

The Highland Council

Agenda Item	6.
Report No	EDU/30/25

Committee: Education

Date: 19 November 2025

Report Title: Parental Involvement and Engagement Strategy

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive - People

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 The report includes the 2025 - 2028 Parental Involvement and Engagement Strategy which has a renewed focus and commitment to strengthening the partnership between families and educational settings across Highlands. The Strategy is built on the principles of equity, inclusion, and collaboration and is underpinned by the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006. The Parental Involvement and Engagement Strategy aligns with broader frameworks such as the National Improvement Framework and the Community Empowerment Act.
- 1.2 At its core, the strategy recognises that parents and carers are key partners in children's learning. The reviewed strategy and plan detail the actions that will enable the active involvement of parents in their child's education, provide accessible advice and information, and support the establishment and operation of parent councils. These strategies will also be inclusive of care-experienced children and families, promote equal opportunities, and integrate with wider services and agencies.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to:
- i. Note the content of the report;
 - ii. Approve the reviewed Parental Involvement and Engagement Strategy 2025-2028 (**Appendix 2**); and
 - iii. Note that action to implement the Parental Involvement and Engagement Strategy will form part of the annual Education Learning Improvement/National Improvement Framework (NIF) Plan.

3. Implications

- 3.1 Resource - The PIE Strategy and Plan will be delivered within existing Education & Learning budgets.
- 3.2 Legal - This strategy is a requirement of The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006. It is aligned with Education Scotland's Empowerment Agenda (2019), How

Good is Our School 4 (HGIOS4) and How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare (HGIOELC). It is in line with the legislative requirements of the Children and Young People's (Scotland) Act, 2014.

- 3.3 Risk; Gaelic; Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people) There are no risks or implications arising as a direct consequence of this report.

4. Impacts

- 4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.

- 4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, Members must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.

4.3 Integrated Impact Assessment - Summary

- 4.3.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment screening was undertaken on 13 October 2025. The conclusions have been subject to the relevant Manager Review and Approval.

- 4.3.2 The Screening process has concluded that there are a number of positive impacts arising from the focus on raising standards in schools through the Education & Learning Improvement Plan. There is therefore no requirement to undertake a full impact assessment. The outcomes of the screening are provided below, and Members are asked to consider the summary in **Appendix 1** to support the decision-making process.

4.3.3 Impact Assessment Area	Conclusion of Screening/Full Assessment
Equality	- Children and Young People – <i>Positive</i> - Children affected by disability – <i>Positive</i> - Older adults – <i>No impact</i>
Socio-economic	<i>Positive</i>
Human Rights	<i>Positive</i>
Children's Rights and Well-being	<i>Positive</i>
Island and Mainland Rural	<i>No impact</i>
Climate Change	<i>No impact</i>
Data Rights	<i>No impact</i>

5. Background

- 5.1 In May 2024 the Education Committee approved the draft Parental Engagement Strategy which was to be reviewed in May 2025. The new management structure within Education & Learning has enabled a refreshed focus on the cluster support for Parental Involvement and Engagement. The revised action plan highlights the

connections between the Raising Attainment and Achievement Strategy and Our Future Highland plan.

- 5.2 The Our Future Highland plan (2024–2027) sets out Highland Council’s strategic vision for transforming services and improving outcomes across communities. This includes strengthening family support and enhancing parental engagement as part of a commitment to community wellbeing. Parental engagement is embedded in the Council’s approach to whole-family wellbeing, recognising that children thrive when their families are supported and involved. Improved joint working should be realised through the reviewed plans.
- 5.3 The Highland Council’s Raising Attainment and Achievement Strategy (RAAS) 2025–2028 is designed to improve outcomes for all children and young people by focusing on leadership, learning and teaching, curriculum development, and data-informed decision-making. A key theme within this strategy is the integration of parental involvement and engagement, recognising that families play a vital role in supporting learning and achievement.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1 By embedding the Parental Involvement and Engagement Strategy within the RAAS, Highland Council aims to create a holistic, whole-system approach to education. This means tracking the learning journey from early years through to post-school destinations, with a particular focus on children facing disadvantage or barriers to learning. The strategy acknowledges that when parents are actively involved and engaged — whether through learning at home, participating in school life, or contributing to decision-making — young people are more likely to succeed academically and socially.
- 6.2 Officers, Headteachers, Parent Councils and partners will work in collaboration to oversee year one of the revised action plan in their cluster areas and evaluate progress throughout the session. Evaluation processes will support the refinement of year 2 of the action plan.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive - People

Date: 31 October 2025

Author: Bernadette Scott, Chief Officer Education (Primary & Early Years)

Background Papers: n/a

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Integrated Impact Assessment
Appendix 2 – Parental Involvement and Engagement Strategy

The Integrated Impact Assessment screening undertaken in respect of the Parental Involvement and Engagement Strategy and Plan 2025 – 2028 highlights the following positive impacts on children and young people through greater involvement and engagement of parents and carers in their education and learning.

- Focused work involving children, young people and parents on improving attendance and the information available to parents to support children and young people learning at school will impact positively on poverty and socioeconomic factors by improving outcomes and increasing prospects and opportunities.
- Children and Young People's right to an Education will be further enhanced by a wider range of activities and opportunities for parents and carers to engage with the school with regard to their child or young person's learning, development and achievement.
- Partnership working with parents, carers and partners to strengthen the family learning will be utilised as an early intervention and prevention approach to reach the most disadvantaged communities. This will support work towards close the poverty related attainment gap.

Highland Council Education and Learning

Parental Involvement and Engagement Strategy

2025-2028



Date:	July 2025
Lead Officer:	Tina Stones
Designation:	
Next review:	April 2028

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Vision and Aims

The overall aim of the Highland Council Parental Engagement Strategy is to ensure that all parents and carers are encouraged and supported to engage as partners in their children's learning and to become involved in the life of the school. The strategy also ensures that it continues to build on good practice and create further opportunities for our parent/carers and schools to work together in the best interests of children and young people. The strategy will be reviewed in line with parental engagement legislation.

The main aims of the strategy are to ensure that parents/carers:

- Are informed about their children's education and learning.
- Are welcomed and involved in the life of their child's school/setting, including being involved in decision making.
- Are able to support their child's learning and to source access to a range of family learning opportunities.
- Have opportunities for their voice to be heard, through involvement in forums for discussion and debate on education policy.
- Are encouraged to participate in parent/carers council meetings and the parent/carers forum.

The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 applies across all sectors, including early learning and childcare (ELC), primary, secondary, special schools and childminders. The Act covers parent/carers of children attending ELC provided in public primary schools, and they are members of the school's parent forum and may join the Parent Council.

Child/Children: When the plan refers to "children" or "child" it means a person under the age of 18.

Parent/s: The term "parents" means anyone with parental responsibilities and others who care for or look after children or young people. The plan acknowledges that individual family units will comprise a wider range of people who might also contribute to a child's learning at home experiences. Although the plan is titled a 'parental' involvement and engagement plan, there are a wide variety of parenting roles. The plan recognises the important role of grandparents, kinship carers, foster parents, wider family (uncles, aunts,

cousins) and separated parents. The term “parents” and “parents and carers” are therefore used interchangeably throughout this plan.

Digital Inclusion: It is recognised that not all parents/carers will have equal access to online resources or find them accessible and partners will work with parent groups to explore alternative options where required.

The Engagement Plan is organised under the following three key themes:

- 1. Family Learning**
- 2. Parental Involvement**
- 3. Parental Engagement**

Each theme is underpinned by one or more of the following essential features:

1. Recognition of Article 5 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which respects the responsibilities and rights of parents and families to guide their children.
2. A nurturing ethos that embeds the strong supportive relationships between families, practitioners, and senior leaders.
3. Good communication with parents and across services.
4. Collaborative, open, and honest working partnerships that ensures children and young people benefit from the support, skills and knowledge of their families and education professionals.
5. Support which meets the needs of parents and families to engage with their children’s education and addresses the barriers that prevent some parents accessing or feeling included in services.

Family Learning and Learning at Home

Family learning is about using creative approaches to engage meaningfully with families in learning that has an impact on the whole family. Schools should be responsive to need and encourage families to participate in relevant family/adult learning programmes, which promote equity, wellbeing and positive attitudes to learning. Family Learning is also about schools working in partnership with others in their community, to support families to secure better outcomes, through programmes which enable them to improve literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. This should be built on a foundation of trusting relationships with families, so that schools can offer help, support and advice as needed.

Learning at Home is learning which happens in the home, outdoors or in the community. This can be everyday activities or organised, active learning activities. Positive and varied learning environments have a strong impact on attainment and wellbeing. It encourages long term positive engagement with learning and develops curiosity and confidence. It encompasses everything within the home and the time that a child spends engaging outside of the school day.

Parental Involvement

Parent Involvement recognises the critical role parents/carers and families play in supporting their children's learning and development.

Parental involvement describes the ways in which parents can get involved in the life and work of the early learning and childcare setting or school or the ways that parents can get involved in “schooling”. Parental involvement includes activities such as parental representation in the development of policies, improvement plans and key decisions. It can include involvement in the life and work of the establishment, for instance through volunteering opportunities. Parental involvement can also include help with homework or keeping track of children’s work and on-going, two-way communication between home and school or early learning and childcare setting.

Parental Engagement

Parental engagement is about parents’ and families’ interaction with their child’s learning. It can take place in the home, at school or in the community. Where it takes place is not important. The important thing is the quality of the parent’s engagement with their child’s learning, the positive impact that it can have and the interaction and mutual development that can occur as a result of that interaction.

Schools should encourage the involvement of parents/carers in their work and provide information that helps parents/carers to engage with school and their child’s education. The following are examples of good practice in this area:

- Feeling welcome and knowing who to speak to for help with any queries.
- Good communication, accessible to all parents/carers. For example, newsletters, weekly updates, information evenings, pupil events and exhibitions.

- Feeling able to contribute to discussions and developments in the school and knowing suggestions will be appropriately considered.
- Opportunities to contribute to the life of the school. For example, helping in the classroom, on school trips or at school events; sharing useful skills; connecting the school with other individuals and groups who may have something to share with the school; suggesting ideas for the curriculum and other activities.
- Being signposted to access advice and support from partners, who may be able to help with a child's particular needs.

Year One (2025-2026)			
What do we want to achieve?	How will we get there?	Key Personnel	Evidence and Measures
Investigate the formation of Area Parent Council forums.	Work with HT groups and parent surveys to determine next steps for 26-27.	AQIMs/PHRG/HSOA	Survey responses from parents. Focus group feedback from HTs.
Identify an effective online resource for parents. Identify parents/carers who may have barriers to access.	Work with HT groups, PC Chairs to determine most effective online resource. Work with CLD partners and schools to identify those who may have barriers to accessing online resources.	HTs/AQIM/PC Chairs CLD links and school staff	PC group, HSOA, PHRG agree on identified resource and an alternative resource where required.
Promote the establishment of Parent Councils in schools and support their operation.	HT to work with their PC Chair. HT to include in their parent comms.	HTs/PC Chairs	HT feedback on the number of parent councils and parent forums established in school. HT share parent comms with their AQIM.
Explore the options for family learning support for schools within existing Council and partner resource	CLD and Whole Family Wellbeing Teams to share information with Cluster HT/AQIM groupings.	CLD Teams, Whole Family Wellbeing Team	By June 2026 schools and AQIM cluster teams are aware of available family learning resource for their area for session 2026- 27 and are able to start partnership work in the new session.

Year Two (2026-2027)

What do we want to achieve?	How will we get there?	Key Personnel	Evidence and Measures
Create and implement the formation of Area Parent Council forums, including the rollout of training and refreshed policy.	Communicate and distribute information from the National Parent Forum of Scotland on Parental Leadership.	Senior Officers/Policy Officer/AQIMs/HT/Parent Council Chairs	Survey and focus group responses show positive relationships between families and those working with children and young people, based on trust, mutual respect and partnership work. Parents report satisfaction with the training.
Parents have access to a forum (parents panel or equivalent) and an online resource or alternative format. The majority of parents use the forum and online resource to provide them with a voice which is helping to inform decisions, policy and practice relating to them and their children. An alternative method of sharing is provided where required. Parent Councils use the forum to consult and feedback to parents around the work of the parent council.	HT promote at school level AQIM promote at cluster level PC Chairs promote to parent body.	Senior Officers/Policy Officer/AQIMs/HT/Parent Council Chairs/CLD links	The Highland Council will use the Annual Family Learning Survey and the National Parental Involvement and Engagement Census to inform improvements in parental involvement and engagement. Monitor school based online resource usage and uptake. CLD partners will work with focus groups of parents/carers who have barriers to access.
Parent Councils consider how to support engagement with families living in the most deprived circumstances and support family learning activities relevant to context.	Focus groups in cluster areas work with the Third Sector to connect with families.	Cluster ESO/PC Chairs/HTs/Third Sector Partners	PC member and engagement process encompass a full range of parent views through a range of methods suited to the needs of the parent body.

Whole Family Wellbeing projects in clusters.			
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Year Three (2027-2028)

What do we want to achieve?	How will we get there?	Key Personnel	Evidence and Measures
All schools and settings have access to, are promoting and using an identified online resource for parents. Parents will have access to useful information about how to help their child. Alternative formats are available when required.	Officers/Policy Officer/AQIMs/HT/Parent Council Chairs will work with parent forums to ensure all parents have access to online resources or a suitable alternative format.	Senior Officers/Policy Officer/AQIMs/HT/Parent Council Chairs	Number of parents and carers accessing and using online resources Focus group and survey responses from parents and carers. Alternative format feedback.
Provide support and information for parents/carers to engage with their child's learning in and outwith school: This will include: • helping parents/carers to understand how their child learns from the early years. • What is being assessed and how. • how parents/carers can support their child's learning. • helping parent/carers to be actively involved in their children's learning, including discussion on next steps (including transitions).	Officers/Policy Officer/AQIMs/HT/Parent Council Chairs will work with parent forums to establish family learning events. Schools and parent councils will access the Whole Family Wellbeing fund to establish family learning activities.	ESOs Officers/Policy Officer/AQIMs/HT/Parent Council Chairs/ Whole Family Wellbeing Team	Number of parents and carers accessing family learning. Family Learning survey
Establish Family Learning networks across Highland Schools	Highland Council will work with partners to support and promote high quality Family Learning and share best	Officers, CLD and third sector partners, HTs, parents and caregivers	Family Learning survey. Family learning focus groups.

	practice across the partnership.		
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