that parents know what is happening in school, whilst parents' evenings, meetings, parental workshops and reports feed back important information on the progress your child is making in their learning.

Supporting Parent Partnerships

Parents Councils are established in all of the Inverclyde Primary and Secondary schools. Inverclyde Council supports the operation of these parent groups and seeks to gather their views whenever possible.

Parent Council representatives are involved in the appointment of school senior managers.

Inverclyde Council also has a parent representative on the Education and Communities Committee.

Complaints

Inverclyde Council has a clearly defined process for responding to complaints which can be viewed on the council website.

<https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/complaint>

Want more detail?

A fuller version of our Parental Engagement Strategy 2018 – 2021 is available online at:

<https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/education-and-learning>