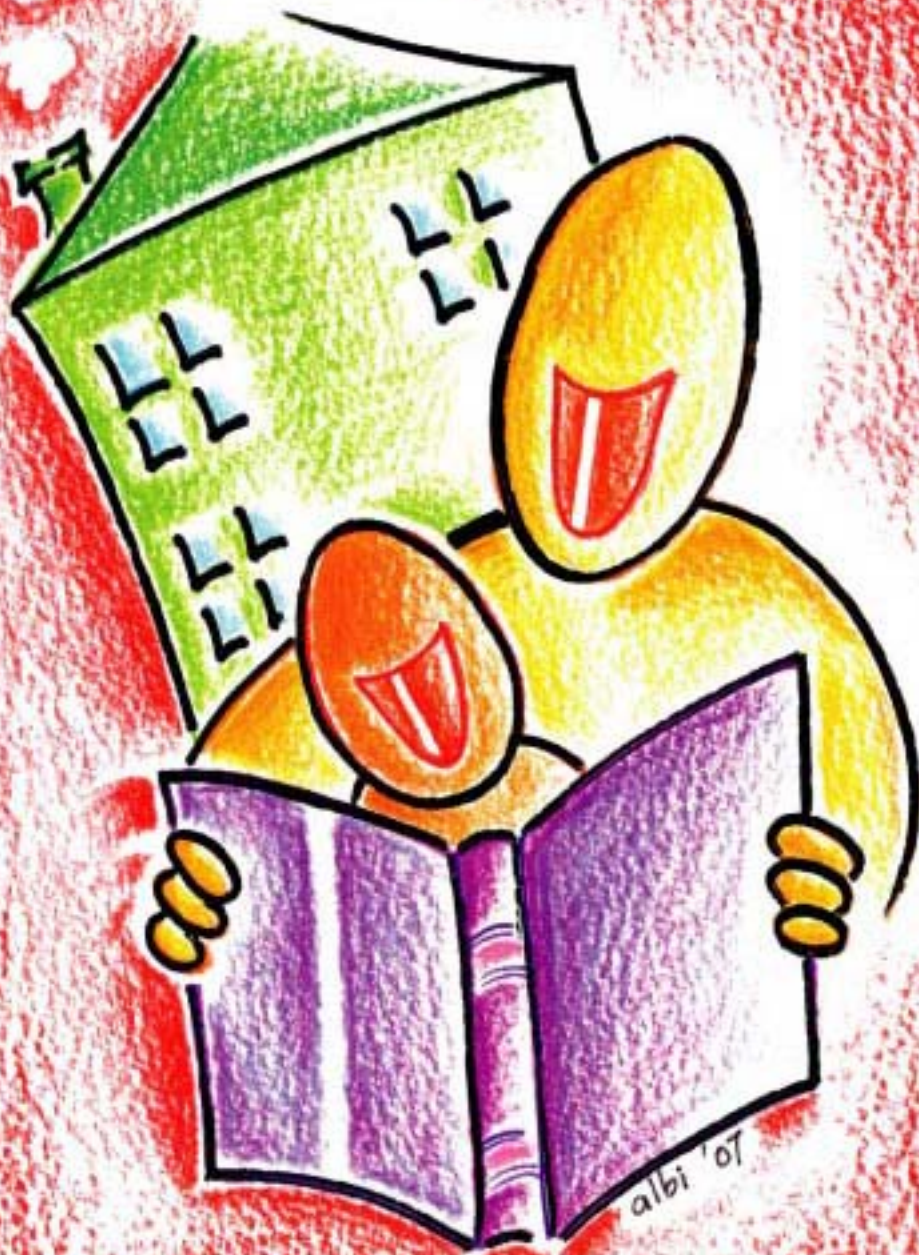


PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN EDINBURGH



NEWSLETTER 1

SEPTEMBER 2007

INTRODUCTION

This is the first in what will hopefully be a series of newsletters issued by the Parental Involvement Unit in Edinburgh. These newsletters will be issued to Chairs of Parent Councils and it is for Councils to then communicate items they feel are appropriate, to the wider Parent Forum. Copies of newsletters will also be made available on the Council webpage and www.edinburghparents.org

THE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT UNIT

Currently there are 2 members of the Unit – Graham Douglas and Audrey Palmer.

Graham is Administrative Officer, Support Services and worked in the School Board Unit from its inception in 1988 to date. Graham has over 25 years Council experience. Graham is your first point of contact.

Audrey is Devolved Resources and Support Manager (Wednesday, Thursday and Friday am) as well as Business Manager at East Craigs Primary School (Monday, Tuesday, Friday pm). Audrey was also previously Business Manager at Drumbrae Primary School.

Contact details are:

graham.douglas@edinburgh.gov.uk tel: 0131 469 3131

audrey.palmer@edinburgh.gov.uk tel: 0131 469 3138

COMMUNICATION

The first point of communication to Parent Councils will be on the Council webpage and www.edinburghparents.org.

Communications will also be issued via e-mail to the Clerk or the Chair of the Parent Council. Previously, many letters were issued via internal mail or posted out to Clerks/Chairs of School Boards. The Unit will, in the majority of instances, communicate electronically.

Examples of communications are invitations to Neighbourhood Meetings, Consultative Committee with Parents Summary Sheets, Summary of Committee decisions, Revenue Budget consultation, Session Dates consultation and training courses.

The training for recruitment and selection is currently being revised. More information will follow.



TRAINING

The training for recruitment and selection is currently being revised.

Other training courses will include courses for Clerks and Chairs. It is anticipated that a series of Neighbourhood meetings will be run each term to provide information, introduce parents to Neighbourhood Teams, question/answer sessions and look at specific local issues and areas of parental involvement.

More information will follow.

CONSTITUTIONS

The Unit has now received over 70 draft Parent Council constitutions and 7 final constitutions, approved by Parent Forums. Please remember to send a copy of your constitution to The Unit via the link on www.edinburghparents.org.

Please also advise The Unit of your Working Group contact, again via the web link.

FUNDING

The funding package has now been confirmed (information previously issued via Head Teachers) until 31 March 2008. Finance are currently writing guidance notes which will be issued shortly. Monies will be available as follows:-

- ✓ Clerk payments - £50 per meeting based on 4 meetings until the end of March 2008. Clerks cannot be paid if they are a member of the Parent Council.
- ✓ Parent Council Allocation – funding is in place to assist Parent Councils with set up costs. In addition, insurance premiums have been paid until 31 July 2008.
- ✓ School Allocation – an allocation has been made to schools in recognition of the costs incurred during the initial set up of Parent Councils.
- ✓ The Unit will shortly be issuing to Parent Councils further guidance on finance.

INSURANCE

Please note that cover is in place for every Parent Council, regardless of the stage from August 2007. Once a final constitution has been received by the Parental Involvement Unit, policy documentation will be issued from the insurance brokers.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY

In addition to the work being carried out by the Devolved Resources and Support Team, the overall parental involvement strategy for Edinburgh is currently being developed. The strategy will consist of actions under a number of priority areas:

- Developing Parent Forums and Parent Councils
- Promoting parental involvement in learning – school-based
- Promoting parental involvement in learning – non school-based
- Promoting engagement and involvement
- Promoting parental involvement in the recruitment of senior school staff
- Providing information to parents
- Working with Looked After Children
- Establishing a complaints procedure

A first draft of the strategy will be available by the middle of September. It will be circulated widely – to parents, school staff, community learning and development and early years staff, the voluntary sector, community groups and young people. We hope it will be widely discussed and are keen to hear your views on it. We aim to incorporate feedback in the final version of the strategy which will be ready in December.

Copies of the draft will be circulated widely. However, if you have not received a copy by the end of September, please contact David Maguire (0131 529 2132 or david.maguire@edinburgh.gov.uk) for your copy.

Working together, we hope that we can produce an effective strategy which will support more parents to be more involved in their children's learning and education.

PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION

The Scottish Parent Teacher Council have advised that a number of PTAs are planning to become part of their new Parent Council, often as a subcommittee. Where this is the case, they wish to stress **the importance of the PTA formally disbanding** with the Parent Council then setting up a subcommittee to carry out PTA type activities. It is not sufficient for there to be a general agreement that “the PTA will go in with the Parent Council”. PTAs, whether they have constitutions or not, have a clear legal identity; if they do not formally end this identity, insurers will continue to see them as separate bodies.

We would welcome feedback and suggestions as to how we can make Parent Councils successful in Edinburgh. If you require any assistance in taking your Parent Council forward, please do not hesitate to contact the Unit.