**National Parent Forum Communications Strategy: External Relations**

**1. Objectives**

1. To promote and raise the profile of the National Parent Forum of Scotland
2. To promote parental/family involvement in the learning of their children
3. To promote partnership working and inclusion

**2. Publics/Stakeholders**

1. Parents/carers/families
2. Children and young people
3. Policy makers (national and local - politicians)
4. Policy implementers (national and local civil servants and agencies)
5. Educators (academics, teachers, trainees, community learning)
6. Partners (voluntary sector, specialists eg health sector, additional support for learning, unions)

**3. Content for messages**

1. Providing and gathering parent voice and offering parental perspective
2. Partnership working with a clear focus on the benefits for children and young people
3. Advocacy role in ensuring children and young people are heard
4. Parental involvement – skills sharing; communication; what makes a welcoming school?

**4. Strategy – how will we achieve our objectives?**

1. By practicing partnership working with publics
2. By communicating effectively
3. By building a profile through press relations
4. By creating parent networks
5. By continuing to develop our internet and social media presence
6. By keeping informed
7. By undertaking research
8. By evaluating the effectiveness of what we do
9. By assisting others in evaluating the effectiveness of what they do

**5. Tactics – what will we do to achieve our objectives?**

1. *By practising partnership working with stakeholders/publics:*

* Network and develop working relationships with stakeholders
* Attending meetings/events/working groups of partners
* Involving partners in projects/events
* Responding to requests for parental input
* Keeping informed about the work of partners
* Supporting the communication tactics of partners
* Sharing information, feedback and ideas with partners
* Responding to consultations/calls for evidence
* Requesting NPFS presence on publicity material

1. *By communicating effectively (Two way: welcoming parent/partner comment, views and feedback)*

* Face-to-face meetings
* Presence at events
* Newsletters
* Post cards
* Posters

1. *By building a profile through press relations*

* Build press database for education/family correspondents
* Issue press releases regularly, generating stories (call for communications strategies in schools; call for parent transitions; call for ‘welcoming schools’ campaign)
* Respond to requests for comments where possible
* Invite reps to contribute letters to letters pages – initiating themes, not just responding

1. *By creating parent networks*

* Build parent email contact database
* Reps to attend local meetings to promote NPFS, inviting parents to sign up to database (sign up sheet)
* Reps attend/drive forward local area forum meetings
* Promote reps – role of rep as facilitator/listener/contributor; and as individuals

1. *By continuing to develop our email, internet and social media presence*

* Develop website content and user-friendliness, including discussion forum
* E Newsletters
* Updates by email from reps
* Tweet
* Develop Facebook pages

1. *By keeping informed*

* Environmental scanning of parent/education-related items on the internet
* Reading and keeping up to date with education and family-related policy and implementation
* Attending meetings/conferences etc
* Ensuring reps are kept informed of latest developments

1. *By evaluating the effectiveness of what we do*

* Research whether communication reaches local/parent destinations
* Gather web hits information
* Gather information on e newsletter take-up
* Environmental scanning of NPFS mentions (partner documents; internet; press)
* Collect feedback at events
* Seek feedback from partners on our communications

1. *By assisting others in evaluating the effectiveness of what they do*

* Feed back information from schools, local authorities and parents as to whether information has cascaded down and as to whether parental awareness on policy matters is in place
* Communicate generic parent experiences and perceptions at meetings/work shops
* Complete surveys and questionnaires as appropriate

1. *By undertaking research to gather and communicate parental views*

* Focus groups
* Surveys/questionnaires
* Consultation events
* Commissioned reports
* Follow-up research