

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



EDUCATION EXECUTIVE

SCOTTISH SCHOOLS (PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT) ACT 2006 – UPDATED STATUTORY GUIDANCE CONSULTATION

REPORT BY HEAD OF EDUCATION (CURRICULUM, QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE)

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To invite the Education Executive to consider the Scottish Government consultation on the updated draft of the statutory guidance of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006, and approve the draft response to the consultation.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Education Executive considers the updated draft of the statutory guidance of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 consultation and approves the draft response to the consultation, which is intended for submission to the Scottish Government by the extended deadline of 30 June 2020.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I	Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; providing equality of opportunities; developing employees; making best use of our resources; working in partnership
II	Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	<p>Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 requires local authorities to promote the involvement of parents in school education, and to provide Parent Councils and all parents with advice and information.</p> <p>The 2018 "Learning Together" national action plan sets out what is meant by parental involvement, parental engagement, family learning and learning at home.</p> <p>West Lothian Parental Involvement and Engagement Framework 2018-2021 sets out the council's expectations in meeting national requirements.</p>
III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None.

IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	None.
V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed.
VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	<p>The council has a Parental Involvement Officer involved in leading the approach to parental involvement and engagement at local level.</p> <p>The Council makes resources available through school budgets to support the operation of Parent Councils, and pays for a corporate membership of Connect, the national body for Parent Councils to ensure that all Parent Councils can benefit from insurance, support, advice and guidance.</p>
VII	Consideration at PDSP	<p>Planned for 31 March 2020 but could not take place due to national Regulations and restrictions agreed by the Council to limit spread of COVID 19.</p> <p>Members of PDSP were subsequently consulted, in line with the procedure put in place by the Council. Two comments were received, both of which supported the content of the draft response.</p>
VIII	Other consultations	<p>Education professionals with experience of Parent Councils.</p> <p>West Lothian Parent Council Forum.</p>

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D1 Introduction

The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 sets out the role parents, schools and education authorities must play in ensuring all parents are fully involved and engaged in their children's learning and in the life and work of schools.

The statutory guidance is being updated following an independent review of the Act by the National Parent Forum of Scotland. The Scottish Government made a commitment to update, strengthen and modernise the guidance as part of its joint Scottish Government and Convention of Scottish Local Authorities "Learning Together" Action Plan (2018-2021).

D2 Scottish Government's Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 Draft Statutory Guidance Consultation

The Scottish Government launched a consultation on *the Parental Involvement Act - Draft Statutory Guidance* on 24 January 2020. The consultation was planned to be open for responses for a total of 14 weeks, closing on 30 April 2020. This deadline

has been extended to 30 June 2020.

The draft amended guidance takes account of various suggestions from a working group which involved officials and representatives from Scottish Government, Education Scotland, the National Parent Forum of Scotland (NPFS), Connect, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), the Association of Directors of Education (ADES), the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) and Families Need Fathers (FNF).

There are two key aims in re-drafting the guidance. The first aim is to modernise the guidance, taking account of the changes in practice and wider legislation that have occurred since 2007. The second aim is to strengthen the guidance whilst recognising that the duties and powers in primary statute remain unchanged.

The updated guidance will ensure that parental involvement and engagement, and the legal duties that underpin this important aspect in education, will be given due prominence and recognition as part of wider aims to develop an empowered education system.

The Scottish Government invites views from parental organisations, head teachers, local authorities, third sector organisations, professional bodies, members of the public and any other organisation or individual with an interest.

The consultation has been shared with all West Lothian schools and Parent Councils for their consideration.

A draft response is attached as an appendix to this report.

E. CONCLUSION

The revised statutory guidance builds on foundations provided by the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006.

A specific section of the updated draft statutory guidance explains the duties the Act places on Education Authorities and the responsibilities they have.

West Lothian Council's Parental and Involvement Framework, approved at Education Executive in May 2019, already takes account of national expectations and ensures that our arrangements for parental involvement reflect the requirements of the Act.

West Lothian Council Education Services have prepared a draft response to the consultation.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Parental Involvement Act Draft Statutory Guidance consultation
<https://consult.gov.scot/learning-directorate/parental-involvement-act/>

Learning together: national action plan on parental involvement, engagement, family learning and learning at home 2018 – 2021
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/learning-together-scotlands-national-action-plan-parental-involvement-parental-engagement/>

- Appendix 1: Draft response from West Lothian Council Education Services

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Date of meeting: 23 June 2020

Parental Involvement Act - Statutory Guidance

DRAFT RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION

1a. Alongside the statutory guidance document, we have provided key principles which we think should underpin practice and approach. Do you agree that key principles should be provided within the final approved version of the guidance?

☒ Yes

1b. We are interested in your thoughts on the principles. Please provide your comments below:

* Principles and explanations are clear overall

* Empowerment:

- There is also a degree of parental responsibility involved in being an empowered parent.

2. We want the guidance to be clear - to be easy to understand and written in plain English. How clear did you find the guidance?

☒ Very clear

3. We want the guidance to be comprehensive. In other words, we want it to explain all of the relevant legal duties and powers and to expand on what those duties and powers should mean in practice. Did you think that the guidance covered all of the information that should be covered?

☐ ☒ It covers most of what is needed

4a. An important task for the guidance is to explain what is meant by the terms parental involvement and parental engagement. Do you think that the guidance explain the terms parental involvement and parental engagement in an accurate way?

☒ Yes

4b. Do you have any comments about the way that we have defined the key terms parental involvement and engagement?

The guidance refers consistently to parental involvement followed by parental engagement.

It would make sense to have the parental involvement definition first in the jargon buster section followed by parental engagement.

We have sought to modernise and strengthen the guidance. **Please provide your comments on each section of the guidance and on the guidance document as a whole.**

Section A – Introduction

- Page 3 Paragraph 13
The definition should include all children to ensure a more unified experience for parents.
- Jargon Buster boxes interrupt the flow of the document and would be better located at the back of the document.

Section B – Involving and Engaging Parents: what does it mean and why is it important?

- Page 7 - *Educators and support staff can benefit from developing positive partnerships with parents by involving them in all decisions affecting their children's education and learning.*

It is the responsibility of both the school and the parent(s) to foster relationships.

- Page 8 /9 - Parental rights

It should also refer to parent responsibility in recognising school as neutral and with a primary focus as a safe space for the child.

Section C – Guidance for education authorities

- Page 13 - Early Learning and Childcare settings (Section 10)

Introduce requirement for funded partner providers to adopt parental involvement and engagement framework and the requirements for a more unified approach for parents.

- Page 14 - (Section 14)

Be clear that this refers to grandparents with parental responsibilities only.

- Page 18 (Section 31)

Add in that schools must remain neutral and are not able to take sides between parents.

- Page 22 (Section 41) and Page 24 (Section 48)

Social media - It would be useful to remind the need to follow child protection procedures and ensure privacy in relation to the use of social media.

- Page 28 (Section 61)

The local authority is not responsible for the actions of the Parent Council.

Section D – Guidance for Parent Councils

- Page 41 (Section 30)

Further definition / clarity required here. Expand this section to make it clear for all.

Annex A – Links to wider legislation and policies

- Very helpful overview of relevant legislation and policies.
- Hyperlinks would allow ease of access and be user friendly for electronic use of the revised guidance.

The guidance as a whole

- Clear outline of the requirements for schools, local authorities, head teachers and parent councils.
- Layout allows for clear reading and scanning for information.
- Jargon busters perhaps more useful for parents than professionals. Would be of more use as a separate section to the document as they tend to interrupt the flow of the guidance.

The statutory guidance document will be a lengthy document and deals with technical matters. We think that it would be helpful to develop shorter summaries of key duties and powers with more practical advice. Do you think that additional summary guidance products would be helpful?

- ☒ Yes, additional summary guidance products would be very helpful

Do you have any suggestions on the type of additional support materials or additional activity to accompany the new guidance?

- Frequently asked questions
- A visual representation / sketch note to engage parents in the new guidance
- A presentation to support training for practitioners in schools

Overall, do you think that the revised guidance is helpful?

- ☒ Very helpful