

connect backchat

Issue 147 Autumn 2018

New and Revised Leaflets for Members



Parents love our leaflets!

We're delighted to tell you about the new and revised leaflets we've prepared for you over the summer!

Our Members tell us they really value our leaflets and resources - we have over 100, covering everything from *What is a Parent Council?* to *Using Social Media for Parent Groups* and *A Guide to Data Protection*. Designed to help parents and carers to get involved in their child's school life in many different ways, our range of leaflets continues to expand.

You can find them all on our website www.connect.scot or using this link <http://bit.ly/connectresources>. Please note: Members will need to register on the website to access some leaflets and resources.

New and updated leaflets and resources include:

- *Parent Councils: Top Tips for Welcoming Families to Your School Community*
- *Jargon Buster - A List of Terms Used in Scottish Education*
- *A Simple Guide to Equality & Fairness*
- *Equality & Fairness template policy*
- *Equality & Fairness: A Glossary*
- *Inclusion Health Check: Support for Families with Money Worries*
- *Inclusion Health Check: Everyone is Equal*
- *Connect Factsheet: Pupil Equity Funding*
- *Privacy Policy Template*
- *Using Social Media*
- *Social Media Glossary*.

If you're planning autumn events, have a look at leaflets such as *Social & Fundraising Ideas for Autumn and Winter*, *Running a Disco - Advice on Safe Practice* and *Some Golden Rules of Catering*. There are also several FAQs about insurance which might be helpful <http://bit.ly/connectresources>.

Keep in touch!

Our contact details are:

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ConnectScot



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Like and follow us to receive the latest news from the world of Scottish education.

See our leaflets on

www.connect.scot

Sign up for our eNewsletters

<http://bit.ly/connectenews>

Join our Parents' Voice survey group

<http://bit.ly/Connectparentsvoice>

Connect, formerly Scottish Parent Teacher Council, connects parents and educators to improve children's learning and lives.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE: P1 TESTING, CONNECT'S INFORMATION & TRAINING SESSIONS, GDPR, SCHOOL NUTRITION SURVEY

Reading this as a hard copy? Would you rather receive it by email? Let us know!

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Connect's Annual Lecture & AGM: Save the Date!

We're planning for our Annual Lecture and AGM next year! We're heading to Dundee, on 14 March 2019 and have lined up a really inspiring keynote speaker - we can't wait! Booking for places will open before Christmas.

We will also be appointing Directors for the Connect Board. If you are a parent or a teacher and you're passionate about parental engagement in children's school lives and learning, please consider joining our Board! Find more information and the nomination papers here <http://bit.ly/connectdirectors>.



Information & Training Sessions

Jen Graham, Connect's Training and Development Officer, leads our fantastic training programme for parents and parent groups. She also co-ordinates our Continuing Professional Development courses for teachers, Senior Management staff and early years practitioners. Here she describes how our Information & Training Sessions work and why parents love them!

'Our free Information & Training Sessions for Connect Members are suitable for new and more experienced Parent Council and PTA members and for those who are interested in finding out more before they get involved.

'Face-to-Face Sessions: We run our Connect Members' face-to-face sessions for parents and parent groups all over Scotland. These include *Parent Council Essentials*, *Helping to Support Your School*, *Involving All Parents*, *School Improvement Planning (new)*, *Effective Meetings* and *Organising Social & Fundraising Events*.

'Online Sessions: We also have online workshops which parents can access from home. These cover different roles on Parent Councils and PTAs, constitutions, social media and our new workshops, *Everyone Matters: Equality & Fairness* and two anti-bullying workshops with *respectme*.

'How can we find out about the sessions?

We offer our face-to-face sessions in response to requests from parent groups or our education partners in local authorities. Then we reach out to other parent groups in the area, usually by email, inviting them to join us. We promote our online sessions on our website <http://bit.ly/EventsConnect> and on our Facebook and Twitter pages. Email training@connect.scot for more information.

'What are the benefits of the sessions?

We share lots of information. Our sessions are friendly and informal. We leave lots of time to chat and for parents to talk to one another. We all learn from each other! The sessions are delivered by one of our staff team who love getting out and about. Every school community is different and it is always interesting to hear about everyone's experiences. Feedback is very positive - the sessions are fun and enjoyable. Parents say they gain confidence and new ideas from them.'



CONNECT'S PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOR TEACHERS, SENIOR MANAGEMENT STAFF AND EARLY YEARS PRACTITIONERS

It is important, as we bring professionals and parents together for the benefit of children, that everyone has a shared understanding of what parental engagement in children's learning and in the school community can look like. Our professional learning courses are a crucial part of this. We run three courses to support family engagement in children's education. For more information, email training@connect.scot.



Connect's away day in September involved our wonderful volunteer Board of Directors, our office staff and our Regional Advisors - we were on fire with ideas!

Connect Campaigns to End Primary 1 National Assessments

In June, we joined Upstart Scotland, Play Scotland, Children in Scotland, the Educational Institute of Scotland, ACE-Aware Nation and others to campaign to end Scottish Standardised National Assessments (SNSAs) of Primary 1 children. There is no evidence to show this approach is effective in improving outcomes. This is a national data-gathering exercise which could be harmful to children's wellbeing and to their feelings about school.

Our parent survey on P1 SNSAs found that:

- **70%** of parents didn't know about their child taking the SNSA in advance
- **94%** of parents did not have any information arising from the SNSA shared with them
- when asked about how they felt the school handled the P1 SNSA, **7%** said it was handled well, **30%** said it was well-handled but they would have liked more information, **34%** felt it was not handled well, **28%** were not sure.

You can find the full survey results at

<http://bit.ly/connectP1testsurvey>

Read Sue Palmer of Upstart Scotland, overleaf.

Connect Parents' Survey on Nutrition in Schools

To help us with our response to the Scottish Government's consultation on Nutritional Requirements for Food and Drink in Schools, we asked you for your views on school meals. The vast majority of replies supported the Scottish Government proposals.

We received **364** responses, of which

- **97%** agreed with the proposed two portions of vegetables and one of fruit in school lunches
- **92%** agreed that fruit/vegetables should be available wherever food is provided
- **87%** agreed that high sugar foods should be limited in schools
- **81%** agreed there should be limits on sugar in cereals, yoghurts, sweetened and baked products
- **78%** agreed there red and processed meat should be limited.

Views were more split on the removal of fruit/vegetable juice, smoothies etc in primary schools - **55%** agreed, **45%** disagreed.

<http://bit.ly/Connectnutritionresponse>

GDPR: The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is now in force!

Even if your Parent Council/PTA just holds contact details for your members, you still need to follow the rules, or you could be fined by the Information Commissioner's Office. Keep these points in mind when dealing with a person's information:

- **If you don't use it, don't collect it**
- **Only those who need to should have access to the information**
- **Delete it when it is no longer needed**
- **Remember to get permission. Make sure people know how, why, and for how long you will hold their information.**

Connect membership-linked insurance does not provide cover for any illegal activity. This includes non-compliance with GDPR. You can find more information and links to our updated Data Protection leaflet and template policy on our website here
<http://bit.ly/ConnectGDPR>



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The Campaign to End National Testing of Primary 1s

John Swinney can't understand why Upstart Scotland is making a big deal about a couple of short tests for Primary 1 children. He's assured us that the SNSA (Scottish National Standardised Assessment) tests of literacy and numeracy are 'low-stakes', simple to administer and most children won't even know they're being tested.

As it happened, when the first P1 SNSA tests were administered, many schools found them extremely time-consuming and disruptive.

There were frequent reports of children being bewildered and distressed. That's worrying, but it's not our main concern.

Our concern about the P1 SNSAs is that all the available research says national standardised testing of this age-group is pointless and potentially damaging to children's long-term wellbeing and educational success.

It's pointless because data about five-year-olds' literacy and numeracy skills doesn't provide useful long-term information. Children of this age are still developing – physically, socially, emotionally and cognitively – and early child development isn't a neat linear process. Just as some children talk before others, some are ready to read and write before their peers. Most countries don't start formal schooling till six or seven, when most children are developmentally ready.

National standardised testing of P1 children can be damaging because it is inevitably 'high stakes' for teachers and schools. It leads to 'teaching to the test', narrowing of the curriculum and steadily increasing anxiety about test performance. Children who aren't ready to read, write or reckon are pressurised to do so because schools will be judged on test results. This can cause long-term emotional damage. All five-year-olds benefit from a test-free, play-based curriculum. We've explained why in our two-minute video <http://bit.ly/upstartplaynottests>



Connect in Action:

July to September 2018

We've been busy over the summer! We have:

- held Partnership Schools Scotland meetings in Fife, Falkirk, Stirling, West Lothian, North Ayrshire, Glasgow
- met Dr Janet Goodall
- welcomed two new Directors to Connect
- revised dozens of Connect leaflets & written several new ones
- visited school communities in West Lothian, Glasgow, Dumfries & Galloway
- met with the Association of Headteachers & Deputies in Scotland
- attended a meeting of the SCQF Partnership Forum
- met with Early Years Scotland
- delivered face-to-face Information & Training Sessions in Glasgow, Fife, Edinburgh, Stirling, Perth, Falkirk
- delivered five online sessions
- attended an event hosted by Adoption Scotland.

Footnotes: Q&A with Connect

In this regular column, we answer your questions. Email them to info@connect.scot.

Q: Our Headteacher says we can't collect parents' names and email addresses because of data protection - is this correct?

You can collect names and emails, as long as the person you are collecting them from has given you permission to do so, and they are stored securely. You also need to make sure you only use the information for the purpose the person agreed to. For example, if you gather email addresses to let the winner of a raffle know, you can't then add them to your newsletter list without their explicit permission.

Q: How long should we keep names and email addresses of parents?

Your Parent Council/PTA needs to agree how long you will hold onto a person's details, and record it in your data protection policy. Remember, you should only keep information for as long as it is relevant. Don't hold onto details of parents whose children have left the school, or if someone gave you details only for a past event.

See more at <http://bit.ly/ConnectGDPR>

