



2017
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supporting partnerships in education

Member Leaflet

Welcome to your Connect Member leaflet! Joining Connect, formerly Scottish Parent Teacher Council, means being part of the only national membership organisation – and charity – for parents and carers with children at school, where thousands of parents go for services and advice, or to share and find information. The most important thing we do is to offer parents the help they need.

Read on for more information about the benefits of membership.

About Connect and what we do

Formerly Scottish Parent Teacher Council, the organisation was formed 70 years ago by a group of parents to share information and ideas, and to campaign about educational issues on behalf of parents.

Today we are a charity and a company limited by guarantee. We have a small staff team, and our Board still comprises mostly parents. We have teacher Directors too: we think it's important to ensure Connect has a broad perspective on education. Without Parent Councils and PTAs, Connect would not exist. Our income comes from membership fees, from around 2000 parent groups like yours.

Membership fees pay for the office and Regional Advisor team, office space and kit, website, resources and for running Information and Training sessions for parents. Of course, it also pays for membership-linked insurance which we buy on behalf of our Members.

Connect membership benefits: A brief guide

What does it mean for you and the other parents at your school to be Members of Connect? Here's a quick checklist:

- Part of a Scotland-wide parents' community, dedicated to helping parents have real engagement in their child's school and education.
- Four membership levels to choose from, so you can pick the benefits that are right for you.
- Free online and face-to-face information sessions to help your parent group work well, and to problem-solve everyday issues.
- Exclusive access to the Members' area of the Connect website and all of its resources.
- Opt in to receive termly newsletters, regular eNewsletters and take part in Parents' Voice surveys.
- Influence policy at Connect and beyond!

Helpline calling...

The Connect helpline is there for every parent who needs advice or information about anything around education.

We answer hundreds of calls and emails each year from parents who have worries about their own child, to members of a Parent Council or PTA who need help to sort out a problem.

Whatever it is, we try to help or give details of other organisations to speak to.

Our helpline is open during office hours but call and leave a message or email us anytime – we promise to respond quickly.

Helpline: **0131 474 6199** Email: **info@connect.scot**

Listening to Parents

Keeping in touch with parents and listening to what they're thinking is the most important thing we do. That's why we have Parents' Voice, our online survey group.

Parents' Voice is open to any parent – sign up on the website, at an info session or simply email us. The surveys are online and members receive an email when the survey is launched: it's up to you to respond or not – there is no obligation. The surveys are short and should take no more than 10 minutes to complete.

Parents' Voice gives you the chance to express your views and allows Connect to gauge what parents think about different issues. We've covered PVG, National Qualifications, transitions, active travel to school, bullying and more.

The results of each survey are published on the website and of course we keep all contact details completely confidential.

As well as Parents' Voice, we sometimes ask members to take part in paper membership surveys. These tend to be longer and need a bit more time to complete, but we know not everyone is able to access the internet or likes to complete online questionnaires.

As with Parents' Voice surveys, we publish the results of our Member surveys on our website, or we can send you a copy by post or email.

Could you be a Connect Director?

Are you a parent or carer involved in your child's education? Motivated by parent politics? Then you should consider joining the Board of Connect! As a small charity, our Directors are vital in making sure we provide the right services to parents and carers whose children are at Scottish schools.

Distance is no barrier – we use technology to make sure Directors who live around the country can participate in online discussions and attend meetings remotely if necessary.

We need parents and teachers to ensure we represent the interests of parent members, inform discussions and help make policy. Connect is the only independent charity in Scotland providing parent-friendly advice and information to all, as well as giving a parental perspective to policy makers and media.

Being a Director is more than just a title – they may attend regular meetings, participate in working groups, comment on policy and business issues and take on the legal responsibilities of charity trustees and company directors. Just email or phone for an informal chat to find out more.

Information and Training sessions

Members can ask us to run one of our free Information and Training Sessions. Some are online and others are led by our friendly and knowledgeable Regional Advisors. Check out our Information Session leaflet for more details.

Some local authorities have Group Membership of Connect which covers all PCs in their schools. In those areas we work in partnership with the local council and parents to plan which sessions to run.

Comments from participants include:

'Well paced, clear facilitation, enjoyed the event – good opportunity to talk to others facing similar challenges'

'It was useful to brainstorm with other school and Parent Council members'

'Sharing information with other PCs and gaining what works from them is very useful'

'We will take forward a lot of ideas! We have a better understanding of how to get more parents/carers/families involved in the school'

If you have 2, 3 or 4 star membership, you can host one or more Information and Training Sessions – just email training@connect.scot.

Easyfundraising

Connect has joined forces with easyfundraising to help our Members raise money for their parent groups in a simple and effective way. easyfundraising is the UK's leading good-cause shopping site, and it has helped educational groups raise over £12million.



Many of our Members already use easyfundraising and recommend it as a no-hassle way to raise more funds. The benefit of registering through our Connect homepage is that, on top of the funds the parent group receives, easyfundraising will donate an extra 20% of those funds to Connect. So far we've raised over £1200 in donations! It won't cost you any extra and we in turn will use those funds to provide more services to our Members.

Register your parent group by visiting <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/connect> and follow the steps to get started.

Our Membership Model



Just right if you want access to the Connect website and resources, but know you don't need the Information and Training sessions or membership-linked insurance.

You can nominate a parent to Connect's Board too.



Ideal for groups who meet but don't get involved in fundraising or social events, and need minimal access to Information and Training Sessions. Public Liability and Employer's Liability insurance is part of this membership. Access to the Members' area of the website is included, you can host one training session, and online training is included too.

And you can nominate a parent or teacher to the Board of Connect.



This level of membership is likely to suit most parent groups who run activities and up to five activity clubs or groups. As well as access to all of the benefits available with 2 star, you also get a comprehensive package of membership-linked insurance benefits: Fidelity and money insurance; Personal Accident insurance cover for helpers; All Risks insurance cover for items you buy for the group or school, and Public Liability cover for up to five activity groups/clubs.



Gives you all of the benefits of 3 star and just a bit more! Includes Extended Public Liability for low-risk activities, and if your group runs more than 5 activity clubs/groups, you get the additional Public Liability Insurance you need. With this level of membership you can also make PVG applications (if you need to) through the highly experienced Connect team. Plus, if you are planning any major events, you have access to the advice offered by our insurance broker.

	Access to member website info	Connect board nominations	Online training and surgeries	Connect training sessions p.a	£10m Public Liability insurance	£10m Employers Liability	Up to £5k Fidelity, £250k money insurance	Up to £25k Personal Accident insurance	£10k All Risks insurance cover	£10m Public Liability	£10m EPL for stall-holders/entertainers	Major projects specialist risk advice	Connect as PVG Intermediary Body
★ Essential Services	✓	✓	✓										
★★ Designed for members who do no social or fundraising activities	✓	✓	✓	1 Session	✓	✓							
★★★ Standard membership for typical groups	✓	✓	✓	2 Sessions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	up to 5 clubs			
★★★★★ Enhanced membership for very active groups	✓	✓	✓	3 Sessions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6+ clubs	✓	✓	✓

About Disclosures, PVG membership and more...

Connect Members often contact us for information and advice on protecting both children and adults, how the disclosure system affects them and how to use the PVG Membership Scheme for their volunteers.

Connect is now an Intermediary Body for Volunteer Scotland, so if your group has four star membership we can help you decide whether someone should join the PVG Scheme. If that proves necessary, we then deal with all the paperwork and liaise with Disclosure Scotland and Volunteer Scotland on your behalf.

This service for four star members complements the information service we always offer to any parent group, so do contact us if you ever have any questions about this subject.

Please get in touch if you would like to upgrade to four star membership - info@connect.scot

Insurance Q&As

We are worried that the money handling in our PC is a bit casual and we're not sure how well our Treasurer is controlling things. What can we do – and will our insurance cover us if things go wrong?

If you have 3* or 4* membership, that includes insurance against theft or fraud, but only if you have done everything you can to make sure your group's money is being properly managed! There is information for treasurers and committee members on our website and we also have an online information session on the role of the treasurer.

We're having a bouncy castle and inflatable slide at our summer fair. Are we covered for injuries to children and do we need extra insurance?

Start by checking out our information on inflatables on the website. If your group is running the activity and you have 3* or 4* membership, your public liability insurance covers your group and helpers for any incident resulting from negligence, for example if a helper allows too many children on a bouncy castle at the same time and someone is injured because of this. Remember it's a condition of the insurance that a risk assessment is carried out for any inflatable.

We are hiring a DJ to run our next disco. Will she be covered by our Connect insurance?

If you hire (pay) an entertainer like a DJ or magician then they should have their own public liability insurance. If they are not a business and don't have insurance, 4* membership provides extended public liability (EPL) which will allow you to co-opt them onto your committee for the event; he/she would then come under the umbrella of your insurance.

Can we include non PC/PTA members in our insurance, for example, stallholders?

4* membership provides this option. If you are running an event where people may be paying you for a stall (whether or not they are giving you a share of the sales) and selling things, you can co-opt them in the same way as DJs and other low-risk entertainers. For details of what can – and can't – be covered, you can find the details of 4* cover on our website.

The Connect Team - Working for our Members

Connect's staff team is small and totally focussed on helping to get parents involved in education. The charity is based in Edinburgh, with our office team responsible for the organisation of all parts of our work. We also have Regional Advisors sprinkled around the country. They lead our Information and Training sessions for parent groups so if you're lucky enough to take part in one of those sessions, you'll meet at least one of our lovely team.

Connect Online

Any parent whose PC or PTA is a member of Connect can create an account to get into the Member area of the Connect website. You'll find leaflets, advice and FAQs plus regular updates about Members' stories and news stories at www.connect.scot.

It's fast and simple to set up your account - you can do this here: <https://www.connect.scot/register>

You can also follow us on Facebook and Twitter for daily updates on what is happening with Connect and Scottish education. Find us using the details below.



ConnectScot

www.connect.scot



[connect_scot](https://twitter.com/connect_scot)

