



the National Parent Forum of Scotland

Statutory Guidance: Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000

Do you have any comments on the definition of “decisions of a strategic nature”

We are pleased to see examples of the strategic decisions and wish to emphasise that the parent forum (as widely as possible) should be involved in this decision making (with relevant training provided if required). We feel it is important that the local authorities are flexible enough to be able to use local data to tailor decisions to the schools and individuals within.

Do you have any comments on the definition of “due regard”?

The definition seems clear, however, as stated by our colleagues in Children in Scotland we question the wording of “the parents of such pupils as the authority thinks appropriate”: and request this is rewritten to be more inclusive of reaching as much of the parent forum as possible.

There is currently considerable variation across the country with regards to the support from schools and the local authorities to actively involve and inform parents. Guidance on how parents and pupils should be consulted would be helpful.

Do you have any comments on the definition of “inequalities of outcome”?

We refer to our colleagues in Children in Scotland’s response to the Education and Culture Committee’s call for views on the Education (Scotland) Bill at Stage One, where they highlighted that ‘inequalities of outcome’ was neither adequately defined nor set against any meaningful or measurable benchmarks.

The National Parent Forum of Scotland are currently conducting a review of the Review of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006, and hope that the recommendations to Ministers to be published early 2017 will be considered as the key factors in unequal educational attainment are heavily influenced by early experience, the home environment and parental involvement.

We would remind Government that schools alone cannot close the equity gap and should not be treated as such.

Do you have any comments on the definition of “socio-economic disadvantage”?

We are pleased that it is noted that 'not all children and young people who experience poverty live in disadvantaged communities' and hope that reference will be made to the Child Poverty Bill. We also seek to remind government to bear in mind the difference between urban and rural poverty.

The legislation is intentionally silent on how education authorities should report on the fulfilment of their duties. The draft statutory guidance reflects the legislative position and leaves it open to education authorities to determine how best to report against their duties. Do you agree that education authorities should determine how they report? Would you find some form of template helpful?

We feel that Scottish Government must delineate their expectations in regards to reporting and there should be a degree of measurability when dealing with this issue. Using common targets will allow the most successful Local Authorities to be identified and offer opportunities to share this best practice. We welcome the inclusion of 'The plans must be underpinned by consultation with pupils and Parent Council', p40, but would again emphasise that the local authority must aim to consult effectively with the parent forum. However, we do wish to strongly emphasise that we do not believe that local authorities should publish school level data and statistics, to avoid the publication of 'league tables' and we would also seek to avoid meaningless reports which simply tick a box for government. We would seek for there to be steps in place to ensure that reporting does not cause further bureaucracy for school leaders.

Do you have any other comments about the draft statutory guidance?

We appreciate that the guidance is not aimed at parents but as parents are impacted by the legislation we feel it is important their views are represented. In addition the guidance must take into account the value of out-with school learning esp. in relation to attainment. LEAs and schools should encourage wider learning and reflect this within their strategies.