

James Gillespie's High School Council Constitution

This is the constitution for James Gillespie's High School Council (JGHS Council).

The JGHS Council represents the Parent Forum of the school under the provisions of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006. Section 5.1 'The parents of the pupils in attendance at a public school constitute (and are collectively known as) the "Parent Forum".'

The JGHS Council replaces the School Board and Parent Teacher Association set up under earlier legislation.

Expressions used in this constitution have the same meaning as in the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 — as outlined in Appendix 1. For clarity, the definition of "parent" is reproduced here:

"Includes guardian and any person who is liable to maintain or has parental responsibilities (within the meaning of section 1(3) of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995) in relation to, or has care of a child or young person."

1. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the JGHS Council are to work in partnership with the school:

- to create a welcoming school which is inclusive for all parents
- to encourage links between the school, parents, pupils, JGHS Trust, feeder primaries, pre-school groups and the wider community
- to develop and engage in all activities in the school
- to identify and represent the views of parents on the education provided by the school and other matters affecting the education and welfare of the pupils
- to be engaged in strategic planning and appointments for the school
- to carry out the functions required of it by the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 — as outlined in Appendix 2.

2. MEMBERSHIP OF THE JGHS COUNCIL

JGHS Council membership is open to all parents. The JGHS Council will encourage all parents to contribute to its activities.

There will be no maximum number of members. Membership will include:

- Officers of the JGHS Council
- Members of sub-groups of the JGHS Council
- Parents who attend meetings of the JGHS Council
- Members co-opted by the JGHS Council.

The head teacher will be a co-opted member of the JGHS Council. The head teacher has both a right and duty to attend, or be represented at, all JGHS Council meetings.

The JGHS Council will publish a list of office bearers, those serving on sub-groups, and those in attendance at recent meetings of the JGHS Council, including co-opted members. This list will be updated and made available with the papers for each JGHS Council meeting.

3. OFFICERS

The JGHS Council will have a chair, vice-chair, communications officer, secretary and treasurer and other officers as deemed necessary to enable it to carry out its functions and fulfill its objectives. Posts may be shared. Officers must be JGHS parents.

Officers will be chosen at the AGM. Terms of office will be for one year, and posts will be filled on an annual basis. If for any reason an office becomes vacant during that time, the JGHS Council will agree another parent member to serve the remainder of the term. No parent may serve more than four terms as an officer, or hold more than one appointment at any time, unless there are insufficient parents willing to take up office. Officers will be expected to maximise their attendance at JGHS Council meetings.

4. SUB-GROUPS

The JGHS Council may form such sub-groups as it considers necessary to carry out its functions and fulfill its objectives. It will set the remit for, and may delegate appropriate authority to, each sub-group.

Each sub-group will be accountable to the JGHS Council, and will report to the JGHS Council on its activities.

5. CO-OPTED MEMBERS

The JGHS Council may co-opt interested staff or pupils from the school community, or members of the wider community, to advise or assist the JGHS Council or sub-groups in carrying out their function and in meeting their objectives.

The JGHS Council will review co-opted memberships as necessary, and report on these to the AGM.

6. JGHS COUNCIL MEETINGS

The JGHS Council will meet regularly during term time, on dates set well in advance and included in the school calendar.

The agenda for meetings will be made known to parents and the school community at least 7 days in advance. All parents, staff and pupils are encouraged to submit agenda items to the secretary for inclusion in the agenda, at least two weeks in advance of the JGHS Council meeting.

The quorum of a JGHS Council meeting shall be four parent members of the JGHS Council, including at least two officers. The meeting must be chaired by an officer. The officers will arrange additional meetings of the JGHS Council, if requested to do so by four or more parent members of the JGHS Council. JGHS Council meetings will be open to the public. Minutes of all meetings will be made public. Copies will be made available to all parents, to staff, and to the head teacher.

7. DECISION MAKING

As far as possible, the JGHS Council and sub-group meetings will take decisions by reaching consensus.

Any member of the JGHS Council unable to attend a meeting may submit a written statement of their views on any item on the agenda of a JGHS Council meeting. When that item is being dealt with, the chair of the meeting will read the member's statement to the meeting, or with the agreement of the meeting may summarise it.

Any member concerned that a consensus will not be, or has not been reached, may demand that a vote is taken. In any vote the view of the majority of those parent members present and voting will prevail. In case of a tie, whoever is chairing the meeting will have the casting vote. The votes cast and the outcome of the vote shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

When a vote is required at any meeting of the JGHS Council, on an item which did not appear on the published agenda, that item will be placed on the agenda for the next meeting to be decided there.

Co-opted members will have the right to be heard at any meeting they attend, and the JGHS Council and sub-groups will have due regard to this, but co-opted members will not have any right to vote, where voting is required.

The JGHS Council will have due regard to the advice of the head teacher, or any representative of the head teacher, in reaching its decisions.

8. GENERAL MEETINGS

The Annual General Meeting will be held in the first term of each academic year. A notice of the meeting including date, time, and place, will be sent to all members of the JGHS Parent Forum at least 4 weeks in advance. Where possible, items for consideration at the AGM should be submitted in sufficient time to ensure inclusion with the notice of meeting. The meeting will include:

- a report on the work of the JGHS Council and its sub-groups
- election of officers for the forthcoming year
- appointment of auditor(s)
- discussion of issues that members of the Parent Forum may wish to raise
- approval of the accounts
- consideration of any constitutional amendments duly submitted in advance
- head teacher's report
- disclosure and review of co-opted members
- election of two JGHS Council trustees to the JGHS Trust
- such other business as the JGHS Council considers appropriate

If 10 or more members of the Parent Forum request a special general meeting to discuss issues falling within the JGHS Council's remit or concerns about the conduct of its business, the JGHS Council will arrange such a meeting. Business at a special general meeting will be restricted to that outlined in the notice given.

9. CONDUCT

If anyone present at any meeting acts in a way that is considered by a majority of parent members present at the meeting to undermine the objectives of the JGHS Council, they will not be allowed to take any further part in the meeting, and may be required to leave the meeting if there is any further disruption.

If a JGHS Council member continues to act in a way that is considered by other members to undermine the objectives of the JGHS Council, a proposal that their membership of the JGHS Council be terminated should be placed on the agenda of the next meeting. Their membership will then be terminated if a majority of members present at that meeting agree, and this will be confirmed in writing to the member. Where the member was an officer of the JGHS Council, the office will be deemed to have become vacant.

10. COMPLAINTS

Formal complaints about JGHS Council activities shall be made in writing (or by email) to the JGHS Council chair or vice-chair and copied to the head teacher. The head teacher and the chair will endeavour to ensure that a satisfactory outcome is achieved for the complainant and that processes and procedures are updated as required.

11. PERSONAL ISSUES

The JGHS Council will not become involved in individual parent grievances, which should be pursued through the education authority's complaints procedures, with the school or the authority as appropriate. The JGHS Council may, however, pursue issues of broader relevance arising out of individual cases of which it becomes aware.

12. SENIOR STAFF APPOINTMENTS

The JGHS Council will nominate two or more members to undertake appropriate training and to represent the JGHS Council through participation in the appointment of a head teacher, deputy head teacher or other senior staff, should circumstances require. The JGHS Council will seek to ensure that such participation in appointments is invited by the appointing body.

13. ACCOUNTABILITY

The JGHS Council is accountable to the JGHS Parent Forum. The JGHS Council will publish a report at least once each year on its activities on behalf of parents. This report will be made available to all parents, pupils, the head teacher and other staff of the school, as well as to the education authority.

14. CONFIDENTIALITY

If the JGHS Council is discussing an issue which it considers should be dealt with on a confidential basis, the discussion may be restricted to a closed group. In such cases, the JGHS Council officers, having due regard to the advice of the head teacher, will decide how to proceed, including any restriction on discussion.

15. FUNDS

Any bank or building society account in the name of the JGHS Council will require the signature of the treasurer and one JGHS Council officer for any withdrawal.

The treasurer will keep an accurate record of all income and expenditure, and will provide a summary of this for each JGHS Council meeting and a full account for the Annual General Meeting. The accounts will be audited annually (by a member of the JGHS Parent Forum who is not an officer of the JGHS Council) prior to the Annual General Meeting. The JGHS Council shall be responsible for ensuring that all monies are used in accordance with the objectives of the JGHS Council.

16. SCHOOL TRUST

The JGHS Council shall elect up to two council members to serve on the JGHS School Trust as trustees, as long as the trust shall exist. The term of office for trustees will be two years.

17. CONSTITUTION

The JGHS Council may change its constitution after obtaining consent from members of the Parent Forum at the AGM. The proposed amendment or amendments will be made available to members of the Parent Forum, who will be given reasonable time to respond to the proposals. Constitutional amendments must be submitted to the officers of the JGHS Council in sufficient time to ensure inclusion with the papers giving notice of the AGM. A copy of the amended or new constitution must be provided to the head teacher and the education authority.

18. EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

In exceptional circumstances, following discussion among the officers and where a majority of the officers are concerned that there is a need to act more quickly than would otherwise be allowed under this constitution, they may do so, subject to that action being reported to and agreed by the next meeting of the JGHS Council. This may include calling meetings at shorter notice and without prior publication of papers.

19. DISSOLUTION

Should the Parent Council cease to exist, any remaining funds will be passed to the education authority, specifically for the benefit of the school where this continues.

APPENDIX 1. Meaning of expressions used

Includes extracts from glossary included in the Scottish Executive's Guidance to the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006:

Parent - Defined in the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 as amended. Includes guardian and any person who is liable to maintain or has parental responsibilities (within the meaning of section 1(3) of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995) in relation to, or has care of a child or young person.

Parent Council - The statutory body responsible for representing parents' views. Parent Councils replace the system of School Boards.

Parent Forum - All parents who have a child attending a public school are automatically members of the Parent Forum for that school. The Parent Forum may choose to be represented by a Parent Council.

School Improvement Plan - All schools are required to produce a plan under the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. (Scotland) Act 2000. Improvement plans must now include a reference to the education authority's strategy for parental involvement.

APPENDIX 2. Schedule of core functions of a Parent Council, as outlined in the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006, section 8, subsection 1.

- (a) to support the endeavours of those managing the school —
 - (i) to raise standards of education in the school,
 - (ii) to secure improvements in the quality of education which the school provides, and
 - (iii) to develop to their fullest potential the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of the pupils attending the school,
- (b) to make representations —
 - (i) to the school's head teacher and to the education authority about the arrangements in the school for promoting the involvement of parents in the education of such of those parents' own children (of whatever age) as attend the school and of its pupils generally,
 - (ii) to the education authority about the arrangements in its area for promoting the involvement of parents of pupils attending schools in that area in the education of such of those parents' own children (of whatever age) as so attend and of those pupils generally,
- (c) to promote contact between —
 - (i) the school,
 - (ii) the Parent Forum,
 - (iii) parents of prospective pupils of the school,
 - (iv) pupils in attendance at the school,
 - (v) the community, and
 - (vi) such other persons as it appears to the council appropriate to include for the purposes of this paragraph,
- (d) to report on the council's activities to the members of the Parent Forum, as often as appears to the council to be appropriate but in any event —
 - (i) not more than 12 months after the council is established, and
 - (ii) after that first report, at intervals of not more than 12 months,
- (e) to ascertain the views of the members of the Parent Forum as regards —
 - (i) the standards of education in the school,
 - (ii) the quality of education which the school provides,
 - (iii) the exercise by the council of its functions, and
 - (iv) such other matters as appear to the council to be of interest or concern to the Parent Forum,
- (f) to collate those views and report them to—
 - (i) the head teacher of the school,
 - (ii) the education authority, and
 - (iii) such other persons as it appears to the council appropriate to include for the

purposes of this paragraph,

(g) to review from time to time its constitution, and with the "requisite consent", to amend (or replace) the council's constitution whenever it appears to the council to be necessary or expedient to do so. Requisite consent —

(i) is consent obtained after each member of the Parent Forum has been sent a copy of the proposed amendment or replacement with an invitation to the member in question to indicate, within such reasonable time as the council may specify in the invitation, whether the member agrees to that amendment or replacement, and

(ii) is the consent of the majority of such members of the parent forum as respond timeously to that invitation.

(h) whether or not it has ascertained and collated the views of the members of the Parent Forum as regards a matter mentioned in paragraph (e) above, to make representations to

(i) the head teacher of the school,

(ii) the education authority, or

(iii) such other person as it appears to the council appropriate to include for the purposes of this subsection, as regards that matter.

(i) to agree and reasonably request an appropriate form for the report which the head teacher must make to the Parent Council at least once a year, evaluating the performance of the school and stating what the head teacher's objectives and ambitions for the school are, having regard to —

(i) the school's development plan and in particular the objectives for the school which the plan sets and the statement of ambitions for the school which it contains,

(ii) the report most recently prepared under section 6(4) of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 (asp 6) (report as to what has been done, over a period of 12 months, in implementation of that plan),

(iii) the measures and standards of performance defined and published most recently under section 7(1) of that Act (review of school performance), and (iv) the equal opportunity requirements.

(j) involvement in the education authority's "appointment process" for filling any head teacher or deputy head teacher post at the school, including consultation over changes to that process, creation of job descriptions and person specifications, shortlisting, interview and selection.

(k) involvement in the setting up and review of the education authority's ./ complaints procedures

(l) involvement in the preparation and review of the school's development plan

APPENDIX 3. Schedule of financial powers of a Parent Council, as outlined in the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006, section 10.

(1) A Parent Council may

a)raise funds by means other than borrowing

b)receive gifts and may expend any sums so received at its discretion

(2) A Parent Council is to keep proper accounts in relation to any sums received by it under subsection (1)

(3) A Parent Council is not to acquire any interest in heritable property, whether by inheritance, gift or otherwise.

End of extract