

A WARM WELCOME FROM IAIN ELLIS
CHAIR OF THE NATIONAL PARENT FORUM OF SCOTLAND

Welcome to the summer edition of our E-News Update. We hope you find the information in the Update helpful – we would be glad to hear your views and ideas. Please contact us through enquiries@parentforumscotland.org.

In this edition, we report back on our campaign to encourage the roll-out of wi-fi in schools as a learning tool. In response to feedback from parents, which was further reiterated at our successful 'Qualifications Plus' events in March, we have prepared three key new information resources for you. Please see below for further details about our user-friendly 'Nationals in a Nutshell' summaries of National 4 and National 5 qualifications in over 30 subjects, our illustrated Curriculum for Excellence Learner Journey and our 'Let's Talk' checklist for building effective and positive partnerships between home and school. Your school should have received our 'Let's Talk' poster - if it is not yet visible, please ask about it at your school office.

Please continue to share your views and experiences with us – we can work together to ensure the parent voice is heard through our National Parent Forum area representatives at local level (see www.parentforumscotland.org for your rep's name and contact email) and through our involvement with working groups and committees at national level. We are grateful to the many partners who work with us to improve home-school partnerships, parental involvement in learning and outcomes for our children.

Yours in partnership

Iain Ellis, Chair
chair@parentforumscotland.org

NATIONAL PARENT FORUM NEWS

The Curriculum for Excellence Learner Journey

NEW: We have prepared a graphic illustration of the Curriculum for Excellence Learner Journey for you. It sets out the main CfE facts: learning levels, qualifications, pupil entitlements and the key terms and descriptions that are used in Curriculum for Excellence. View the Learner Journey at www.parentforumscotland.org. A print-friendly version is available too.

Nationals in a Nutshell

Information about the new qualifications at National 4 and National 5 levels has now been summarised by the National Parent Forum. You can read about the key features of more than 30 subjects on our [website](http://www.parentforumscotland.org). Subjects are listed in alphabetical order. The Nationals in a Nutshell describe the skills-based emphasis, the active learning opportunities and the inbuilt learning progression which characterise these new Curriculum for Excellence qualifications. More details about course content can be found on the [SQA website](http://www.sqa.gov.uk).

Let's Talk - Promoting Home-School Partnerships

Our new '[Let's Talk](#)' resource is a checklist of good ideas and inclusive practice, gathered from teachers and parents. The key

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themes are: A Welcoming School, Effective Communication, Supporting Learning, Supporting Families. Add these together, and you have positive relationships between home and school with a joint focus on helping children to thrive and flourish.

ICT IN SCHOOLS

Wi-fi campaign update and the national context

Earlier this year, we wrote to directors of education across Scotland to ask about the roll-out of wi-fi in schools as a learning tool. Responses suggest that the roll-out of wi-fi is patchy and is at the early stages of development. Challenges are: undeveloped internet infrastructure (restrictive broadband widths), funding constraints, and a reticence to invest heavily when technology may be out of date very quickly. Some authorities have a roll-out programme, working through primary and secondary sectors, and using different approaches to accessing the internet with wi-fi. These include pupils using their own devices (limited to pilots, in preparation for migrated Glow) and wi-fi hubs on trolleys that are moved from class room to class room. The 'public facing' use of wi-fi for pupils using their own devices is being piloted in some schools, as protocols are developed.

Work at national level is ongoing. Glow - the national intranet for schools - has been improved, with a new, user-friendly interface (called RM Unify). Work is well underway to transition to Microsoft Office 365 services. The ICT in Education Excellence Group, which includes a National Parent Forum representative, has made a number of recommendations on how Glow can be further improved. Work is also underway to identify how best to take forward aspirations for greater access to wi-fi, including 'Bring your own device', and to look at filtering policies.

Please ask at your school about progress on internet and wi-fi use. Our view is that schools can lead their communities, supporting pupils and parents in the safe and creative use of the internet for learning.

Contact us

Share your ideas, views & local stories with us by:

[Emailing us](#)

[Visiting our website](#)

Or by following us on Twitter and Facebook:

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Subscribe

Subscribe and receive this E-News Update as well as other information from us relating to parental involvement in education.

Just [email us](#) with your name, email address, child(ren)'s year group, school and local authority.

Events

The National Parent Forum's annual conference with workshops will take place on 5 October 2013 in Bishopbriggs. This year's theme is Health and Wellbeing. This free event is a fantastic opportunity to share ideas and find out about educational developments in Scotland. There is a free crèche and buffet lunch is provided. Visit our [website](#) for further information (coming soon).

Curriculum for Excellence Qualifications: Assessment

The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and Education Scotland have released more material to support teachers with assessments for the new National Qualifications. For National 1 to National 4 qualifications, assessment is undertaken internally by schools/centres in accordance with SQA guidance. The coursework units for National 5s are also assessed in this way. The new resources help teachers with this internal assessment. Most National 5 subjects also have external assessment by the SQA. Some do not, as has always been the case with Standard Grades, because of the practicalities of transporting large projects or externally assessing live performances.

Learners need to pass both coursework units and course assessments to gain their National Qualifications. Sample question papers are available on the [SQA website](#). The National Parent Forum is requesting more resources and sample questions for next year to help parents and learners to practise for the new qualifications.

New Resource for Parent Councils: Effective Consultations

Children in Scotland and the Scottish Government recently published a new guide to effective consultation for parent councils. It has been sent out to parent council chairs and provides a step by step guide to consulting with the wider parent forum. 'A Guide to Gathering Views and Ensuring Parents' Voices are Heard in Your School' uses the expertise of the Consultation Institute and describes what good consultation looks like. The National Parent Forum was involved in preparing the [guide](#) which also includes examples and tips.

Additional Support for Learning

Transitions: Enquire, the national organisation which supports children with additional support for learning needs and their families, has produced a new film, 'Getting Ready to Leave School: Making a Good Transition' which is [available on YouTube](#).

SUPPORTING FAMILIES

[ParentLine Scotland](#) is the national, confidential telephone helpline and email service for anyone caring for a child. It's not just for parents but for grandparents, aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters, neighbours and friends. People call for all sorts of reasons – no problem is too big or too small. ParentLine Scotland, which includes the national Kinship Care Helpline, is open seven days a week: **9am-10pm Monday to Friday and 12pm-8pm Saturday and Sunday** with trained call-takers providing an out-of hours service. Contact ParentLine on 08000 28 22 33 or email Parentlinescotland@children1st.org.uk or access the [website](#).

CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Scottish universities have been developing statements on entrance requirements that reflect Curriculum for Excellence. For entry to Scottish universities, Highers will remain the key entry qualifications. Universities have expressed their commitment to fair admissions policies and equal consideration of candidates who demonstrate the necessary knowledge and skills base for their chosen course, taking into account that they may well follow different routes through the senior phase (S4-S6). Visit our website for links to the university statements. You can find more information about universities and Curriculum for Excellence on the [Education Scotland website](#).

RURAL EDUCATION

Small populations mean that schools in rural areas may be particularly vulnerable to closure. The Commission on the Delivery of Rural Education recently published its report with 38 recommendations. It found that Scottish rural schools can deliver to the highest levels and notes that education should not be looked at in isolation: sustainable rural communities depend on a range of services including schools, jobs and housing. The recommendations will now be considered by the Scottish Government and by COSLA, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities who will respond to its recommendations. The report, and more information on the work of the Commission is available on the [Scottish Government website](#).

Useful Resource Bank

For Learners

[Scottish Qualifications Authority](#) website has past papers, exam timetables and course specifications.

The [BBC Scotland Learning Pages](#) have many useful resources and revision aids.

For Parents & Parent Councils

General

[Parentzone website](#) - providing you with the most up to date information about your child's education.

[The National Parent Forum of Scotland](#) - creating a voice for Scotland's parents.

[Parents as Partners](#) in their [Children's Learning Toolkit](#)

[Parenting Across Scotland](#) offers information and support for families in Scotland.

[Scottish Parent Teacher Council \(SPTC\)](#) - representing teachers and parents.

Additional Support for Learning

[Enquire](#) is the Scottish Advice Service for Additional Support for Learning.

The [Addressing Dyslexia Toolkit](#) has been prepared to support dyslexic children and young people and contains sections for professionals, parents and young people themselves.

E enquiries@parentforumscotland.org W parentforumscotland.org

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