

connect backchat

Issue 149 Summer 2019

Connect Membership is Changing!



**Connect Membership
Renewals Are Due!**

We've listened to feedback from Connect Members and are refreshing Connect Membership packages for 2019-2020. We're making some changes, designed to give Connect Members an improved experience and benefits package. For parent groups who pay for their own Connect Membership, you should have had information to renew for 2019/2020. Over twenty local authorities pay for Group Membership for all their Parent Councils, so these Parent Councils don't need to worry.

Key changes you need to know about:

- **3*** will become the main membership level for Parent Councils/PTAs/Clubs and Groups. It will now include as standard the Extended Public Liability insurance needed for stall holders and guest entertainers – no more upgrades to 4*!
- **4*** will be the membership level for Members wanting to access PVG intermediary services, or for those running 6+ groups and clubs
- We will remove **2*** membership – this was an option chosen by very few Members
- All Connect Members will be able to attend our new and revised Information Sessions. We're increasing the number of online sessions we offer and we're changing how we offer our face-to-face sessions too, planning a year-long calendar of face-to-face sessions that any Connect Member can take part in. You'll get the calendar when membership is confirmed, allowing you to plan well in advance and make sure you attend the ones you really want!

We hope these changes will make it all easier to understand and enable more Connect Members to take part. We're also looking at other ways of using social media for sharing information and stories – watch this space!

Keep in touch! Our contact details are:

info@connect.scot

0131 474 6199



ConnectScot



@connect_scot

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See our leaflets and resources on www.connect.scot

Sign up for our eNewsletters

<http://bit.ly/connectenews>

Join our Parents' Voice survey group

<http://bit.ly/Connectparentsvoice>

Connect works with parents and educators to improve children's learning and lives.

Inside this issue: Carol Craig's 10 Key Messages on resilience, Partnership Schools Case Study & more

Reading this as a hard copy? Would you rather receive it by email? Let us know! Email info@connect.scot

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Thank you to everyone who gives us feedback and those who took part in our Connect Member Survey!

We're very grateful for all the feedback we receive during the course of the year and a special thank you to those of you who responded to our Member Survey. Your views of our services have helped us refresh our Membership package to better meet your needs. We're always keen to hear from you - please get in touch by email info@connect.scot or call us on 0131 474 6199.

Connect's Annual Lecture 2019

Carol Craig, author and chief executive of the Centre for Confidence and Wellbeing, delivered a thought-provoking Annual Lecture on *Learning to Cope: How Do Children Become Resilient?*

Carol has written extensively on the subject, most recently in *The Golden Mean: Fostering Young People's Resilience*. You can listen to a recording of the lecture here <http://bit.ly/ConnectCarolCraiglecture>.

Carol also shared her ten key messages on resilience which are designed to help parents and teachers see what they can do to help develop resilience.

1. Remember bad feelings:

- don't last
- have a purpose
- galvanise us to do things differently.

2. Try to normalise young people's set-backs. Help them to see they are not abnormal in having difficulties in life.

3. Help them to see that problems can be solved.

4. Encourage young people to keep things in perspective – the problem is usually confined to only one part of their lives.

5. Remember the value of humour – laughing can be a great release (but only if it is well-intentioned).

6. Encourage young people to accept responsibility for their actions.

7. When reading stories, or discussing events, point out how people manage to overcome difficulties.

8. Remember that learning is often frustrating. Encourage young people to persist and believe they can get there.

9. Provide support. Help them to see there are people who care about them and can give them help and advice when needed.

10. Create a positive environment that emphasises the importance of relationships and a sense of purpose: there is more to life than the way they feel.



Connect's Professional Learning for Teachers, Senior Management Staff and Early Years Practitioners

We're currently working on our 2019/2020 programme of professional learning. It will include the following modules for teachers and educators: *Engaging Families in Children's Education*, *Family Engagement for School Improvement* and *Evaluation - Assessing the Impact of Family Engagement* plus a new session, *Overcoming Challenges*. These modules help to develop a shared understanding of parental engagement in children's learning and help find a pathway to family learning. We have a new Twitter feed and hashtag for educators too - please follow us! [@Connect_ScotPL](https://twitter.com/Connect_ScotPL) and [#engagfamiliesscot](https://twitter.com/engagfamiliesscot)



Call to Action! Connect calls on school communities to discuss and act on bullying NOW!

We've been working for some time with *respectme*, Scotland's anti-bullying service, running anti-bullying online sessions for parents and Parent Councils.

Our Parents' Voice survey last year with *respectme* highlighted the damage and hurt caused by bullying. We've now written an Anti-Bullying Behaviour Guide and an Anti-Bullying Behaviour Health Check.

You can find the Guide here
<http://bit.ly/connectABGuide>
and the Health Check here

<http://bit.ly/ConnectABHealthCheck>

These will help parents, staff and pupils to kickstart discussions and actions to challenge bullying. Sadly, we're increasingly becoming aware of adult to adult bullying behaviour in school communities. We urge Parent Councils to use our Code of Conduct here <http://bit.ly/ConnectCodeofConduct>. Adults are role models for children and young people and need to think carefully about how they behave too!



INCLUSION HEALTH CHECK: Anti-Bullying Behaviour

This exercise will help you identify how your school community challenges bullying behaviour, including prejudice-based bullying, and will help you identify areas for improvements. We recommend the whole school community works together on this to create an inclusive culture in which bullying cannot thrive.

PLEASE NOTE: Adults have a crucial part to play in being role models for children and young people.

Using the tick boxes, mark each one with the following colours:

GREEN: Very well implemented
ORANGE: Good start
RED: Needs improvement

INCLUSION: Anti-Bullying Behaviour	
Our school community values and respects everyone and this is made clear in all our vision/values statements, policy-making and practices	☐
The school and Parent Council recognise that bullying behaviour can happen in school, in the workplace, in the home, in the community and online	☐
Our school community has clear and visible statements that bullying behaviour is not acceptable and that respectful relationships with others are crucial for ensuring that bullying cannot thrive	☐
Everyone understands what is meant by bullying behaviour (see Connect's Anti-Bullying Guide) and that bullying is both behaviour and its impact on others	☐
The adults in our school community (parents, staff etc) understand the importance of their own behaviour because we are role models for children; bullying behaviour by adults towards children and other adults is not acceptable	☐

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Connect Parents' Voice Survey on Musical Instrument Tuition Charges

We had a massive response to our parent survey on musical instrument tuition fees, confirming the value and importance of learning musical instruments in our schools. The survey informed our robust submission with recommendations to the Scottish Parliament's Education and Skills Committee inquiry. The Committee report, the subsequent response from Cabinet Secretary John Swinney and the EIS teaching union's report have not moved the issue on much because local authorities decide budget allocations.

Whilst equality of access and free instrument tuition for those doing SQA qualifications have been highlighted, young people need to learn instruments in the years before SQA qualifications. Should they wish to study music at university, they also need to achieve grades from the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music. We stand by the recommendations in our report here <http://bit.ly/ConnectMI>

Connect's Snap Survey on School Subject Choices

We asked parents about their young person's experiences of choosing subjects in secondary school. Instead of the personalisation and choice offered by Curriculum for Excellence, parents tell of lots of restrictions and limited options.

The most common issues were teacher shortages, not enough young people choosing a subject to run the course or timetable clashes.

We used the responses for our submission to the Education and Skills Committee inquiry into the possible narrowing of subject choices.

You can read our submission here
<http://bit.ly/ConnectSubjectChoices>



Guest Column: Partnership Schools Scotland Year 3

You'll know we're proud of our Partnership Schools Scotland work which brings school communities together to work on supporting learning. Read about one of the goals of Moray Primary School, Falkirk. You'll find other case studies in the Year 3 report here

<http://bit.ly/ConnectPSSYear3>
Moray Primary School chose the following Learning Goal: to enhance the knowledge and understanding of science and social subjects with the development of skills progression. To further develop the knowledge, understanding and skills required for work.

The school used Pupil Equity Funding and local grant money to create a learning environment to support the teaching and learning of life skills for all. The team used this money to organise and resource a Life Skills Room. They updated their parent skills sheet to identify who could



help support the project. Parents helped to decorate the room and create kitchen, dining and bedroom areas. The aim is for the room to be used 75% of the week.

Parents and members of the local community will help children develop life skills such as baking, sewing, cooking, personal organisation, first aid and simple household tasks such as making the bed. The team hope to complete the room by June 2019.

In April/May, the team helped to organise a World of Work Week and other experiences where pupils engaged with parents, local businesses and the wider community to learn about different pathways and jobs; this further developed pupils' life skills and resilience.

Connect in Action: January to April

We've been busy! We've been surveying on subject choices and on Connect Membership. We also:

- held Partnership Schools Scotland meetings in Falkirk, North Ayrshire, Glasgow
- attended conferences of the South East Improvement Collaborative, the West Partnership, SCVO's The Gathering
- ran Information & Training Sessions for parent groups in Stirling, Angus, Edinburgh, West Lothian
- delivered online sessions for Members on Anti-Bullying, Social Media, Constitutions, the Role of the Chair, PVG, Secretary, Treasurer, Q & A
- attended meetings of the SQA Advisory Council, the Parliament's Cross Party Group on Children & Young People, Education & Skills Committee, the Scottish Government's Parental Involvement Steering Group.

Footnotes: Q&A with Connect

In this regular column, we answer your questions. Email them to info@connect.scot

Q: My Parent Council is thinking about becoming a charity. What do we need to consider?

A: Think carefully about why you want to do this and be clear about what it will mean for your parent group. Also remember that the Parent Council has a legal role (look at the Parental Involvement Act <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2006/8/contents>) and obligations to represent the parent forum and support the school. As a charity you would also need to comply with rules set out by the Office of the Charities Regulator (OSCR). For some groups, setting up a separate charity is the best option: the charity can support the school but would not be limited by the rules applying to Parent Councils. You could also recruit a wider range of trustees. And remember – your group may be keen as mustard now, but will the next group of parents in the PC want to take on the responsibilities of running a charity? Check out our information and advice here

<http://bit.ly/Connectcharityleaflets>


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