



A Warm Welcome from Iain Ellis Chair, National Parent Forum of Scotland

Dear Parent/Carer

Welcome to the National Parent Forum of Scotland newsletter – written by parents for parents. Parent council chairs should be already receiving our termly **E News Update** from headteachers – we hope it is circulated widely. It is a useful source of information for all parents at your school. Download the PDF from www.parentforumscotland.org and upload it onto your school or parent council website.

We are launching our 'Let's Talk' campaign with this newsletter and our 'Let's Talk' poster. Effective communication between school and home is essential for the best outcomes for our children. We urge everyone to play their part in building positive, sustained relationships, and in creating good communication channels. See below right and visit our website for helpful examples. Please also ensure that our National Parent Forum poster with its 'Let's Talk' theme is displayed in your school so that all parents can contact us to share their views and ideas. We would be delighted to hear about your experiences of effective school-family links too.

Yours in partnership

Iain Ellis, Chair, National Parent Forum of Scotland
chair@parentforumscotland.org

PS To join our database of parent email addresses, email us at enquiries@parentforumscotland.org with your name, your child(ren)'s year group(s), your school and your local authority. Your information will only be used by the National Parent Forum for parental involvement-related correspondence.

National Parent Forum News

The new National Qualifications

Your Frequently Asked Questions on the new National Qualifications and the Senior Phase (S4-S6) of Curriculum for Excellence are available at www.parentforumscotland.org from late March. You will also find the report from our 'Qualifications Plus' regional events there too. If you have further queries about Nationals, please send them to us at enquiries@parentforumscotland.org.

Creating a parent voice on local authority education committees

Do parents in your area have a say in local decision-making? Our campaign for parental representation is proving successful – eleven education committees now have parent representatives.

Email your education committee convener to add your voice to our campaign.

Nationals in a Nutshell

We are preparing summaries of the new National qualifications for parents/carers over the next few months. The first Nutshells are available at

www.parentforumscotland.org



Let's Talk

The best way to build strong school-family links, which envelop our children, ensuring that they are supported and nurtured, is to build relationships and communicate effectively with one another. What does this mean? We have been gathering examples from across Scotland and we list a few of them below which can be developed jointly by parents and schools to meet local needs.

Become a 'Welcoming School' and develop a 'Communicating with Parents' Plan.

We like.....

- Clear, welcoming school signage
- Visible staff and parent reps with legible name badges at every event, formal or informal, to 'meet and greet' us
- Parent information boards
- Parent areas of websites
- Good news about our children
- Concerns about our children to be raised quickly with an agreed action plan following on
- Weekly email bulletins of school news and achievements
- School news tweeted each week
- Newsletters
- Email addresses of teachers so that concerns and compliments can be shared promptly
- Parent feedback to be sought regularly and acted on, then reported back
- Inviting cluster primary parents and pupils to informal high school events
- Parent drop in sessions on designated days and times
- Dedicated phone lines/voicemails for pupil support staff
- A named school staff contact for each child who will be our first port of call
- Sharing information and positive news with the wider community and partners regularly to build relationships
- Joint meetings of high school and cluster primary parent councils
- Regular communications about what our children are about to learn – we need conversation openers, especially in the early and teenage years!
- Lots of informal opportunities for meeting school staff at celebratory events such as concerts, shows, coffee mornings
- Visiting the school during the normal school day so that we can see what our children's lives look like!
- 'Take your parent to school' days – it is a while since we went to school, so we don't know what it is like nowadays!

Terminology Explained You May Have Heard About...

Positive Destinations

Schools and local authorities are required to support young people into a 'positive destination' (college, work, university, training) when they leave school. This is part of the Scottish Government's Post 16 Education Reform programme which includes employability, the 'learner journey' (progression from college to university), student support, college regionalization, university governance.

Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)

A national initiative, elements of which will be enshrined in legislation in the upcoming Children and Young People Bill, GIRFEC is a way for local authorities, health services and the police to work together consistently to meet the needs of children and young people. It overarches all Scottish Government policies for and about children and young people and like Curriculum for Excellence, has children's wellbeing at its heart.

The 27–30 Month Review

From April, parents of all children aged 27–30 months will be offered a review of their child's social and emotional, language and cognitive development and overall health as part of the Scottish Child Health Programme. Assessments will identify whether additional support is required.

The National Play Strategy

The Strategy is still under ongoing construction but a big push to encourage more active play is already under way with play rangers helping primary pupils to make the most of break times.

The National Parenting Strategy

Published last autumn, it contains 80 commitments including improving information and advice for parents, better dad-friendly services, support for parents of teenagers, help for families affected by imprisonment and a focus on improving outcomes for looked-after children.

Seeking Your Views Let Us Hear your Voice!

National Parent Forum reps sit on a wide variety of national working groups. These are listed on www.parentforumscotland.org and include the Curriculum for Excellence Management Board, the National Numeracy Network, the Outdoor Learning Network, the One Planet Schools Working Group, the General Teaching Council, the Advisory Group for Additional Support for Learning, the Early Years Task Force and The Languages Working Group, among many others. The most recent addition is an Instrumental Music Group. So that we can express your ideas and concerns and those of parents in your school, please share your views on any of these areas with our reps via enquiries@parentforumscotland.org



the National Parent
Forum of Scotland

ENSURING PARENT VOICES ARE HEARD IN SCOTTISH EDUCATION

THE NATIONAL PARENT FORUM OF SCOTLAND

- was set up in 2009 to ensure that parent voices were heard at local and national level
- is comprised of volunteer parent representatives from local authority areas
- has been building partnerships with organisations such as Education Scotland, the Scottish Qualifications Authority, Scottish Government, education departments in councils, Enquire, Children in Scotland and many others
- has representatives on a number of national working groups.

Visit www.parentforumscotland.org for more information about our roles.

Find the National Parent Forum of Scotland
and talk to us:

www.parentforumscotland.org
enquiries@parentforumscotland.org
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NATIONAL PARENT FORUM OF SCOTLAND CONFERENCE

Sat 5 October 2013
Bishopbriggs Academy
East Dunbartonshire

Dates for your Diary

The fourth National Parent Forum of Scotland Conference will take place on Sat 5 October 2013 at Bishopbriggs Academy in East Dunbartonshire. A range of workshops and keynote speakers will be announced nearer the time. Please register your interest by emailing enquiries@parentforumscotland.org

Open to Question


The National Parent Forum  looks for answers from:

Dr Alasdair Allan

Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland's Languages

 Education at its best is inspirational. Please describe something in education that has inspired you recently.

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.

 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.

