

connect

Connect Strategy

2026 -
2030



Who We Are

Connect is Scotland's independent charity for parents and carers in education.

We exist to ensure that parents' voices are heard and respected in all matters affecting children's learning, wellbeing and future.

We work to strengthen the partnership between home and school, promote equity and inclusion, and support parents to exercise their rights in Scotland's education system.

Our work is rooted in the belief that meaningful parental involvement is a cornerstone of high-quality, inclusive education and essential to every child's success.

We work with teachers and other educational leaders to spread the benefits of parental engagement and the power of partnership.



Our Vision

A Scotland where every child and young person can learn, grow and thrive in partnership with their family, school and community.



Our Mission

To champion the rights of parents and carers to be fully involved and respected partners in their children's education, and to promote a fair, inclusive and collaborative education system across Scotland.



Our Values

Independent – We are an independent voice for parents and carers, free from government and commercial influence.



Equitable and Fair – We are committed to reducing inequalities and ensuring all families are supported to participate in their children's education.



Rights-Based – We promote the rights of children and parents as set out in Scottish and international law, including the right to inclusive education and participation in decision-making.



Respectful – We act with integrity and respect for all those we work with.



Collaborative – We work constructively with schools, local authorities, government, and partner organisations to achieve shared goals.



Evidence-Informed – Our work is guided by research, lived experience, and the real voices of parents and carers across Scotland.



Our Unique Role

Connect makes a distinctive contribution to Scotland's education system by ensuring that parents' and carers' experiences and perspectives shape policy and practice.

We:

- Support parents, carers and parent groups to be confident, informed and effective partners in education.
- Provide accessible, accurate information and training on parental rights, school policy, and inclusive practice.
- Advocate for equity, transparency, and accountability in how Scotland's education system works for families.
- Engage directly with decision-makers to ensure that education policies are grounded in evidence and lived experience.
- Promote collaboration between parents, schools, and the wider community to improve outcomes for all learners.



We work in partnership with a wide range of organisations in education, children's rights, health, and the other partners.



We are proudly independent of government, ensuring that our work is always focused on the best interests of children and families.



Why What We Do Matters

Education shapes lives, families and communities. When parents are empowered to participate, children achieve more, schools are stronger, and society is fairer.

But too many families in Scotland still face barriers to being heard and included. Poverty, inequality, and inconsistent practice across schools and local authorities mean that some parents struggle to participate as equal partners. We want to change that.



The **Cost of the School Day** continues to create real hardship for families, limiting opportunities and affecting wellbeing.

Parents of children with **Additional Support Needs (ASN)** often have to fight for the help their child is legally entitled to receive.

And despite Scotland's strong commitment to **children's rights**, parental involvement is not yet consistent or equitable across all communities.

Connect's work is essential to tackling these challenges.

We champion **inclusion, promote accountability**, and help ensure that Scotland's education system fulfils its promise to **every child and family**.



Our Strategic Priorities 2026–2029



Families and Communities

- Every family feels welcomed, respected, and supported to engage meaningfully in their child's learning.
- Parents and carers have access to clear information, resources and support to participate in school and local decision-making.
- Local parent groups and Parent Councils are confident and effective in representing their communities.
- We champion a human rights-based approach to education, ensuring parents' voices are included in all relevant policy development.



Inclusion and Additional Support for Learning

- Children and young people with additional support needs receive the help they need, when they need it.
- Parents are informed of their rights and supported to navigate the ASL system.
- We work with partners to ensure national commitments under the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 are fully implemented.
- We advocate for transparency, accountability, and adequate resourcing of ASL provision across Scotland.



Tackling Poverty and the Cost of the School Day

- We work with schools, local authorities, and national partners to eliminate costs that exclude or disadvantage children.
- We promote policies that reduce financial barriers to participation in learning and wider school life.
- We ensure that families' lived experiences inform national strategies to tackle child poverty and educational inequality.



Parental Rights & Advocacy

- We support parents to understand and exercise their rights in education, including involvement in school improvement, access to information, and appeals processes.
- We develop and deliver advocacy training for parents and partners.
- We collaborate with legal, rights and advocacy organisations to promote fair and consistent treatment for all families.
- We champion parents' rights to participate in education policy development at every level.



Collaboration and Partnership

- We strengthen our relationships with local authorities, government and its agencies, trade unions, and other partners to influence positive change.
- We share good practice and evidence on what works in parental involvement and engagement.
- We encourage a culture of openness, respect and shared learning across Scotland's education system.
- We support parent representatives to contribute meaningfully to local and national forums.



Our Approach



A Rights-Based and Equity-Driven Approach

Connect places human rights and equality at the heart of everything we do.

We support parents and carers to know, claim, and use their rights.

We expect education providers to uphold their duties under equality and children's rights law, and we hold them to account when they do not.

Evidence and Lived Experience

We combine research with the real voices of parents and carers to influence policy and practice.

Our insights are drawn from thousands of conversations with families and parent groups across Scotland.

We ensure that lived experience informs every recommendation we make.



Our Approach



Empowerment and Capacity-Building

We provide training, guidance, resources and support for parents, carers, and Parent Councils.

We develop leadership skills and confidence so that parents can make a difference in their schools and communities.

Collaboration with Partners

We work with government, local authorities, schools and third sector partners to co-produce solutions that reflect families' realities.

Our goal is a coherent, inclusive education system where partnership between home and school is embedded in culture and practice.



Sustainable Connect

Capacity and Capability

We will invest in the development of our staff, trustees and volunteers to ensure we have the expertise, knowledge and confidence to deliver our mission.

Good Governance

We will maintain high standards of transparency, accountability and ethical leadership, ensuring that Connect remains a trusted national voice.

Financial Sustainability

We will diversify our funding base, securing long-term sustainability through partnership projects, membership growth, training delivery and grant funding.

Continuous Improvement

We will monitor, evaluate and reflect on our work, ensuring that we remain responsive to the needs of parents, carers and the wider education community.



Our Impact

Over the next three years, Connect will work towards:

- Strengthening parent voice and representation in Scottish education.
- Increase awareness of parental rights and entitlements under education and equality law.
- Improve understanding of Additional Support for Learning and ensure parents can access appropriate any help and support they might require
- Contribute to national and local policy on equity, poverty and participation.
- Advocate to support the reduction of financial barriers for families across Scotland.
- Promote collaboration between schools, parents and communities as the foundation of inclusive education.



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