

**Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) (Scotland) Act 2006 – A Summary for Parents**

The Scottish Government and local authorities have a duty to promote parental involvement in education. To help achieve this aim, the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act introduced ‘Parent Councils’, replacing the previous model of School Boards. Parent Councils are a means for parents to get involved in their child’s school and have their say about education matters. They provide a key channel for schools, parents and local authorities to communicate with each other and for parents to find out more about what they can do to support their child’s learning.

**What is a Parent Council?**

* Parents and carers of all pupils at a school are known as the ‘Parent Forum’. The Parent Forum decides if they want a Parent Council, and if so what type of Council they would like. In some schools the Parent Council is known by a different name, such as Parent Partnership. In some cases two or more schools share a Parent Council – this is called a Combined Parent Council.
* Parent Councils are a way for parents and carers to get involved in the running of the school and have their say about their child’s education. Parent Councils provide support and information so that all parents and carers can take part and have their views heard by the school and the local authority.
* Parent Councils are made up of members of the Parent Forum, but can choose to bring in other parents who don’t currently have children at the school if they think their involvement would be helpful (‘co-opted parents’).

**What are the key things Parent Councils should know?**

* Parent Councils can expect to influence decisions, to be listened to and be taken seriously. For example, they should be involved in developing and supporting the school’s improvement plan, and should also take part in the recruitment process for appointing the head and deputy head teacher of the school.
* Parent Councils have the right to receive information and advice on issues that affect pupils’ education, and they can request this information from the school and from the local authority.
* Parent Councils have the right to receive support from the local authority – this can includes receiving funding to enable the council to carry out its duties, and can also include the provision of services and accommodation (e.g. email access, meeting rooms, secretarial support).

**What are the key things Parent Councils should do?**

* Parent Councils should encourage and support parents to get involved in the school, and provide opportunities for parents to express their views.
* Parent Councils support the work of the school in a variety of ways. For example, they can:
	+ Consider ways parents can get involved in children’s learning to improve their levels of achievement
	+ Help build positive relations between parents and school staff
	+ Support the school in consulting with the wider parent forum on decisions about the school
	+ Help with school events and work with the staff to make sure that these events are enjoyable, encourage parental participation and suit the needs of parents.
* Parent Councils answer to the Parent Forum and they should make sure that they keep all parents and carers up to date about the work they’re doing.
* Parent Councils should encourage communication between the school, parents, pupils, nurseries and the wider community.

**How can you find out more about your school’s Parent Council?**

* Contact your child’s school for more information. In many cases, details about getting in touch with the Parent Council are available on the school’s website.

**More information**

Link to the Act:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2006/8/contents>

Link to the Guidance:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/09/08094112/5>

Link to Parent Council Toolkit – contains practical step-by-step advice for Parent Councils:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/147410/0038822.pdf>