

352

Piaskowski K (Karen)

From: Tina Smith [Tina.Smith@orkney.gov.uk]
Sent: 02 June 2005 10:14
To: Parental Involvement Bill
Subject: 352 - Response from OIC Ed Dept



Respondee
Information Form 01.

This email has been received from an external party and
has been swept for the presence of computer viruses.

Please find enclosed the respondee information from Orkney Islands Council's Education Department.

I would appreciate if you could acknowledge receipt of the form.

Should you require further information or clarification, please contact me at the address below.

Thanks,

Tina Smith

Tina Smith
Service Improvement Officer
Department of Education & Recreation Services
Orkney Islands Council
School Place
KIRKWALL
Orkney
KW15 1NY
Tel: (01856) 873535 ext 2422
tina.smith@orkney.gov.uk

PLEASE NOTE: THE ABOVE MESSAGE WAS RECEIVED FROM THE INTERNET.

On entering the GSi, this email was scanned for viruses by the Government Secure Intranet (GSI) virus scanning service supplied exclusively by Energis in partnership with MessageLabs.

Please see <http://www.gsi.gov.uk/main/notices/information/gsi-003-2002.pdf> for further details.

In case of problems, please call your organisational IT helpdesk

Respondee information form

Please complete the details below and attach it with your response. This will help ensure we handle your response appropriately:

Name: Tina Smith, Service Improvement Officer

Address: Education Department, Orkney Islands Council, School Place, Kirkwall, Orkney, KW15 1NY

Title of consultation: **MAKING THE DIFFERENCE – INVOLVING PARENTS BETTER IN SCHOOLS**

1. Are you responding as:

- an individual?
on behalf of a group or organisation?

2a. INDIVIDUALS:

Do you agree to your response being made public (in SE library and/or on SE website)?

- Yes
No

2b. Where *confidentiality is not requested*, we will make your response available to the public on the following basis (**please tick one** of the following boxes)

- Yes, make my response, name and address all available
Yes, make my response available, but not my name or address
Yes, make my response and name available, but not my address

2c ON BEHALF OF GROUPS OR ORGANISATIONS:

Your name and address as respondees *will be* made available to the public (in the SE library and/or on SE website). Are you content for your response to be made available also?

- Yes
No

3. SHARING RESPONSES/FUTURE ENGAGEMENT

We will share your response internally with other SE policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for the Scottish Executive to contact you again in the future in relation to this consultation response?

- Yes
No

MAKING THE DIFFERENCE – INVOLVING PARENTS BETTER IN SCHOOLS

CONSULTATION QUESTION TEMPLATE [FOR PARENTZONE]

Question 1: Do you agree with the placing of a new duty on education authorities to promote parental involvement?

Supporting the role of parents has been a priority for this authority in recent years. A new duty on Education Authorities to promote parental involvement is therefore welcomed.

Question 2: Do you agree that education authorities should be required to prepare new Strategies for Parental Involvement (SPIs)?

There have been developing mechanisms for consulting widely with parents over a number of years eg questionnaires, surveys, feedback from school board meetings. Any SPI should acknowledge the strong foundation already present and seek to build on good practice.

Question 3: Do you agree that incorporating these Strategies in existing Annual Statements of Education Improvement Objectives and School Development Plans (as set out in the 2000 Act) is the right way for education authorities to set out their intentions? Or should this be done in some other way?

The strategies should be incorporated in existing systems such as Service Improvement Plans/School Development Plans.

Question 4: Do you agree that the current system of parental representation i.e. School Boards should be replaced by a more flexible system of parent forum, as decided locally by the parents, in a way which best suits them and their school best?

There is strong evidence to support the view that in this local authority the current system of school boards is highly successful and effective. Whilst additional flexibility is welcomed, there is a suspicion that the new forum would be less structured and less meaningful.

Question 5: The Bill does not prescribe the means of appointment to the new forums (elections to Boards are mandatory) but provides for parents to decide this locally. Do you agree?

Although it is not always easy, school boards are consistently formed from an appropriate representation of parent members, community, staff and others. The current composition suits local circumstances, and the view is that the new proposals in no way guarantee better involvement.

Question 6: Do you agree that education authorities should have a new duty to promote the establishment of a parent forum in each school and to support their operation?

The local authority accepts the new duty as consolidation of current practice.

Question 7: Should the Bill provide for 'composite' parent forums where this is the preferred option of parents in each school in a combined school or cluster of schools?

In a geographically dispersed island community, such as ours, no representation has been requested to consider 'composite' parent forums.

Question 8: Do you agree with the proposal for the involvement of education authorities to get the initial parent forum off the ground? If not, what alternative would you suggest?

The education authority centrally holds the relevant information and support to help establish the new parent forums. Concern has been expressed that this support might not continue beyond the initial setting up phase.

Question 9: The draft Bill leaves the forum's 'constitution' to be determined locally, either by the parents or initially under the education authority scheme. Do you agree with this approach? If not, what alternative would you suggest and why?

Feedback suggests that the current school boards wish the local education authority to strongly consider implementing an Orkney wide policy.

Question 10: Do you agree that membership of a parent forum should be confined to parents (the broad definition) of children attending the school or individuals co-opted by the parent forum? Should parents always be in the majority?

As at question 5 local opinion suggests that the present representation of a school board is a balanced one. Though ideally parents will be in the majority, where there is a very small community of parents from which to draw, this in reality may be hard to achieve in a remote location.

Question 11: Do you have a view as to how the needs of looked-after children should be addressed and catered for in the Bill?

LAC are no different from other children in respect of their rights to education. However, potential conflict may arise where natural parent and fosterer are attendants at parent forum.

Question 12: Do you agree that the Bill should not result in parent forum members being subject to automatic disclosure checks but that members, like any other parent, should only be checked when engaging in activities defined under the Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003?

Our preference would be for parent forum members to complete disclosure checks.

Question 13: On balance, do you agree that 'rights of attendance' for certain non-members of a parent forum should not be a part of the new arrangements? In other words do you agree that non-members of the parent forum should attend only by invitation or do you believe the headteacher should have the right to attend, with the councillor or other individual by invitation?

Local opinion would support the view that 'rights of attendance' should remain.

Question 14: Do you consider these functions appropriate to parent forums? Would you suggest removing or adding any, or making some obligatory and others optional?

The key functions as described eg finding out views, reporting views, reporting activities etc are well established activities. Support to deliver training to members on how to raise quality and standards, promote contact with current and prospective parents, amend constitutions etc may well be issues.

Question 15: The Bill has been drafted to allow the parent forum to find out and report the views of parents in the school on any matters which are of interest or concern to them. Do you agree with this open-ended provision or would you suggest defining the areas of interest more restrictively?

Providing support materials are available to contextualise matters of concern, parents representing the interests of all families and not single interest groups, would make valid contributions.

Question 16: Do you agree that the Bill should designate parent forums as 'agents' of the education authority for the purpose of their dealings with third parties, and that the issue of insurance should be looked into further? Or do you take an alternative view?

Agreed.

Question 17: Are these the appropriate obligations to place on education authorities in relation to their working with parent forums?

The obligations are appropriate and should be guaranteed.

Question 18: Do you agree with the provisions requiring education authorities to provide financial support or support in kind to parent forums or would you suggest alternative arrangements?

Current support for school boards is guaranteed within a local authority ring fenced budget. Should the financial climate change, the perception is that funding and commitment to support parent forums might diminish.

Question 19: Do you agree with the proposed duty on education authorities to provide advice and information to individual parents on request, on matters relating to the education of their children?

Other legislation would support this duty eg freedom of information act.

Definition of reasonable request?

Question 20: Do you agree that education authorities should be enabled to replace the current system of appointing headteachers and deputy headteachers with more modern, flexible processes and procedures?

The local authority endorses the Scottish Executive's commitment to secure the highest quality leadership in our schools. It also applauds the value of parental involvement in the appointment process, whilst recognising that education personnel are best placed to recognise leadership qualities in relation to learning and teaching.

Question 21: If you do not agree that the principle of parental involvement should be retained by the involvement of parent forums in the new senior appointments processes, please give your reasons.

Question 22: Do you agree with the proposal to require education authorities to establish complaints procedures in relation to the way they exercise their functions under the Bill?

Agreed.

If you wish to reply electronically, please email your response by **Tuesday 7 June** to parentalinvolvementbill@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Or please return it to the following address:

Parental Involvement Bill

Schools Division

Area 2B

Victoria Quay

Edinburgh

EH6 6QQ

Confidentiality

Copies of all responses received will be placed in the Executive library and will be available to the general public. Responses will also be made available to the public on the Scottish Executive website. The views expressed may be quoted or referred to in any future review of responses. **If you do not wish your responses to be made public, please ensure that you indicate clearly that all or part of your response is to be treated as confidential.** Confidentiality will be strictly respected. We will still count confidential responses in any statistical analysis and your views will of course be taken into account in the same way as for non-confidential responses.

Electronic publication and additional copies

This publication and a summary leaflet designed for parents are available via the internet at www.scotland.gov.uk/.....

Several copies of this consultation paper have sent to each school. Summary leaflets have also been sent to all schools for onward distribution to parents. If you would like additional copies or if you would like this document in another format or language or more copies please contact us on 0131 244 1860. We will try to accommodate your wishes.