

**James Gillespie's High School**

**Parent Council Meeting**

**Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2021**

**Note of meeting**

This meeting was held using Microsoft Teams due to ongoing limitations on group meetings related to Covid-19. Questions from parents and carers were invited prior to the meeting and could also be added during the meeting using a moderated chat.

The following are notes of the presenter names and main points covered, as well as any relevant links, to accompany the video of the meeting held on Teams which is available to view at: <https://youtu.be/ZEF3uHOG-Uo>

Further responses to questions submitted during the meeting are also available at:  
<https://jghspc.wordpress.com/documents/meeting-minutes/>

**Presenters:**

Donald Macdonald – DM (HT), Sarah Scott – SS (Chair), Laura Stewart – LS (DHT), Ben Lewis – BL (DHT)

**Moderators:**

Graeme Davis – GD, Cath Downie – CD, Ailsa Macintosh – AM

**1. Welcome and note of last meeting (0:00:00 – 00:03:24)**

SS welcomed everyone and outlined the format of the meeting. Formal minutes were not recorded for the previous online meeting (23 March 2021) as a video record is available at <https://youtu.be/O0i8dZoNBGA>

SS indicated that there would be one further Parent Council meeting in the 2020/21 school year which would take place on Tuesday 8 June.

She noted that Daniel Johnson MSP had been re-elected as MSP for Edinburgh Southern constituency and thanked all the MSPs and councillors who support the Parent Council in raising parents' issues.

**2. Introduction – Sarah Scott (00:03:24 – 00:09:34)**

SS updated the meeting on changes to Active Schools funding which will affect how activities are delivered in the future. Further information would be available at the next Parent Council meeting.

She reported on concerns raised by Parent Councils across Edinburgh about the operation of the SQA's Alternative Certification Model and invited parents to raise any issues with the Parent Council.

She reported on Parent Council finances and the ways in which parents can contribute via EasyFundraising and ParentPay. Further information on Parent Council fundraising is available at: <https://jghspc.wordpress.com/fundraising/>

SS thanked Shelagh Shields on her retirement from Parent Council, for her work over many years as Refreshments Co-ordinator.

### **3. Overview – Donald Macdonald (00:09:34 – 00:31:52)**

DM welcomed the fact that students had come back to school on a full-time basis since Easter, and noted that there had not been an active covid case in the school since November 2020.

He spoke on SQA exams and indicated that the school would prefer a more holistic approach as last year, but was working hard to implement the system to the SQA had put in place. Changes continue to SQA guidance continue to occur. Exam security had been raised as an issue, which was an inevitability with assessments not taking place on a single day, although assessments would not be identical across schools.

The school and the prom committee are working together to organise events to mark S6s leaving school, running in June and at the end of August/beginning of September.

He acknowledged difficulties for some parents in booking appointment for the recent S1 parents' evening. He has written to parents on this.

The school is looking at extra-curricular activities, including Active Schools, with a view to widening participation.

He also spoke on Young Scot cards, plans for changing timetables in June, P7-S1 transition and interviewing for new staff.

### **4. Capacity contingency plans – Laura Stewart (00:31:52 – 00:41:55)**

LS gave an update on plans to deal with capacity issues in 2021/22 through the use of part of the Children First building adjacent to the school.

The presentation can be viewed at: <https://jghspc.wordpress.com/category/parent-council/>

Updates on capacity planning are also available on the school website at: <https://www.jamesgillespies.co.uk/information/capacity-updates-2021-22/>

### **5. Re-organisation of school communities – Ben Lewis (00:41:55 – 00:48:26)**

BL gave a presentation on plans to re-organise school communities to facilitate Pupil Support re-structuring in light of rising rolls.

The presentation can be viewed at: <https://jghspc.wordpress.com/category/parent-council/>

### **6. Questions and answers (00:48:26 – 01:12:18)**

DD, LS and BL answered questions on SQA assessment arrangements, alternatives to the S1 residential weekend, Council-provided iPads, the use of textbooks, beards for pupils, the

availability of lockers, instrumental tuition, the use of own devices in school and school WiFi.

See also <https://jghspc.wordpress.com/documents/meeting-minutes/> for these and other questions.

**7. Thanks (01:12:18 – 01:12:55)**

SS thanked all the presenters and noted the importance for parents of being able to hear from school staff about developments in such a disrupted year.

**8. Date of next Parent Council meeting**

Tuesday 8 June