

To summarise:

Parent Councils are a new opportunity to be seized, rather than a guarantee. They are there for you as parents to make them work, in whatever way you want, to help you make your views clear on decisions which are being taken, on matters which worry or concern you, and so on. The main benefits are that:

- ▶ the structure and size of the new Councils will be totally parent-friendly – decided entirely by you, to suit your needs and wishes, and nobody else's
- ▶ they will focus on the issues of most concern and most importance to you
- ▶ as statutory bodies they will have a loud voice, and a voice that will be heard and cannot be ignored
- ▶ involving more of you in the life of the school will surely help understanding between parents and the school.

In short, they should deliver what you as parents have long said that you want.

Further copies of this document are available, on request, in audio and large print formats and in community languages, please contact:

اس دستاویز کی مزید کاپیاں آڈیو کیسیٹ پر اور بڑے حروف کی چھپائی میں اور کمپوٹی کی زبانوں میں طلب کیے جانے پر دستیاب ہیں، برائے مہربانی اس پتے پر رابطہ کریں:

এই ডকুমেন্ট-এর (দলিল) অভিন্ন কপি, অডিও এবং বড়ো ছাপার অক্ষর আকারে এবং সম্প্রদায়ের ভাষায় অনুরোধের মাধ্যমে পাওয়া যাবে, অনুগ্রহ করে যোগাযোগ করুন:

Gheibhear lethbhreacan a bharrachd ann an cruth ris an èistear, ann an clò mòr agus ann an cànan coimhearsnachd. Cuir fios gu:

इस दस्तावेज़/कागज़ात की और प्रतियाँ, माँगे जाने पर, ऑडियो टैप पर और बड़े अक्षरों में तथा कम्प्यूनिटी भाषाओं में मिल सकती हैं, कृपया संपर्क करें:

ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼/ਕਾਗਜ਼ਾਤ ਦੀਆਂ ਹੋਰ ਕਾਪੀਆਂ, ਮੰਗੇ ਜਾਣ 'ਤੇ, ਆਡੀਓ ਟੇਪ ਉੱਪਰ ਅਤੇ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਅਤੇ ਕੰਪਿਊਨਿਟੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਮਿਲ ਸਕਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ, ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ:

此文件有更多備份，如果需要，語音版本和大字體版本及少數種族語言版本也可提供，請聯絡：

يمكن أن تطلب النسخ الأخرى من هذا المستند كالتسجيل الصوتي والخط المكبر ونسخ بلغات أخرى، يرجى الإتصال على:

parentalinvolvementbill@scotland.gsi.gov.uk or phone 0131-244 4485

Asitron B43523 9/05

new parent councils

What's in it for me as a parent?



CHOICE

INVOLVED

REPRESENTED

CONTRIBUTING



As the new Parental Involvement Bill is launched, you will wonder what's in it for you. Will a different type of board or council to represent your view really make a difference? How well will it answer your wishes and needs?

What parents want?

Ever since they were first asked, parents have made clear what they want. They have never wanted to run schools, but have always wanted good opportunities to express their views, to raise the issues that are important to them, to be taken seriously, to get a proper response to their requests and questions, and understand better what goes on at school. In a nutshell, that is what the Bill and the new system of Parent Councils offers.

Accessibility – the opportunity to get more involved

The new Parent Councils will be parent-friendly, shaped and appointed by parents locally in each school. And you can expect to be supported and helped to decide on exactly what sort of a Parent Council you would like to see in your school. For instance, in a very small primary school the Council could indeed comprise all the parents, if that's what they wish; in a rural west coast secondary where some parents may live a ferry-ride away, the Council could meet in a way which accommodates some members via an internet or video link; in a big urban secondary the Council could in effect comprise a series of sub-committees at year group level.

The new Councils can be set up and meet in ways which take account of different working patterns in different areas and reflecting the fact that parents' "spare" time is always precious and limited – in other words to best suit parents' wishes, availability and circumstances.

Focus on parents' own issues, concerns and priorities

Having established a new Parent Council, the next step will be to focus on issues which really matter to the parent. Top of the list in one school might be an outbreak of head lice, in another, whether to continue to enter S3 pupils for Standard Grade, or the pros and cons of school uniform, or parking at the school gates, the state of the toilets and so on. In all cases it will be parents rather than anyone else who will set the Parent Council's agenda.

Right to information

The new Parent Councils will have a right to information so, as at present, parents will have a right to know about matters such as school funding and how funds are spent. If, for instance a Parent Council does some fundraising of its own, parents will have a good idea of where the spending gaps are and how they might best use any monies raised.

Being taken seriously

The rights of the new Parent Councils are set out in the Bill. The school and the local authority must listen to what parents say and give a proper response. Sometimes information may be enough, sometimes it may mean a change in policy and sometimes it may be a careful explanation as to why the parents' requests cannot on this occasion be granted. In all cases parents can expect to influence decisions, to be listened to and be taken seriously.

Getting to know the school

Parents who currently get involved in the school quickly find that one of the big benefits is that they have a much better understanding of how the school works and what the teachers do. With the opportunity for more parents to get involved through the new, more flexible Parent Councils, more parents will experience these benefits.

The real challenges

Of course nothing works smoothly all the time. As individual parents you will still have problems that you will need to take directly to the school – indeed the Bill strengthens your right to do just that. Not all the parents in a school will think the same about every issue, so different groups of parents may want conflicting things or disagree with a school policy. The new Parent Councils, like so much else, will depend on people working together in a spirit of goodwill, on parents taking advantage of the new opportunities and encouragement to get more involved in the school and with the teachers.