

James Gillespie's High School

Parent Council Meeting

Tuesday 30th November 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/wt1scA6RDn4>

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

Presenters:

Donald Macdonald – DM (HT), Sarah Scott – SS (PC Chair), Eliot Ambrose – EA (Active Schools Co-ordinator), Robert Shankland – RS (DHT) and Ian Porter – IP (DHT)

Moderators:

Cath Downie – CD and Ailsa Macintosh – AM

1. Welcome and note of last meeting (0:00:00 – 00:02:08)

SS welcomed everyone and outlined the format of the meeting. Formal minutes were not recorded for the previous online meeting which was the Parent Council AGM (13 October 2021) as a video record is available at <https://youtu.be/UUcqQMEJGao>

2. Introduction – Sarah Scott (00:02:08 – 00:08:40)

SS welcomed Donald Macdonald, HT, to give his report on the start of the school year, Eliot Ambrose, to speak on the Active Schools programme, Robert Shankland, DHT, for an update on SQA arrangements and Ian Porter, DHT, to outline support for mental health in the school.

She thanked those who had contributed to the Scottish Government consultation on the reform to the school assessment system, which had been compiled into a response by the Parent Council (<https://jghspc.files.wordpress.com/2021/11/education-reform-consultation-jghs-pc.pdf>).

SS also reported on the most recent Locality meeting where issues surrounding school the robustness of school Wi-Fi had been raised and assurances been given that work was ongoing on to improve it. She also confirmed that the Parent Council had written to the HT on the availability of Instrumental Music Tuition at the school.

SS gave a report on PC finances, the Small Sums Fund and the Festive Fundraiser. Parents can contribute to Parent Council fundraising via EasyFundraising and ParentPay. Further information is available at: <https://jghsparentcouncil.org/fundraising/>. Volunteers are still sought for an Events and Fundraising Group and for a Health and Wellbeing Group.

3. Active Schools – Eliot Ambrose (00:08:40 – 00:17:17)

EA gave a presentation on the Active Schools programme at the school. He was happy to report that an extensive Active School programme had been put in place; however, further financial support was still sought from parents by donation to keep the programme running. Parents were also invited to support Active Schools by volunteering as coaches and helpers.

4. Head Teacher's report and update – Donald Macdonald (00:17:17 – 00:34:35)

DM confirmed that along with the Active Schools clubs there were a large number of other extra-curricular clubs running in the school.

He gave an update on staffing and the recruitment of a new Curriculum Leader for Modern Languages, Maths teachers and an Acting DHT to cover the position which had been held by Jeff Warden. Covid absences continued to affect staffing levels and covid mitigations remained in place in the school and were increasingly important in light of the new Omicron variant.

DM confirmed that instrumental music provision is provided externally to the school via a formula drawn up about 10 years ago. It does not keep pace with increases in school rolls so should probably now be reviewed. A previous Council decision to charge for instrumental tuition had been superseded by Scottish Government funding to maintain music provision.

DM also gave updates on access to the campus via school gates, homework guidance, the school reporting and tracking system, the course choice evening for S2, S4 and S5 and school Wi-Fi and computing capacity.

5. Active Schools Q&A – Eliot Ambrose (00:34:35 – 00:43:25)

EA answered questions on the new financial model for Active Schools, appropriate level of donation and use of ParentPay, and applications and waiting lists.

6. SQA arrangements – Robert Shankland (00:43:25 – 00:57:33)

RS made a presentation on SQA arrangements for 2021-22.

This presentation is available at: <https://jghsparentcouncil.org/2021/12/>

7. Mental Health Support – Ian Porter (00:57:33 – 01:17:04)

IP made a presentation on the mental health support available to pupils in the school.

This presentation is available at: <https://jghsparentcouncil.org/2021/12/>

8. Questions and answers (01:17:04 – 01:45:35)

DM, RS and IP answered questions on assessments for SQA qualifications, Active Schools, the prelim timetable, S2 maths assessment, school toilets, tracking and reporting of pupil progress, lab technicians, roll-out of iPads, resources for language learning, eye problems caused by screen use, the school vaccination programme, proportion of pupils returning for S5 and S6, proportion of pupils within the school with Additional Needs, the CAMHS backlog, the inclusion of an understanding of ADHD in PSE lessons.

See <https://jghsparentcouncil.org/documents/meeting-minutes/> for these and other questions.

9. Thanks (01:45:35 – 01:46:24)

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.

10. Date of next Parent Council meeting

26 January 2022