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The
**Engaging
Parents
Toolkit**
Techniques to maximise parental impact



Publishing
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The Engaging Parents Toolkit

**Julie McGrane with contributions from
Charles Desforges and David Leat**

**Helping you to raise achievement in school through better
communication with parents.**

Every school has a different position regarding the communication between their school and their students' parents, as well as a different cohort of parents from year to year. This means that when tackling the issue of involving parents in their child's learning there really is no room for any school to feel that the job is finished.

There are many levels and types of parental involvement in students' education but the one that has been proven to impact on pupil achievement the most is talking at home. This is where **The Engaging Parents Toolkit** can help you.

Getting you started on building relationships with parents

The Engaging Parents Toolkit is designed to help you start conversations with the parents of your students and your staff to make a difference to pupil attainment. The toolkit comes in 5 sections which are specifically designed to help you engage with parents in a way that will have a positive impact on students. The sections cover areas such as:

- What is known about parental involvement
- Templates for promoting talk about learning
- National policy and school priorities

Easy to use

In this toolkit you will find a range of tools designed to help you engage with parents in a way that will have a positive impact on students. There is no need to read this document in the order presented here. The navigation tool provided in the toolkit will help you to use it however you see fit for your school. It will help you to tackle the most urgent issues regarding parental involvement in your school.

Read on for a summary of what is included in each section:

Section 1 What do we know about parental involvement (Prof. Charles Desforges)

This provides you with a summary of the latest evidence about parental involvement.

It can be copied and given to SLTs, governors, staff and parents to read or you can use the tools provided elsewhere in the toolkit to share this evidence.

Section 2 Tools for starting conversations

This provides you with a range of tools for starting conversations with staff and parents.

They can be used as starter activities for events you already run or as a sequence of activities for new forms of engagement. Either way they help you build a relationship around shared priorities which contribute to helping young people succeed.

Section 3 Templates for promoting talk about learning

This provides you with a range of exemplar 'templates' designed to encourage parents, students and school to talk about learning.

They can be used to help you review the contribution that processes such as parents' evenings, mentoring days and homework diaries make to learning. This section also exemplifies how templates can be used to encourage 'at home' talk. You will also find a focus on fathers here.

Section 4 Enquiring parents

This provides you with a description and explanation of the potential benefits of engaging parents in enquiry. In addition, it provides tools to get you going and accounts from practice so you can learn from the experience of others.

This can be used in two ways. Firstly, it can include parents in the process of gathering parental views (useful for your self-evaluation form). Secondly, it explores how enquiry might be used to support/challenge specific groups of parents. It also

considers how you could use student enquiry to promote 'at home' talk and bridge the gap between home and school.

Section 5 National policy and school priorities (Professor David Leat)

This provides a summary of aspects of policy and practice with which you will be wrestling in school and explores where parental involvement could connect and add value.

Use it to build shared understanding among staff and governors.

To help you use the toolkit to its full potential we have included an audit tool. This will enable you to identify the key areas that you need to focus on in your school and prioritise those areas that need to be tackled first.

See for yourself how other schools have used the tools effectively

Also included in **The Engaging Parents Toolkit** are case studies to help demonstrate how the tools have worked in practice in a variety of different school settings.

The Engaging Parents Toolkit will:

- Help you to review the way your school currently involves parents/carers
- Provide you with the materials you need to complete section 2 of the SEF
- Help staff to understand the benefits of involving parents
- Provide tools to engage all parents, including those 'more difficult to reach'
- Make parental involvement core to your school's development
- Maximise the quality of statutory provision (ie parents' evenings and reporting)
- Provide tools to improve pupil achievement through parental involvement
- Facilitate agreement on mutual priorities between parents and school

About the author

Julie McGrane runs Leading Learning (Education), a consultancy committed to helping individuals and organisations develop and innovate by making learning their core business. Having been a teacher and network consultant for the National College for School Leadership, Julie now engages in a variety of work. In addition to inspecting schools, Julie works with them as they innovate in the areas of curriculum, teaching and learning and professional learning. She is also a visiting fellow at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne.

To find out more visit www.leadinglearning.eu.