



eNewsletter

December 2020

We'll all be glad when the Christmas holidays start and we can begin to look forward to a new and hopefully better year. We wish you and your family a peaceful festive break when it comes.

In the meantime, here's the latest news from Connect and partners in education

- [Have a parent pat-on-the-back for your help with our surveys this year](#)
- [Connect's Online Information Sessions in January](#)
- [Connect's Digital Survey](#)
- [The launch of Connect's Manifesto](#)
- [Join our online Information Session with easyfundraising](#)
- [Become a Connect Director - we need you!](#)
- [Connect campaigns: Communicating with Parents Plans](#)
- [The latest news in Scottish Education](#)
- [Connect Members: Update your group's contact details](#)
- [Our Members' closed Facebook group](#)
- [Support us through Amazon Smile and Charities Aid Foundation](#)

Please share this eNewsletter with other parents and education professionals and invite them to subscribe to it [here](#).

NOTE: If you forward this eNewsletter on to others, please ask them NOT to unsubscribe or they will unsubscribe you!

For tips, pointers and the latest news about the world of Scottish education, follow and like us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). We are also on [LinkedIn](#). To access all the content on our website, please register [here](#).



[The biggest thank you ever...to the thousands of parents who helped with our surveys](#)

We received an astonishing 10,008 responses to our three parent/carer surveys this year. We asked how families were managing in lockdown, what parents were feeling about the return to school/nursery and more recently, about children and young people being back in school/nursery.

You helped us to take your lockdown experiences and issues directly to Scottish Government, local authorities and key education partners. Thank you! We acted as quickly as we could, pushing hard for improvements. Whether this made enough of a difference, we can't be sure. But we can tell you - we really, really tried. Read the three reports:

- [How are you doing?](#)
- [Next Steps \(Back to School\) and How are you doing now?](#)
- [Back at School](#)

[Join Connect's Online Information Sessions January 2021](#)

We're delighted to set out details of our Information Sessions for Connect Members for January. Please click on the session you want to join and book your free place!

- [Social and Fundraising Events](#) 19 January 8pm
 - [Easyfundraising](#) 26 January 8pm (see below)
 - [Money Matters for Parent Groups and Treasurers](#) 28 January 1.30pm.
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[Connect's Digital Survey](#)

[Our latest survey](#) is on digital technology used for learning in schools and at home. With the pandemic, this is more important than ever! It closes 16 December.

This will also help us with our response to the Scottish Government's *Digital Strategy for Scotland* consultation, which you can read [here](#).



[Our Manifesto 2021-2026 is launched!](#)

Connect's Manifesto sets out our priorities for the next five years (2021-2026) as we work to improve parental engagement in children's learning and school lives. This is the key factor in improving children's outcomes and also improves schools and nurseries. Read the Manifesto [here](#). We've set out four themes to focus on over the next few years. These are:

- the importance of parents and carers in children's learning
- the important role of parents in improving schools and nurseries
- the importance of good relationships between families, schools and nurseries
- fairness, kindness and access for all children and young people in our education system.

Thank you to those of you who helped shape this by sharing your priorities in our surveys and Information Sessions!



[Connect introduces: easyfundraising - join our Information Session!](#)

Easyfundraising is a way for parent groups to fundraise when the families in their school and the wider community do their normal online shopping, at no extra cost.

We're pleased to host this Information Session at 8pm on 26 January with easyfundraising so you can find out more. There will also be two £25 donations for parent groups!

You'll find out how easyfundraising works and how to get people involved. This session will be useful to both new and existing users of easyfundraising and there will be an opportunity for questions.

Book your free place [here](#).

If your parent group is not already registered with easyfundraising as a good cause, then you can register through the Connect easyfundraising landing page [here](#).

Please note: This session is sponsored by easyfundraising.

[Passionate about Parental Engagement? Become a Connect Director!](#)

Our AGM is scheduled for March (more details in the January eNewsletter), and we're looking for energetic new parent volunteers to join our fantastic Board of Directors. There's probably never been a more important time to be involved as the impact of COVID-19 keeps having an impact on our children's education and learning, and the role of parents and families becomes even more critical! If you value what Connect does, and want to support our work, please consider becoming a Director! Find more information about the role and the nomination form [here](#). If you'd like to chat about the role, email us on info@connect.scot. We'd love to hear from you!



[Communicating with Parents Plans - recommended by Education Scotland and the Scottish Government!](#)

Parents told us in all three of our COVID-19 surveys this year that communication from schools/nurseries to parents could be improved. We're pleased to see our idea for every school/nursery to have a *Communicating with Parents Plan* now features as a recommended action in new [COVID-19 parental involvement guidance](#) and also in this [Education Scotland guidance](#) in the context of school closures. But we'd like to see ALL communication with parents in a plan which is discussed by and agreed with parents and schools.

Other guidance from the COVID-19 Education Recovery group is [here](#).



[Scottish Education Updates](#)

- Highers and Advanced Higher exams [will not go ahead for 2021](#), and instead will now be awarded based on teacher judgement of individual learner attainment, similar to National 5s. Education Secretary John Swinney said this method would be fairer to the many young people who have had their learning disrupted by COVID-19.
- Connect gathered your views on out of school care and submitted [our response](#) to the Scottish Government consultation. You can now read the Scottish Government summary report on the consultation responses [here](#). Most responses were from parents and carers.
- The Scottish Government recently consulted on its proposal to provide free bus travel for people resident in Scotland aged under 19. Read Connect's response [here](#).
- The Scottish Parliament's Education and Skills Committee is looking for views on

[Connect Members: Please update your contact details!](#)

To make it easier for Connect Members to update their group's contact details, we've created an online form [here](#). If you've set up a general Parent Council/PTA email address eg schoolnameparentcouncil@gmail.com, we'd be grateful if you could also complete the online form, so we can make sure you receive all the benefits of your Connect membership!



[Join our new Member-Only Connect Facebook Group!](#)

Join our closed Facebook Group for Connect Members [here!](#) Many parent groups are exchanging knowledge and ideas in this private space - don't miss out!

PLEASE NOTE: You must answer **all three** of the questions to join so your application can be approved. The Parent Council/PTA/parent group of your child's school should be a Connect Member (or you can be an individual Connect Member), and you need to confirm you agree to the group rules. We also need to know your local authority (there are lots of schools around Scotland with the same name!)



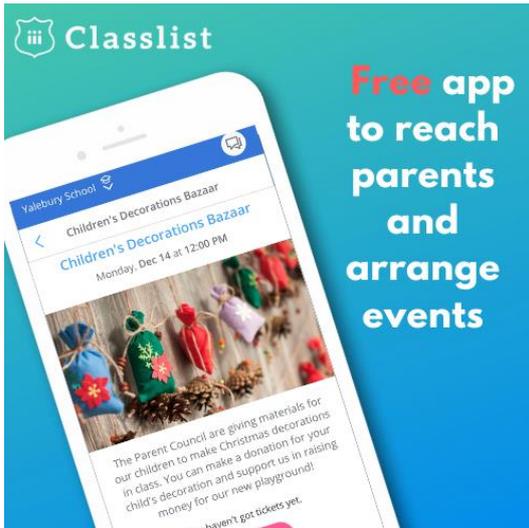
[Support Connect while online shopping with Amazon Smile or by donating through Charities Aid Foundation!](#)

If you feel able to do so, you can now support Connect's work in a couple of ways:

- Through Amazon Smile if you shop with Amazon: choose Connect as your preferred charity [here](#) (under our registered charity name Scottish Parent Teacher Council). Every time you make a qualifying purchase through the [Amazon Smile Portal](#), Amazon will donate 0.5% of the net purchase price (not including VAT and shipping)
 - By donating through our [Charities Aid Foundation web page](#).
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[COVID-19 Scottish Government Guidance for Schools](#)

- The most recent report from the Scottish Government COVID-19 education sub committee about the evidence on COVID-19 transmissions and risks for children, young people and staff in education and early years settings is [here](#).
 - The latest Current Scottish Government guidance around reducing risks of COVID-19 in schools is [here](#).
 - You'll find links to key Scottish Government documents on education and COVID-19 on our website [here](#).
 - You can also find advice on Parent Club [here](#).
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About Classlist (sponsored)

Classlist's free app is the most popular event and community management tool used in UK schools.

- A safe, inclusive online community: all your parents together in one place
- Easy to moderate and manage: fully GDPR compliant
- Reach all families with colourful newsletters and instant app alerts
- Collect payments and donations, set up events, issue e-tickets and sign up volunteers - for virtual as well as live events

Classlist's award-winning 'virtual school gate' can be up and running in minutes. [Find out more.](#)

'Classlist has been invaluable during lockdown. It has been such a useful tool. We would have struggled keeping in contact with the parents without Classlist!' - Chair of the PTA, Longstone Primary, Edinburgh

This article is sponsored by Classlist.



While we are working from home, the best ways to contact us are by email on info@connect.scot or through [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#).
