
JGHS Parent Council Annual Report 2023-24

October 2024

The main aim of the Parent Council is **to help parents and carers to become actively engaged and involved in their children's learning and life of the school**. We provide a voice for parents and represent their views effectively to the school, through meetings and open discussion

At the last Annual General Meeting of the Parent Council in October 2023, our previous Chair, Sarah Scott, stepped down; Kirstin Leighton was appointed as Treasurer, Aileen Nimmo was re-appointed Refreshments Coordinator, and Hilary Snaith was reappointed as Communication Coordinator.

In subsequent discussion amongst the new and remaining members of the Parent Council in November 2023, it was agreed that the Parent Council would run with acting office bearers for the rest of the session:

- Co-chairs (acting): Tiziana Basciani, Hilary Snaith
- Vice-chair (acting): Liz Hilton
- Treasurer: Kirstin Leighton
- Co-secretaries (acting): Christiane Kerlen, Padriac Kinsella
- Comms Coordinator (acting): Kate Pinault
- Refreshments Coordinator: Aileen Nimmo

Parent Council meetings

The Parent Council has held six meetings over the past year, three online via MS teams, and three in person at the school: 10 September 2024, 5 June 2024, 19 March 2024, 31 January 2024, 28 November 2023, and the AGM on 11 October 2023. The meetings continue to be well attended, with over 90 people at the meeting held at the start of this academic year. Many thanks to our Comms coordinator Kate Pinault for hosting the online meetings.

Issues addressed at JGHS

The Parent Council has heard presentations from a number of different teachers across the year – in November 2023 Cockcroft described the work in the Support for Learning team to assist learners through the school; in January Mrs O'Brien discussed the arrangements at JGHS for curriculum choice

and coursing for pupils entering S3, S5 and S6; and in June 2024 Mrs Stewart presented the school's Empowered Learning strategy, including the appropriate place of iPads and smartphones in teaching.

The Headteacher was present at all meetings and provided a report on current issues at the school. In particular he addressed concerns raised by the Parent Council about attainment in SQA assessments; the School Improvement Plan; communication between the school and both parents and pupils; pressures on space caused by rising pupil numbers; and provision of suitable toilet facilities.

The Parent Council also heard from the Active Schools coordinator Eliot Ambrose about provision of extracurricular sports clubs at JGHS, and from the coordinator of the A+ Group, Zaki El Zalahi, about the group's work to promote racial awareness and sensitivity in the school.

Wider issues

More broadly the Parent Council engaged with TheChat project, which aimed to provide better support for parents talking to their children about Reproduction, Sexual Health and Parenting. A small group of parents from the Parent Council joined the project leader, Dr Colin Morrison, for a discussion aimed at identifying useful resources.

The £8.2M cuts to the education budget proposed by the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) in January 2024 would have been extremely detrimental to pupils across the city. Along with several other parent councils, the JGHS Parent Council contributed to a deputation to the CEC calling for this proposal to be scrapped. In February 2024 the Parent Council also submitted a further deputation calling on CEC to ensure that education budgets are protected in further budgetary planning. However, although the education budgets were not reduced in 2024/25, there are renewed financial pressures on funding in 2025/26, and the JGHS Parent Council will engage with wider efforts to minimise cuts.

Office bearers from the Parent Council have also attended meetings of the North East/South East locality meetings of the CEC education committee, the ASN mainstream locality meetings, and the Council Committee with Parents.

Small Sums Fund and fundraising

The Parent Council's Small Sums Fund is used to provide support for activities proposed by teachers to benefit pupils in the school. Funds are raised for the Small Sums Fund through Parent Council fundraising. This is primarily through donations made via Parent Pay and from the sale of refreshments at school events. The Parent Council is indebted to Aileen Nimmo and her team for the work they do to

James Gillespie's
High School
Parent Council



coordinate these events. In the past funds have been raised at point of sale. However in Spring 2024 it was agreed by the school that a small additional fee can be added for refreshments to all tickets, with the fee coming directly to the Small Sums Fund.

Funds in the 2023/24 session were allocated to a wide range of activities, including dance costumes, sports kit, basketball hoops for Darroch Annex, subscriptions to magazines, and subsidies for school trips. Applications for support in 2024/25 will be assessed shortly, and the funds distributed as soon as possible.

More details about the work of the Small Sums Fund is available in the treasurer's report, and further information about the Parent Council and its activities is on the website:

[JGHS Parent Council website](#)

The Parent Council is very grateful to everyone who gives their time to engage and support their work – the office bearers, members, parents, carers, and the staff at JGHS, especially the Headteacher Mr McCallum.

JGHS Parent Council Acting Co-Chairs, Hilary Snaith and Tiziana Basciani