



E-NEWS UPDATE
FEBRUARY 2013

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**A QUICK WORD FROM IAIN ELLIS,
CHAIR OF THE NATIONAL PARENT FORUM OF SCOTLAND**

Welcome to our first E-News Update of 2013. It is already proving to be a busy year for the National Parent Forum. We began with a call to schools to make wi-fi available as a learning tool for young people – we have to ensure that we are not holding our young people back from using the internet as an educational opportunity. Read our [press release](#) to find out more.

In response to feedback from our parent focus groups, we are really pleased to be hosting three 'Qualifications Plus' regional events. Along with our partners, we will ensure that your questions on the new Nationals are answered. Please book using the links below. Places are limited but we will share the event reports [on our website](#). If you can't make it, email me your questions to chair@parentforumsotland.org and I will put them to our guests for you.

By late March, you will receive two copies of our 'Let's Talk' newsletter and a poster with our contact details via your school. Please look out for these and display them for all to see. We are continuing to build our communications network so that we can share information and seek your views – please add your name to our database by emailing enquiries@parentforumsotland.org.

Look out also for our 'Nationals in a Nutshell' series of parent-friendly summaries of National coursework and assessments.

Yours in partnership,
Iain Ellis
chair@parentforumsotland.org

THE NATIONAL PARENT FORUM NEWS: WORKING FOR YOU

To book your place at our 'Qualifications Plus' information events on the new Nationals, please [click here](#) or [visit our website](#).

East of Scotland - Fully Booked

Tuesday 5 March 6-9pm, St Thomas of Aquin's High School. Keynote Speaker: Michael Russell MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Education & Lifelong Learning; Scottish Qualifications Authority Presentation.

Email your questions or views to chair@parentforumsotland.org and look out for our event report.

West of Scotland

Wednesday 13 March 6-9pm, Holyrood Secondary School, Glasgow. Keynote Speaker: Dr Alasdair Allan MSP, Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland's Languages; SQA Presentation.

North of Scotland

Wednesday 20 March 6-9pm, Cults Academy, Aberdeen (Keynote Speaker: Dr Alasdair Allan MSP; SQA Presentation).

Events will include roundtable discussions and a question and answer session with a panel of experts. We are hosting these events in partnership with Education Scotland, the Scottish Government and the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

Coming soon: we are preparing a series of 'Nationals in a Nutshell' that will give you a summary of the new National 4 and 5 qualifications and coursework. They will be available on our website from mid March. Information for teachers is already available from Education Scotland and the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

Our campaign for parent and pupil representation on local authority education committees is ongoing. The City of Edinburgh Council is due to appoint its first parent rep shortly as is Perth and Kinross. Parent reps are in place in Inverclyde, West Lothian, Glasgow, Moray, South Ayrshire, North Ayrshire, West Dunbartonshire, Aberdeen and Falkirk. Email your education committee convenor to add your voice to our campaign.

CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE

S3 and moving into the Senior Phase (S4-S6)

This is an important year for many S3 pupils, as they choose their courses for the Senior Phase (S4-S6) leading to the new National Qualifications next year. There is information on the Nationals from the SQA on [the SQA website](#).

Pupils are also currently developing an S3 profile to be completed by

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Contact us

Share your ideas, views & local stories with us by:
Emailing us
Visiting our website
Or by following us on Twitter and Facebook:

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Subscribe and receive this E-News Update as well as other information from us relating to parental involvement in education. Just **email us** with your name, email address, child(ren)'s year group, school and local authority.

June 2013. The profile, which includes a learner's statement, captures a pupil's best achievements in and out of school and is developed by the pupil with support from their teacher. Developing the profile will also support pupils in the transition to the Senior Phase (S4-S6). Further information can be found on the [Education Scotland](#) and [Parentzone](#) websites.



Events

Enquire, the national support agency for families of children with additional support for learning needs, is holding its **annual conference** on Thurs 7 March in Newtown St Boswells with the theme of partnership working. The National Parent Forum's Louise Gough will be speaking and sharing 'A Plea from Parents', our briefing note to professionals who work with families in this field.

GETTING IT RIGHT FOR EVERY CHILD (GIRFEC) AND THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE BILL

You may have heard professionals talking about 'GIRFEC' but what exactly is it? It is a national initiative (also sometimes described as 'an approach') that is being implemented by local authorities in partnership with other public services eg the National Health Service and the police. Like Curriculum for Excellence, children and young people are placed at the heart of services. Professionals are expected to work together to meet the needs of children and young people holistically. There is an explanatory booklet available called [Getting it right for children and families](#), or visit the [website](#) for more information. The Children and Young People Bill, which is due to be introduced to Parliament this year, will enshrine some core principles of GIRFEC in legislation. Our [submission to the consultation](#) on the Bill is available to read.

OPEN TO QUESTION

The National Parent Forum (NPF) looks for answers from:

Dr Alasdair Allan MSP

Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland's Languages

NPF: Education at its best is inspirational. Please describe something in education that has inspired you in the last 12 months.

Dr Allan: Something I thought was really inspiring was visiting a school in Glasgow where they regularly brought parents into the class and gave them a greater involvement in their children's education. I'm very aware that for some parents their own experience of school was not good, and overcoming such barriers are essential if we are going to give a good start to all children at school.

NPF: The National Parent Forum believes that parents and families have so much to offer schools and education. How could family involvement in Curriculum for Excellence be expanded?

Dr Allan: Family involvement is crucial to the success of Curriculum for Excellence. I have seen great examples of schools and parents working together to help individual children, or to get the best for the young people in their community. I hope schools, Parent Councils and families can take the opportunity offered by Curriculum for Excellence to get together and work out the ways that suit them best.

We like this - Good Partnership Practice

- East Renfrewshire Council is appointing a teacher in every school to act as parental involvement co-ordinator, focusing on all aspects of engaging with parents.
- As the first ever National Play Strategy is being developed, Play Rangers are helping P7 children to support and encourage younger pupils' active play in break times.

SEEKING YOUR VIEWS: CONSULTATIONS

The Scottish Parliament European and External Relations Committee has [launched an inquiry](#) into the teaching of foreign languages in primary schools. Views from parents, teachers and pupils are welcome. Funding, the skills base, teaching resources, curriculum capacity, language choices and the role of languages in economic development are to be considered. The closing date for submissions to the Committee is 15 February 2013.

The Scottish Government has set up an Instrumental Music Group, which includes a representative from the National Parent Forum. Please share your views with our rep via enquiries@parentforumsotland.org.

POST SCHOOL OPPORTUNITIES

The Post-16 Education (Scotland) Bill was introduced to the Scottish Parliament in November. It links in with the **Post 16 Education Reform Programme** that is already underway, for example, the regionalisation of colleges and the Scottish Government commitment to creating a place in education or training for all 16-19 year olds. Other project strands are employability, the learner journey, student support and university governance. Tying in with this is the commitment from universities that they will allow equal consideration of candidates who possess the necessary knowledge and skills base, irrespective of what routes they may have taken through the Senior Phase. Universities are starting to

Useful Resource Bank For Learners

Scottish Qualifications Authority website has past papers, exam timetables and course specifications.

The **BBC Scotland Learning Pages** have many useful resources and revision aids.

announce their positions on entry requirements relating to the new qualifications, with Highers remaining the benchmark entry qualifications.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR LEARNING (ASL)

Enable and for Scotland's Disabled Children, support organisations for those with learning and physical disabilities and their families, recently published '[Making the Grade](#)', their report on the extent to which local authorities are meeting their duties under the Additional Support for Learning Act. Key recommendations include more information on the Act to be provided in the early years and primary sectors, reference to the Act in all school handbooks, and the establishing of ASL forums or groups. Please ensure that these are on the agenda in your school.

RAISING ATTAINMENT FOR ALL

[Scottish Schools Online](#) provides useful information for parents on their local schools. 2012 attainment figures saw Scotland's pupils achieve the best exam results since records began. Young people are also leaving school better qualified - Higher pass rates rose from 72.9% in 2006 to 78.9% in 2012. More young people than ever before are in positive post-school destinations (training, employment or further study). However, the attainment gap between the most and least advantaged young people, including young people with learning support needs, continues to remain a key challenge. How is your school tackling this gap? Please share your experiences with us.

HEALTHY EATING IN SCHOOLS: ARE WE MAKING PROGRESS?

The ongoing interest in health promotion and nutrition in schools is reflected in a new webpage on [Engage for Education](#) dedicated to 'School Food'. It includes a discussion area where anyone (pupils, parents, teachers, suppliers) can have their say, a blog section which highlights success stories, a history of school food in Scotland and some key facts. School meal uptake by pupils continues to grow – so are we getting this right? Share your ideas and views on the [Engage for Education](#) webpage.



For Parents & Parent Councils

General

[Parentzone website](#) providing you with the most up to date information about your child's education.

[The National Parent Forum of Scotland](#) creating a voice for Scotland's parents.

[Parents as Partners](#) in their [Children's Learning Toolkit](#)

[Parenting Across Scotland](#) offers information and support for families in Scotland.

Scottish Parent Teacher Council (SPTC)

The SPTC recently entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Educational Institute of Scotland, the trade union which represents 60,000 teaching staff.

Additional Support for Learning

[Enquire](#) is the Scottish Advice Service for Additional Support for Learning.

The [Addressing Dyslexia Toolkit](#) has been prepared to support dyslexic children and young people and contains sections for professionals, parents and young people themselves.

[Modren Scots Grammar: Wirkin Wi Wirds](#), published by [Scottish Language Dictionaries](#), is now available and introduces grammar from different Scots dialects.

Enquiries@parentforumsotland.org [W](#) parentforumsotland.org



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