

This document has been compiled by members of the Locality meetings to answer some questions which are frequently asked by Parent Council chairs (or their representatives). We do hope that you will find this helpful.

Attending the Locality Meeting

Q: Can only Parent Council chairs attend?

A: Ideally, the Parent Council chair would attend, but it is perfectly acceptable to send a representative on your behalf. What is most important is that we hear a broad view of Parent Councils; recognising that diaries / logistics are not always easy to manage. Similarly, some Parent Councils ‘buddy up’, with one representative attending on behalf of other cluster schools.

Q: Do I need to prepare anything beforehand?

A: No. Bring yourself, and your thoughts and questions. You may be new to the role and therefore some chairs may be more experienced than others; this is a perfect forum to share ideas and ask questions. No-one has a monopoly on ‘the right answer’. But, by all means if there is a particular issue you want to raise; you can signal this in advance so that time can be allocated on the agenda.

Q: What will I get out of attending this meeting? Why should I attend?

A: The forum is essentially a communication forum. It is an opportunity for Council officials to communicate key topics (we have had recent presentations from the Scottish Qualifications Authority; on strategic initiatives such as ‘Edinburgh Learns’ and on recent Scottish Government consultations). It is also an opportunity to hear of issues arising in particular schools and to understand whether there is a broader citywide issue (which can then be escalated and perhaps prompt action to be taken more quickly).

Q: I’ve heard that the Locality Meeting needs to send representatives to City Chambers. I don’t want to attend in case I get roped into that. Is that true?

A: Locality Meetings are invited to send up to 3 representatives each to the Consultative Committee with Parents (CCwP) which is a formal Council Committee, held at City Chambers. However, there are ‘usual suspects’ in each Locality who are more than happy to represent Locality issues at CCwP if no-one is otherwise minded, so no-one is press-ganged to attend CCwP. However, if there is an issue that a specific Parent Council chair is particularly passionate about or involved with, then we would always make space for them to attend CCwP if they so wished.

Finding Out More Information

Q: I am new to the role of Parent Council chair. What else should I be thinking about?

A: The first place to start is by meeting with your Head Teacher, to understand their views and expectations. There is some Scottish Government information online which can give you a bit more of a steer - <https://www.gov.scot/publications/parent-council-welcome-pack/>. Connect (formerly the Scottish Parent Teacher Council) run introductory sessions and you can find more details here - <https://www.connect.scot/events>.

As a Parent Council chair, you may be required to support the recruitment of a Head / Depute Head Teacher; regardless of previous experience, you will need to have attended a 'Recruitment and Selection' Training Event run by Edinburgh Council – more details on this (and any other Education Children & Families department matters) can be sought by contacting Parental Engagement Parental.Engagement@edinburgh.gov.uk. You should also think about inviting one (or more!) of your local councillors to attend your Parent Council meetings; they are used to being invited / attending, so don't be shy – you can find who they are here - <http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/councillors/name>.

Q: Can I access the papers for CCwP and Education Children and Families (ECF) Committee?

A: Yes. Papers are issued roughly a week before the meeting. These are available on the Council website - <http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/cpol>. The CCwP sits about a week before the ECF Committee; which means the ECF papers are normally available the day before the CCwP. The ECF papers are discussed in brief at the CCwP, and the Executive Director of ECF and/or Head of Schools & Lifelong Learning (who both attend CCwP) will typically signpost those papers of particular interest to Parent Councils.

Q: How do we get something on the CCwP agenda if it is important to us?

A: Part of the key output from Locality meetings is an understanding of what parents want to hear more about from the Council. The Parent Representative to the ECF, and any other interested Locality attendee, is invited to attend a CCwP 'agenda setting' meeting to help frame the topics to be discussed at future meetings; similar representations are also made at CCwP. The Parent Representative is currently Alex Ramage, and he can be contacted at parentrep.edin@gmail.com.

Q: Is there any other means of sharing thoughts, ideas or questions?

A: Yes. <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/edinburgh-pc-network>. This is a 'google group' discussion forum, for Parent Council chairs across Edinburgh. You will need to have a google account, and then request to be added as a Member, by the forum admin. This will then give you another invaluable source of information (and you will perhaps be able to put a face to a name if you attend a Locality meeting!).