



✦ PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY ✦

FIRRHILL HIGH SCHOOL

A summary guide for parents



INTRODUCTION:

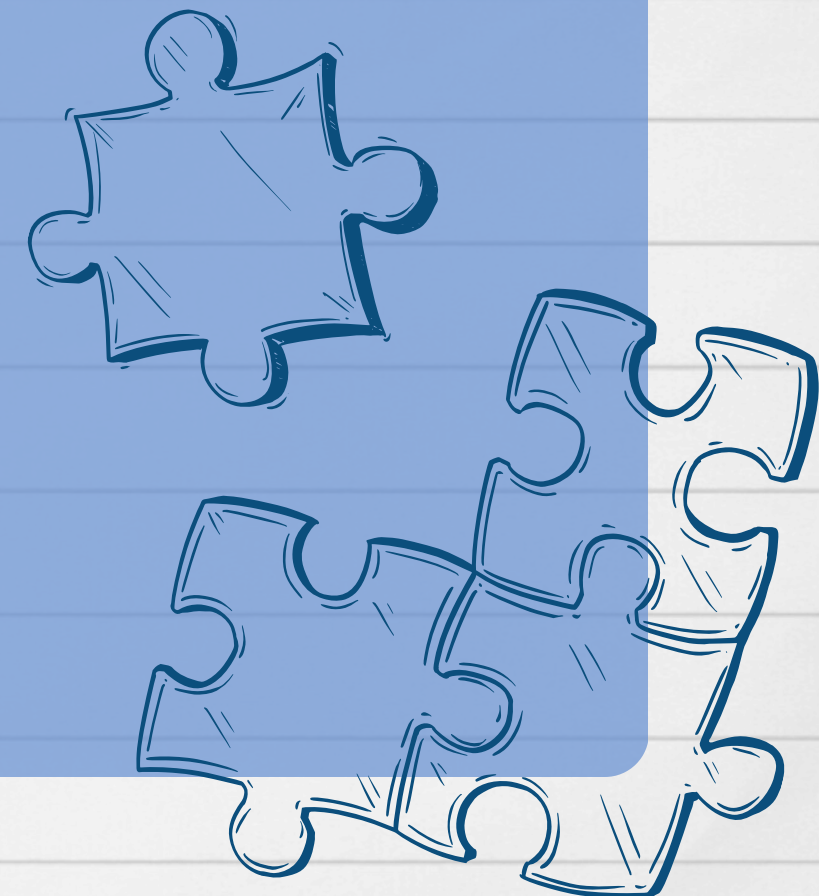
At Firrhill High School we believe that fostering positive partnerships between parents, schools and young people are key to securing the best outcomes for all.

Firrhill High School Parental Engagement Strategy 2024 aims to ensure that all parents and carers are encouraged and supported to engage as partners in their children's learning and in the life of the school community.

Parents are the most powerful influence on children's learning at home.

(United Learning, 2023)

This document sets out the strategic aims, vision and activity areas to support parents and carers in their child's learning, and includes an overview of key policies that have helped to inform our strategy planning as well as our consultation process with parents, staff and young people.



GLOSSARY

Parent - parent refers to the primary care giver (mother, father or foster carers, relative or friend) who has been given responsibility for looking after or bringing up a young person. We will use the term parent or parents to refer to all parents and carers throughout this document.

ASN (Additional Support Needs) - young people who require additional support in order to help them make the most of their school education and to be included fully in their learning.

GIRFEC (Getting it Right for Every Child) - GIRFEC is our national approach to promoting, supporting and safeguarding the wellbeing of young people. This provides a consistent framework which puts children's rights and wellbeing at the heart of services that provide support to them and their families.



GLOSSARY

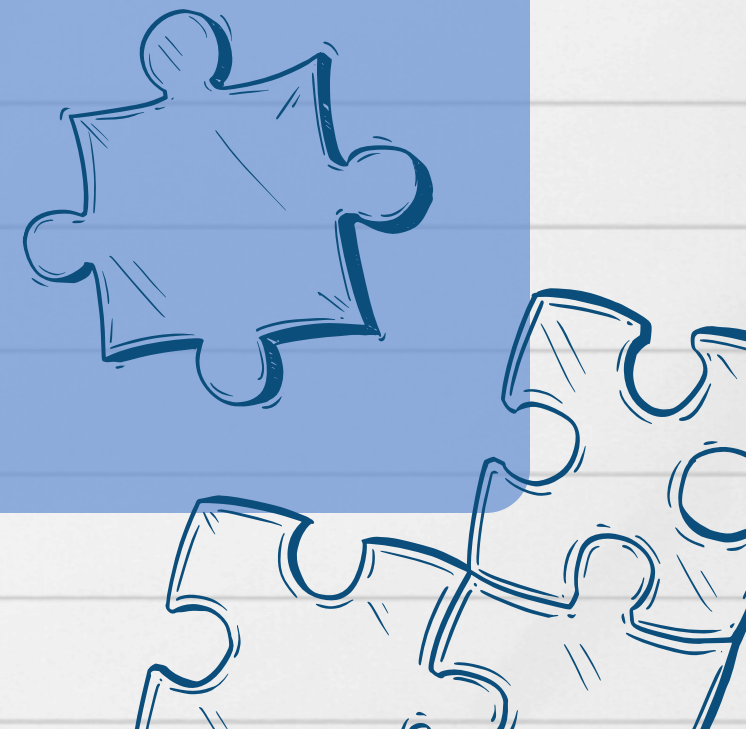
HGIOS (How Good is Our School?) - HGIOS (Education Scotland, 2016) promotes effective self-evaluation as the school's first stage in the process of self-improvement. It incorporates key quality indicators and a toolkit to help schools deliver the best possible outcomes for their young people.

UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) - The UNCRC (1989) is the most widely upheld human rights treaty in history. It applies to all children under the age of 18 and care experienced young people up to the age of 26.

The Edinburgh Promise - Edinburgh's Promise is to care experienced children and young people that they will grow up loved, safe and respected. It is governed through the Edinburgh Children's Partnership and the ambition is for services to be as joined up as possible to support children and young people.



the promise
scotland

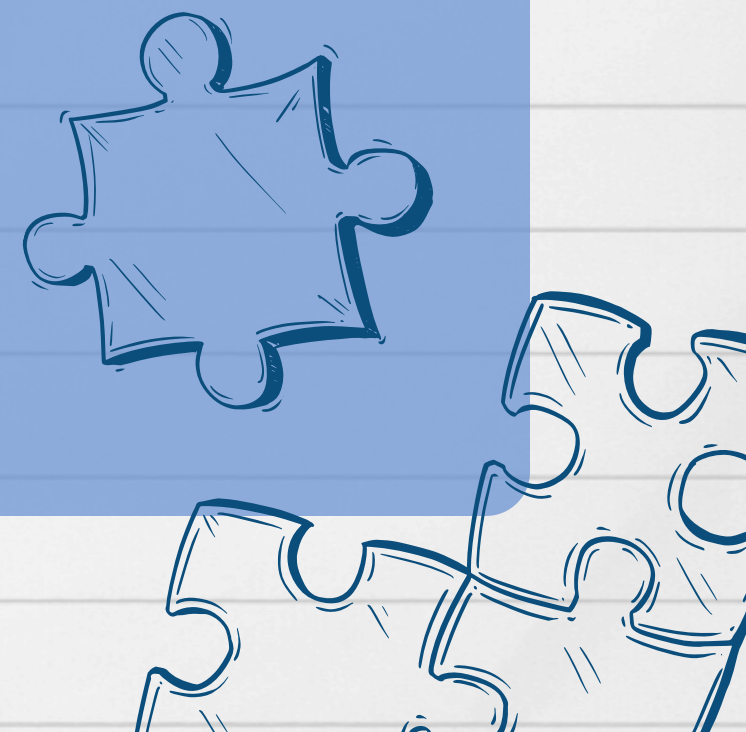


WHAT IS PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT?

Parental engagement is about the ways in which parents and carers, families and professionals can work together to support children's learning.

For the purposes of our strategy at Firrhill High School, we have adopted (Goodall and Montgomery's 2014) definition of parental engagement as **'active and meaningful involvement in children's learning'**.

“While there are no universally recognised definitions in Scottish education today the term ‘parental involvement’ most often focuses on parents getting involved in the life and work of the school, and ‘Parental engagement’ most often refers to parents’ engagement in their child’s learning at home, at school, and in the wider community”
(Education Scotland, 2023)



WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Parental engagement offers greater opportunities for parents and carers to be involved in their children's learning which can help improve outcomes in the widest sense. Not just in terms of attainment and achievement, but also in terms of their health and wellbeing.

Research proves that parental engagement leads to greater success for our young people. **Together, we can make a difference.**

**We like when
parents ask
questions about
how we are keeping
up with work at
school.**

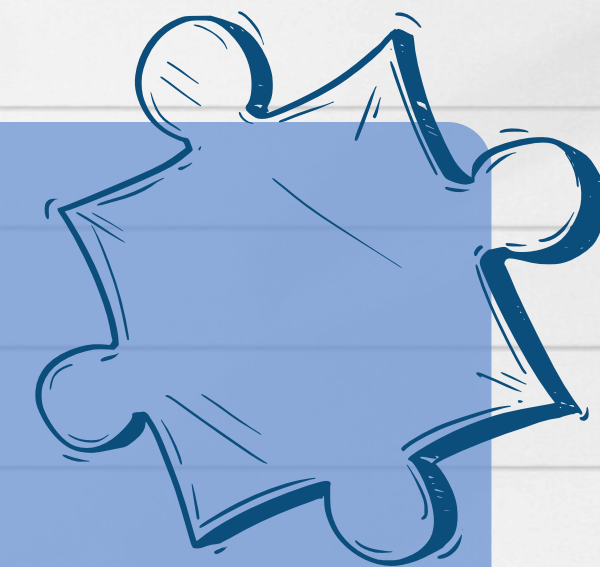
(Pupil focus group)

**Parents are the
primary
educators of their
children.**

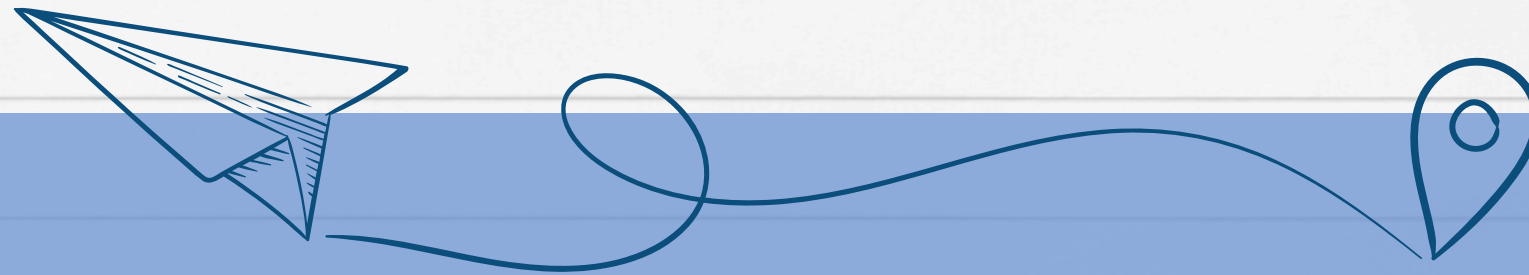
(Learning Together,
SG, 2018)

**Every learner
(parent, carer,
young people)
matters, and
matters equally.**

(UNESCO, 2015)

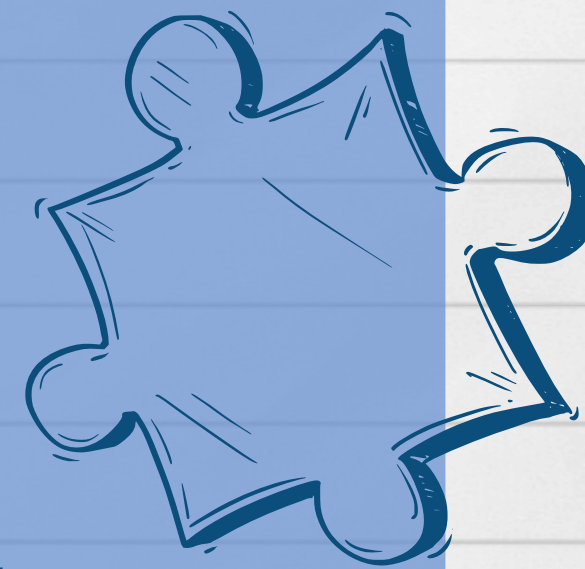


OUR STORY



Parental engagement is part of our planned journey to excellence as a school. Over the past few years we have seen attainment rising year on year across all demographics, supported by a culture of high aspiration and expectation, articulated in our school vision, “**excellence for all, excellence by all**”.

As a **UNICEF Gold Rights Respecting School**, our successful 2022 gold reaccreditation report recommended that we continue to ensure that rights are explicitly linked to all school activities, which includes the rights of our parents, and the role they play as Duty Bearers to uphold the rights of children, through a new parental engagement strategy.



Partnerships are integral to the way a highly effective school works

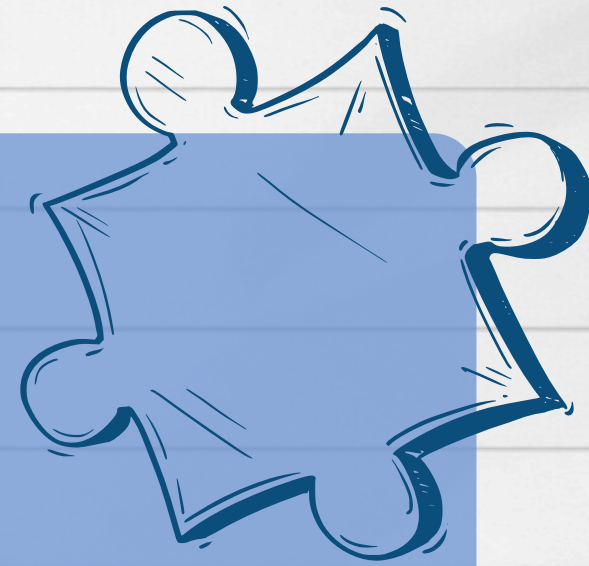
(HGIOS, 2016)

The launch of our parental engagement strategy will be a new initiative for the school, intended to bring about long-term change and **effective partnerships with parents and carers**.

POLICY LANDSCAPE: GLOBAL

The current global, national and local policy landscape shows that parental engagement is vital to the education of children.

The United Nations (UN) recognises education as essential in attaining its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, asserting that every learner matters equally (UNESCO, 2015) and by extension, every parent, carer and family (2030 UNESCO Education Agenda). When taken together, these policy elements form a compelling case that a commitment to parental engagement is a matter of social justice.

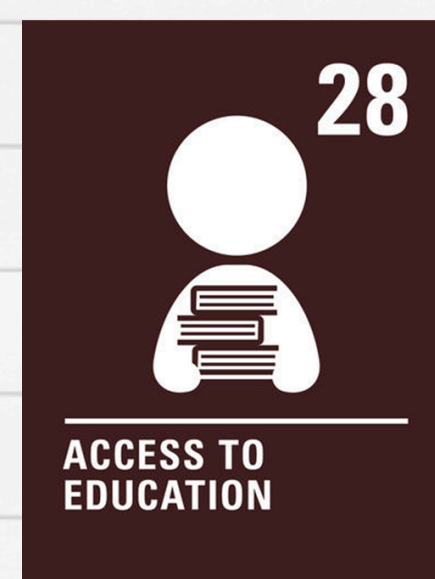
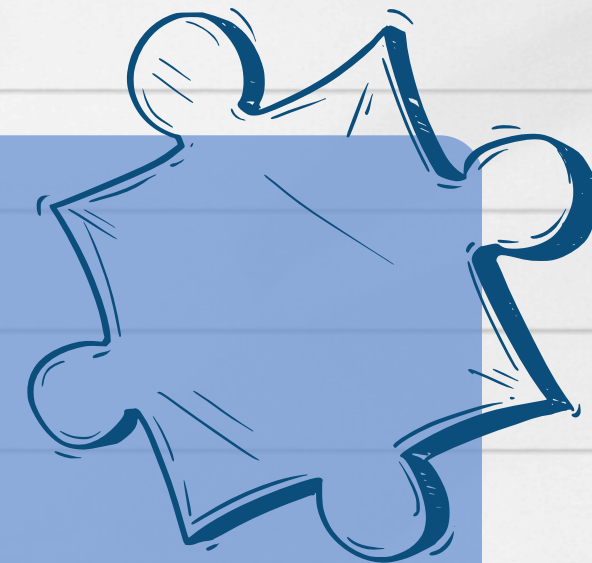


POLICY LANDSCAPE: GLOBAL

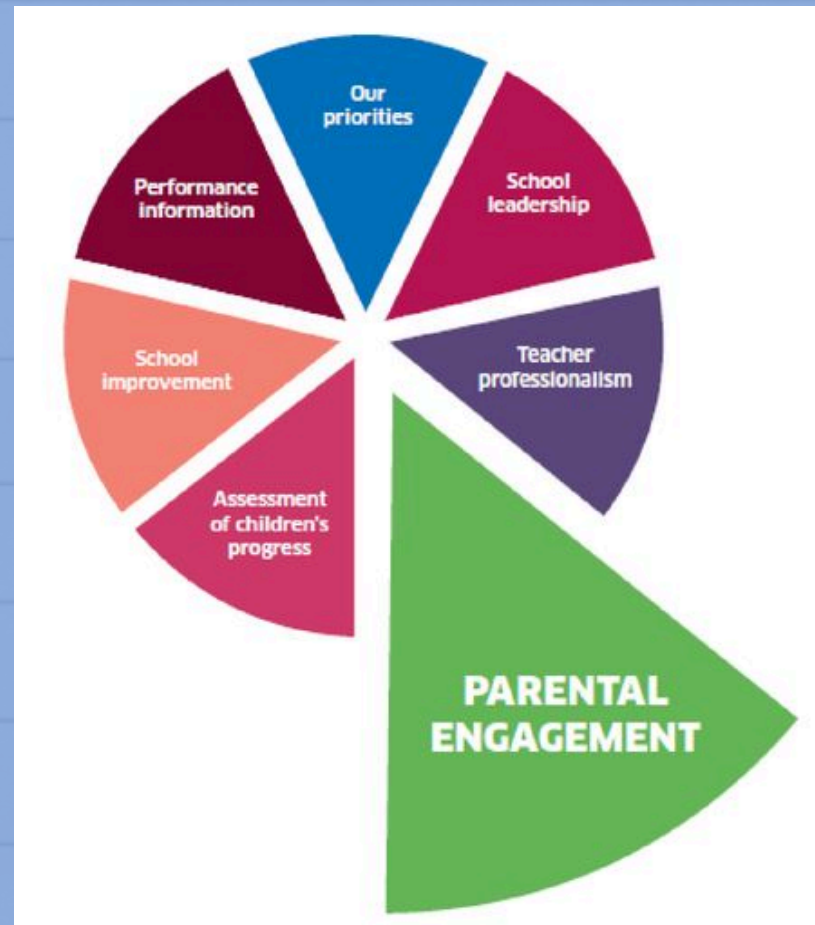
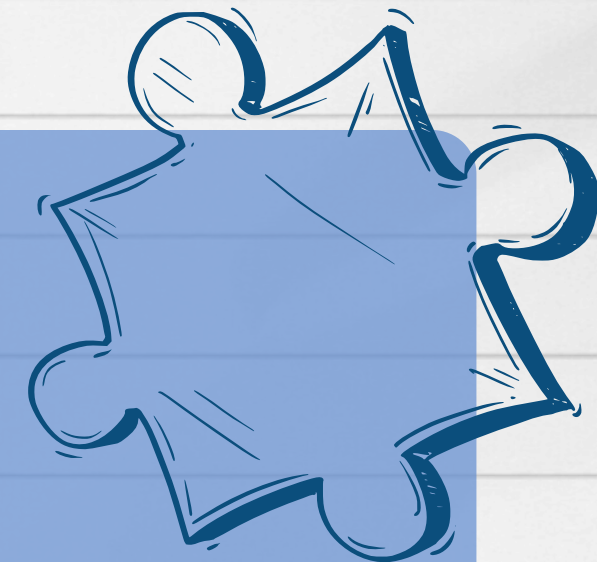
The concept of parental engagement is also a key focus in educational reform internationally through the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC,1989)**.

The UNCRC outlines the role of Duty Bearers in ensuring the rights of young people under the age of 18, and care experienced people up to the age of 24, are upheld as Rights Holders.

This recognises the responsibilities of parents (Article 18) and the role of governments in supporting them (Article 5). The UNCRC seeks to create an environment that fosters the best interests of the child and upholds their right to education (Article 28).

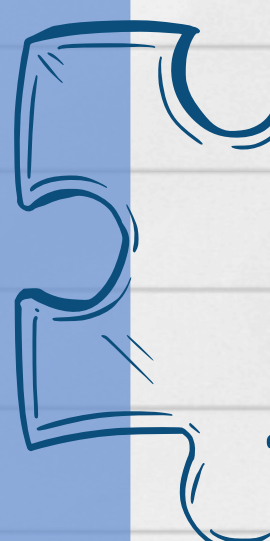


POLICY LANDSCAPE: NATIONAL



Parental engagement is one of six key drivers of improvement in the National Improvement Framework (2023) for Scottish education and closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

The current review by the Scottish Government of their 'Learning Together' action plan (2018) will result in the adoption of a new policy framework on parental engagement corresponding to the adoption of the UNCRC currently being enshrined into Scots law this year.



The Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) framework also lays out a strong commitment from the Scottish Government, to provide all children, young people and their families with the right support at the right time (SG, 2022). Engaging with parents is an integral part of helping young people to reach their full potential and protect their wellbeing.



POLICY LANDSCAPE: LOCAL

Edinburgh Learns for Life (2023) outlines the City of Edinburgh vision for education to 2030. Their vision is: **A fairer, healthier, greener future for everyone, where learning for life happens at school, in the wider community, at home, and in in the workplace.**

The local authority view is that parental engagement is a key driver in improving outcomes for children. Edinburgh Learns Framework (2018) highlights key actions schools can undertake to support parental engagement and aims to ensure excellence and equity within schools.

We do not view or judge families and are aware and sensitive to all of the protected characteristics which they may possess.

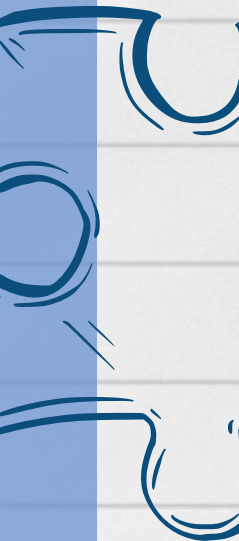
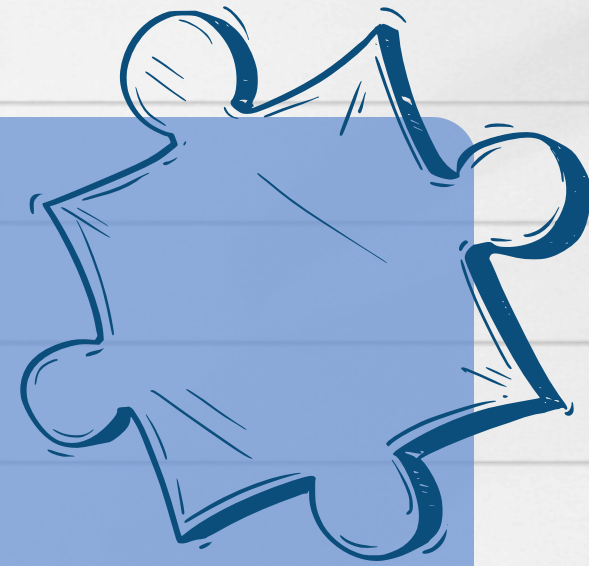
(Learning Together Framework, Edinburgh Learns for Life, 2023).

Transform

Connect

Empower

◆ EDINBURGH ◆
THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL



OUR 3 STEPS



1: AUDIT – WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Large-scale consultation & engagement process.

Over 1700 stakeholders consulted.

Included 550 parental responses to large scale survey. Parent focus groups & interviews.
1000 pupil responses.

Consultation with: Pupil Leadership Teams, Director of Armed Forces education, all staff (teaching and non-teaching), QIEO, and the wider community.

2: WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Co-creating a shared vision, strategy and action plan for parental engagement at Firrhill High School.

3. HOW WILL WE DELIVER IT?

We have created a large parental engagement team which includes parent and pupil reps to help drive this initiative forward.

We will also be working in partnership with our parental focus groups, our Parent Council, pupil body, Pupil Leadership Teams (year councils) and Senior Student Council.

CONSULTATION

We consulted our stakeholders through anonymous surveys in order to provide trust and obtain accurate information during consultation activities (Brookfield, 2017). This applied not only to our S1-S6 pupil body survey which generated 959 responses, but also to our parent consultations too.

Importantly, the pupil survey was written by the pupils themselves, based around materials from How Good is our School Learner Resource Part Two (Education Scotland, 2018). This approach incorporates the advice of Docherty and Sandelowski that the way of obtaining the best sources of information about the experience of pupils is through their own eyes, not the lens of teachers (Docherty and Sandelowski, 1999, cited in Cohen, 2017).

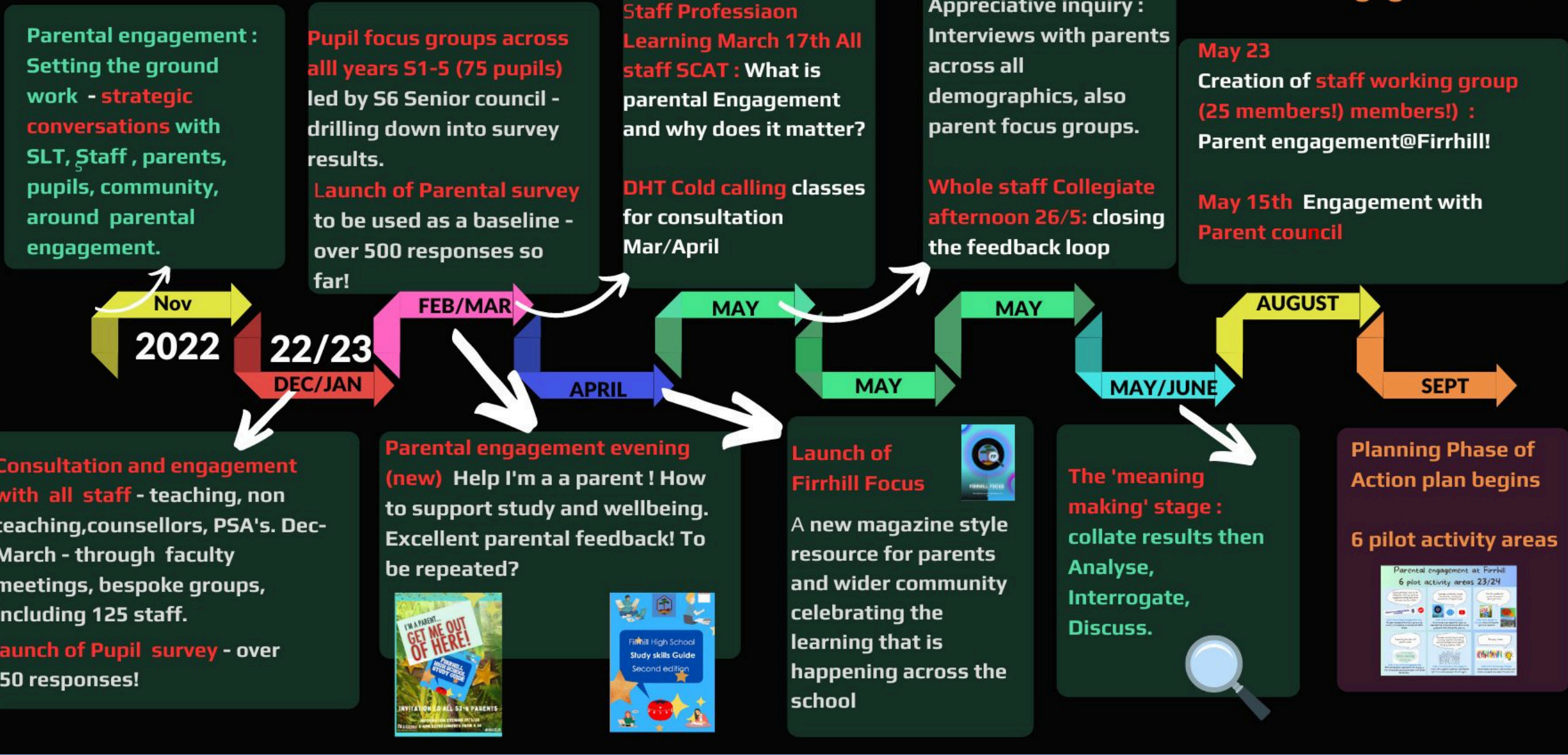
Over 1700 individuals actively participated with over 35 different consultation and engagement activities, generating a very robust dataset that has been used to inform the development of our shared vision.



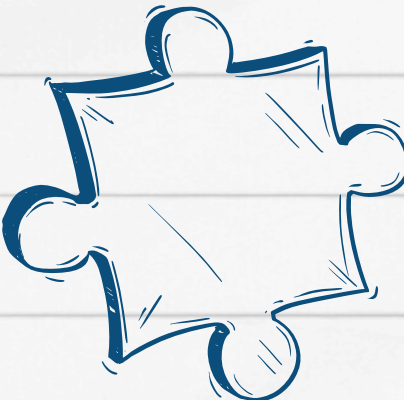

CONSULTATION

★ **Nov 22 - Sep 23 : Parental engagement at FHS** - Audit, consultation & engagement, Development of shared vision & understanding.

★ **Sept 23 - May 24 : 6 Pilot activity areas & Planning parental engagement strategy**



OUR PUPIL VIEWS



So they understand what's going on with my learning and can help if I'm stuck at home.
(Erin, S2 pupil)

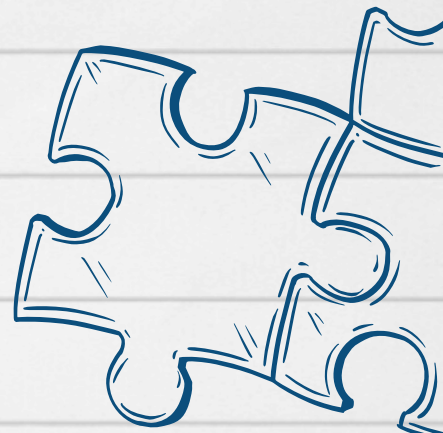
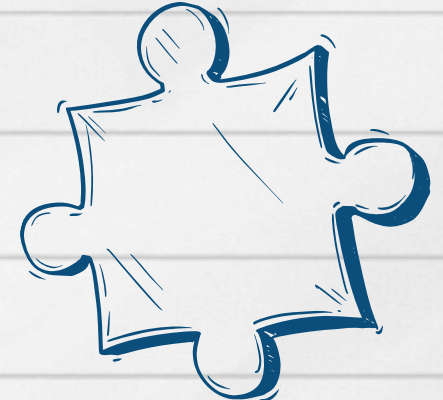
Parents are helpful in learning because they can set expectations and motivate you to do well.
(Freddie, S2 pupil)

So they can help out and see what I am struggling with.
(Courtney, S3 pupil)

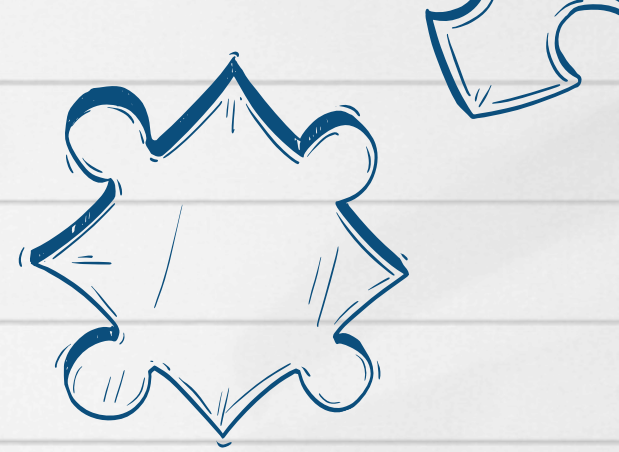
Parents want to be more interactive with the school. Because of Covid, many haven't been in to the school for 3 years.
(Senior Student Council)

It definitely helps by knowing what sort of questions to ask us when it comes to revision.
(Senior Student Council)

It's important that they help with your education so you can learn new skills outside of school.
(Evie, S2 pupil)



OUR PUPIL VIEWS



What parents do that works to support our learning at home

Encourage
Check in & ask
Break down questions
How are you doing?
Listening to me
Helping with questions
Looking out for me
Helping me revise
Sharing their own experience

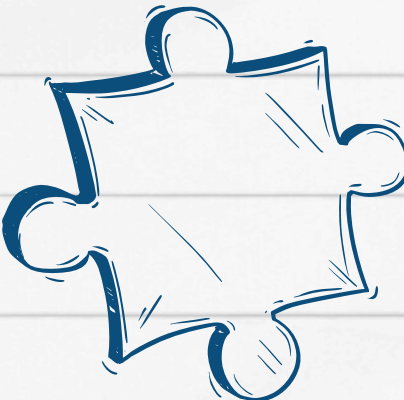

What parents do that isn't helpful

Nagging constantly
Getting shouted at
Pretending to know what the work is about
Not remembering how to help
Confusing me
Forcing me to do work

What we would like them to try out

Just let me do the work without interfering
Help me plan my time and trust me
Be more understanding
Show interest in my work
Let me choose when to get the work done

OUR PARENT VIEWS



49% of parents have the view that ‘the school gives me advice on how to support my child’s learning at home’.

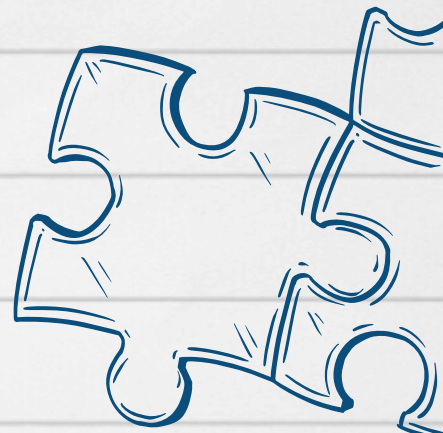
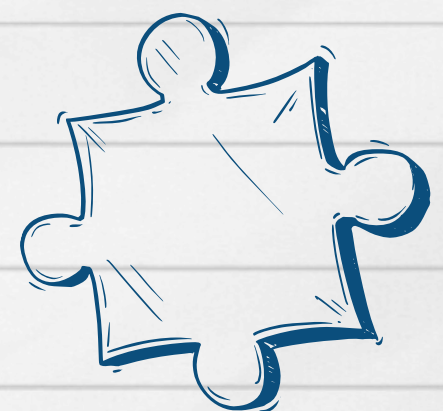
92% believe staff ‘treat my child fairly and with respect’.

We would like more help in knowing how to support our child’s additional support need at home.

86% of parents believe the school is ‘well led and managed and have confidence in the school’.

79% are ‘satisfied with the quality of teaching in the school’.

82% feel ‘comfortable approaching the school with questions, suggestions and any issues’.



OUR STRATEGIC AIMS

1

To improve pupil outcomes
in the broadest sense.
(Attainment, achievement,
health and wellbeing)

2

To increase parental
confidence in supporting
learning.
(Self-efficacy)

3

To increase parental
confidence in our shared
value of working together.
(Social capital)

**“The more parents and young people talk about what they are learning,
the better the young people achieve”.**

(Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003)

OUR ACTIVITY AREAS

Over 2023-2024 academic session, we piloted 6 key activity areas to increase parental engagement and improve pupil outcomes.

We have streamlined this in to 3 activity areas for our 2024 Parental Engagement Strategy.

Connect

Connecting with parents and establishing an invitational climate for all.

Collaborate

Collaborating with parents to support learning at home and school.

Community

Working together to support all needs within our school community.

Article 3:

Best interests of the child

The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.

Article 23:

Children with a disability

A child with an additional need has the right to live a full and decent life with dignity.

Article 5:

Parental Guidance

Governments must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents and carers to provide guidance to their child as they grow up.

Article 28:

Right to an Education

Every child has the right to an education.

Article 18:

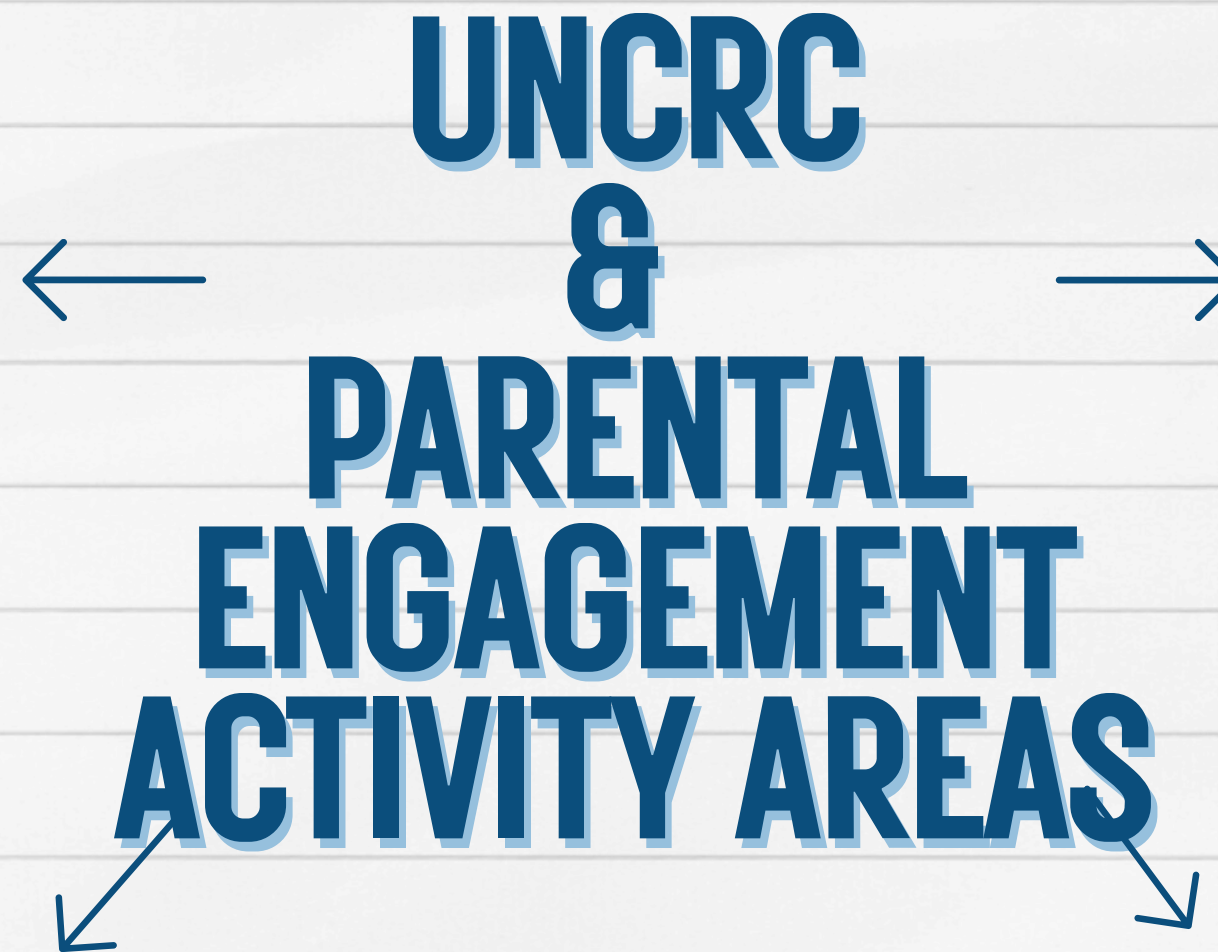
Parental Responsibilities

Parents share responsibility for bringing up their child and should always consider what is best for the child.

Article 42:

Knowledge of rights

Governments must actively work to make sure children and adults know about the Convention.



Connecting with parents
and establishing an
invitational climate for
all.

Connect

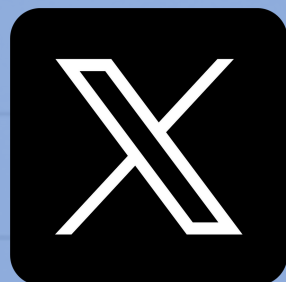


Over the past year, we have developed our digital media and methods of communication with parents and carers in order to increase opportunities of clear connections between school and home.

These are embedded in our strategy:



Launch and pilot of Firrhill Fridays weekly parent updates
Increase of information on school social media accounts



Use of school YouTube videos
Creation of department 'Padlets' to share course information



Firrhill Focus online magazine
Bring your parent to school day
Parental engagement calendar

Engagement and
communication between
partners (parents) is
regular, structured,
supportive and efficient.

(HGIOS, 2016)

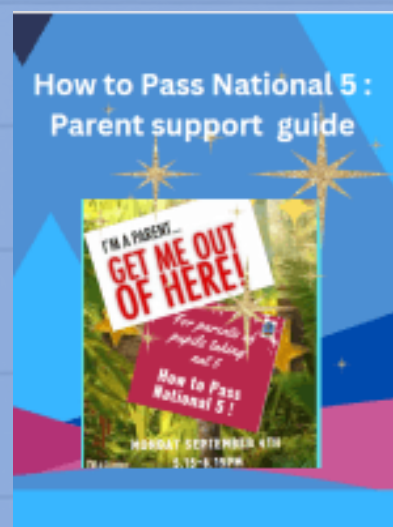
Collaborating with parents to support learning at home and school.

Collaborate



We have piloted ways that encourage parents and carers to become more involved in supporting learning at home. As part of our new strategy, this involves:

- ‘How to pass’ guides to National 5 exam revision
- Maximising study skills evenings for senior phase pupils
- Study skills assemblies for S3-S6
- ‘Life After S6’ information evening
- S2 course choice evening
- Transition information events
- DYW Speed date a parent career evening
- ‘Help! I’m a parent’ events (eg wellbeing)
- ‘Raising teens with confidence’ workshop
- Live ‘n’ Learn family programme



Parental engagement that has the strongest relationship with attainment, includes displaying enthusiasm for learning and encouraging good study habits.

(Hattie, 2008)

Working together to support all needs within our school community.

Community



Within this activity area we have piloted opportunities over the past year for parents and carers to receive support around specific needs. These are embedded in our strategy:

Dyslexia information awareness evening

Trauma informed practice training

Autism awareness Educational Psychology training

Care Experienced Learners staff working group

Staff and pupil wellbeing teams and events

Anti-racism and Equalities staff working groups

Pupil Leadership teams

ASN WhatsApp parent network

Enhanced Transition party

Family coaching

Enhanced pupil tracking system



**#Keep
The
Promise**

We do not view or judge families and are aware and sensitive to all of the protected characteristics which they may possess.

(Learning Together Framework, Edinburgh Learns for Life, 2023).

PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT TEAM

Ewan Brodie - Pupil Support Leader

Sarah Kerr - Pupil Support Leader

Martin Hollis - Pupil Support Leader

Shona Dunn - Pupil Support Leader

Anneliese Hardie - Pupil Support Leader

Megan Wilson - Transition Teacher

Rory Murray - Curriculum Leader: Wellbeing Approach

Ian MacFarlane - Curriculum Leader: English

Clare Watson - Curriculum Leader: Maths

Bianca Mariani - Curriculum Leader: Modern Languages

Holly Neilson - Curriculum Leader: PE (Acting)

Dionne Bridges - Administrative Officer

Emily Hazley - DYW Co-Ordinator

Agata Gorka - English Teacher

Kirsty Foote - Chemistry Teacher

Morag Easson - Chemistry Teacher

Lizzie Williams - Biology Teacher

Sarah Campbell - D&T Teacher & Digital Learning

Claire Connolly - RMPS & History Teacher

Simone Kupisz - Maths Teacher & PSL (Acting)

Liam Smith - Geography Teacher & PSL (Acting)

Mark Rennie - Physics & Engineering Teacher

Lewis Rahimian - PE Teacher

Rhona Williams - Drama Teacher

Kelsey O'Sullivan - Modern Languages Teacher

Alice Clegg - Depute Headteacher & Chair

Consultation with pupils, parents & carers, Parent Council and Parent ASN network.

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**THANK
YOU!**

