

You could ask for ASL to be a regular item on the agenda at PC meetings; have an ASL rep on the Parent Council or even ask to form a sub-committee.

A group of parents are very concerned about the traffic and parking around our school. Is this something that the Parent Council can look at on our behalf?

Absolutely! The Parent Council is there to represent your views and you should ask them to do what they can to help. For example, they could ask the local police officer to come and talk to the Parent Council; lobby the local council to make improvements to signage around the school or; involve the children and/or the council's road safety officer.

My child has just started high school and the Parent Council seems to run in a completely different way to the one in his primary school; is this right?

Yes. The main aim of the Parental Involvement Act was to make it easier for more parents to get involved in the life of the school and make the organisation of groups like Parent Councils less formal and less prescriptive. It is up to the Parent Forum in each school to decide what best suits their school and the only three things that Parent Councils must remember is that:

- The chair must always be a parent with a child at the school
- The headteacher has a right and a duty to attend Parent Council meetings
- In denominational schools the local church has the right to nominate a representative to the Parent Council.

I have recently divorced and do not live with my children. I would still like to join the Parent Council; is this possible?

Yes as you are still a parent with a child at the school. In fact, "parents" can include anyone with a parenting role with regards to a child such as foster or adoptive parents and kinship carers. The Parent Council also has a responsibility to be mindful of any children who are in care.

We would like to know

Did you use this leaflet?
Did you find it helpful?
Please give us your comments

Other leaflets available

1. What is a PTA/PA?
2. Constitutions Made Easy
3. A Model Constitution
4. Money Matters
5. Office Bearers & Their Roles
6. Campaigning

About SPTC

You may be interested to know that we offer our members a range of benefits including our membership insurance scheme which covers:

- Public Liability
- Personal Accident
- Fidelity Guarantee
- Employer's Liability
- Extended Public Liability for hired-in entertainers
- All-Risks (for equipment purchased by the PTA/Parent Council)
- Short-term all-risks insurance for special events

You are welcome to use information from this leaflet however, if you do we ask that you acknowledge SPTC.

January 2014

SPTC, Mansfield Traquair Centre, 15 Mansfield Place, Edinburgh, EH3 6BB
Tel: 0131 474 6199

Email: sptc@sptc.info Website: www.sptc.info

The Scottish Parent Teacher Council is an independent voice of parents and a national organisation. It is a Company Limited by Guarantee. Company No. SC151086, Scottish Charity No. SC019168



Promoting Partnership
in Scottish Education

A User's Guide to a Parent Council



Although Parent Councils have been around for a few years, some parents – especially those whose children have recently started school – may be unaware of what the Parent Council is and what it can do for them. Hopefully this leaflet will help to answer some of the questions.

Do we have to have a Parent Council?

It is up to the Parent Forum whether they want a Parent Council. A Parent Forum is made up of all the parents with a child at the school so all parents are automatically members. The Parent Forum is the body who should appoint the Parent Council to run matters on its behalf, and they also have the right to decide on their constitution; this should be done at an Annual General Meeting or EGM. Of course, the Parent Forum may decide that they do not wish to have a Parent Council.

Does every school have a Parent Council?

Although the majority of schools in Scotland do have a Parent Council, there are still a few which don't. Some groups have decided to use another name for their Parent Council and there is nothing to stop you doing this. We have heard of Parent Partnerships, School Associations and Friends of...

What are the main responsibilities of the PC to the Parent Forum?

The Parent Forum (all parents at the school) can expect the following from the Parent Council:

- To receive information about the PC and its activities
- To be invited to be involved in PC activities, such as subcommittees
- To be asked for their opinion by the PC on issues relating to the school community
- To have all views represented in an equal and fair way
- To participate in how the PC is organised and how it operates, for example making changes to the

constitution

What are the main duties of the Parent Council?

The first duty of a Parent Council is to represent the views of the parents at the school. The duties of a Parent Council are not laid down in legislation so it is up to each Parent Forum to decide what they want their PC to do. This should be detailed in the constitution. There are many things a Parent Council could get involved in, including:

- Supporting the work of the school, for example, by advising the school on its policies
- Being involved in the appointment of senior staff
- Organising social and fundraising events
- Promoting contact between *all* parents and the rest of the school community
- Discussing anything that's of interest to parents

Can anyone become a member of the PC?

Any parent with a child at the school may become a member of the Parent Council. Parents must always be in the majority and the Chair must always be a parent with a child at the school. The headteacher has a right and a duty to attend PC meetings but is not automatically a member. It is up to the Parent Forum to decide if there should be other members on the PC and this should be detailed in the constitution, for example, co-opted members.

How can I get to know what my PC is doing?

If your Parent Council is communicating well with the Parent Forum then you should expect to get information on its activities via newsletters, the school or the PC website, information on the school noticeboard, etc. If this information is not easily available then why not ask the Parent Council to tell you why and how they are going to improve their methods of

communications.

Can I ask to see the minutes and accounts from my PC?

Yes. Remember, the Parent Council is responsible to the Parent Forum and these documents should always be open to parents at the school.

I am not a member of the Parent Council, can I still attend their meetings?

There is no reason why you shouldn't. Parent Council meetings should be public meetings and open to all members of the Parent Forum. Of course, it is up to the Chair how the meeting is conducted and you may have to ask them if you wish to address the Parent Council. If you have an issue that you wish to bring to the PC, then it is good practice to let the Chair or other PC members know about this in advance.

I'm not happy with the work of the PC; what can I do?

The first step would be to ask to see the constitution and check whether they are complying with this. The next course of action would be to put your comments on paper and write to the PC Chair. If you are still unhappy then you could organise a group of the Parent Forum to ask the Parent Council for an answer/comment and how they are going to address the issues raised.

My child is being bullied; can I ask the PC to help me with this?

It is not the role of a Parent Council to tackle individual issues however, this would be an opportunity for them to look at the whole school bullying policy - has it been updated recently? How is it implemented? - and then make recommendations to the school.

My child has Additional Support Needs; what can the Parent Council do for me?

Although the Parent Council cannot discuss individual issues they can raise awareness of ASL and, for instance ask the school to organise information sessions for parents to get advice and information.