

**James Gillespie's High School**

**Parent Council Meeting**

**Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> September 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/DIXZ9cRECjs>

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) and Ian Porter – IP (DHT)

**Moderators:**

Cath Downie – CD and Hilary Snaith – HS

**1. Welcome and note of last meeting (0:00:00 – 00:02:27)**

SS welcomed everyone and outlined the format of the meeting. Formal minutes were not recorded for the previous online meeting (8 June 2021) as a video record is available at <https://youtu.be/iz0SOso6wz8>

**2. Introduction – Sarah Scott (00:02:27 – 00:10:40)**

SS welcomed Donald Macdonald, HT, to give his report on the start of the school year and Ian Porter, DHT, to welcome S1 parents.

She outlined the role and organisation of the Parent Council for those who were unfamiliar with it, updated the meeting on the latest Consultative Committee with Parents (CCwP) meeting with the Council and reported on the results of the survey of parents (<https://jghsparentcouncil.org/2021/09/07/results-of-parent-council-survey-now-out/>)

She also reported that, following Laura Young resigning as PC secretary earlier in the year, Kirstin Leighton had agreed to take on that role, and that Hilary Snaith and Laura Bird had agreed to jointly take on the role of Communications Officer.

Parents can contribute to Parent Council fundraising via EasyFundraising and ParentPay. Further information is available at: <https://jghspc.wordpress.com/fundraising/>

### **3. Head Teacher's report and update – Donald Macdonald (00:10.40 – 00:44:16)**

DM confirmed that covid mitigations remained in place in the school and that covid cases in the school would be reported each Friday. The tracking of contacts would now be carried out by the NHS rather than the school.

The school is considering its approach to pupils' work while self-isolating and a guide was being prepared but that the school was also being affected by higher numbers of staff self-isolating.

It was planned for SQA exams to take place as normal, with some adjustments to course content and prelims in January. Overall SQA results were in line with previous years, but the process had been stressful and challenging for pupils, parents, and the school.

Some extra-curricular activities had started again, including Active Schools, but there were still limits, particularly for any activity requiring overnight stays. DM also gave an update on the Darroch refurbishment and on classroom space and teacher contact time for Advance Higher courses, using both the main campus and the Children 1<sup>st</sup> building and commented on homework expectations and parents' access to information on homework, school capacity and availability of classrooms, S1 open learning periods, instrumental tuition, and mental health and the availability of school counsellors and other supports.

### **4. S1 welcome – Ian Porter (00:44:16 – 00:51:50)**

IP welcomed S1 parents to the school and confirmed that the S1 year group would be just under 300. Transition had largely been carried out online, but also included S6 befriender volunteers who had helped with practical issues, such as getting around the school.

He confirmed that Pupil Support Leaders are the main points of contact for parents, but currently each have a caseload of approximately 300 pupils so there is typically a 3-day turnaround for any queries raised by parents.

### **5. Questions and answers (00:51:50 – 01:10:46)**

DM and IP answered questions on provision of textbooks, Active Schools, payments through ParentPay, the school vaccination programme, assessments for SQA qualifications, the Darroch annexe, use of FDL for Advanced Higher courses, music clubs, S2 course choices, Pupil Support Leaders, admission numbers in S1 and anti-racism in the school.

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

### **6. Thanks (01:10:46 – 01:11:58)**

SS thanked the presenters for their updates and for answering questions and noted the continuing importance for parents of being able to hear from staff about developments in the school.

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

Parent Council AGM on 13 October 2021