

EARLSTON HIGH SCHOOL PRIMARY SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes : Thursday 22nd January 2026, 7pm Hybrid in person and online meeting

<p>Attendees:</p> <p>Chair: Alice Caldock (AC) Vice Chair: Charlotte Shortel (CS) HT: Alex Johnson (AJ)</p> <p>Teachers: Jonathon Morton + Asha Lyons</p> <p>Heather Toal Eleanor Deardon Alex Heneveld Richard Kennedy Rosie Leslie</p> <p>Online attendees:</p> <p>Hilary Thomson Sarah Milne Hilary Shand Jess Bailey Jess McBeath Sahar Alissa Adam + Leslie Ward Noemie de Schuyter Stephen McLean Sinead Jackson Karen Meanie Hannya</p>	<p>Apologies:</p> <p>Treasurer: Travis Burne Louisa Johnson Chris Fairgrieve</p>
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Agenda Item	Actions identified Who? When?
<p>1. Issues arising from previous minutes –</p> <p>AC fed back that the staff faculty wish list (for resources, equipment, training or other kinds of support that would enhance teaching and learning) was created – but won't be shared until the Parent Council have their first fundraiser and, more crucially, the addition of AC and CS to the bank signatories in order for funds to be spent.</p>	None
<p>2. Agreeing the name of the Group</p> <p>The vote was 50% for the group title remaining 'Earlston High School Parent Council', with the other % as follows: 30% Earlston High School Parent Forum; 10% Earlston High School Parent Group; 10% Earlston High School Parent Network. AC was keen to ensure everyone was happy with the current name and</p>	None

<p>suggested the title could be discussed again in the next academic year if the group wished for this.</p>	
<p>3. Mobile Phone use</p> <p>Dr Morton presented slides on Mobile Phone use.</p> <p>The group wondered if this was a proposed school ban on phones, which Mr Johnson said was not currently in discussion.</p> <p>JB reported they were an online safety consultant and chairs Ofcom’s Advisory Committee for Scotland. She would be happy to provide some time talking to you about these issues as she is also keen to understand parents’ perspectives. “We are now a digital society. There is significant academic debate about positive or negative impacts of digital technologies. For some young people, technology is a lifeline.”</p> <p>JB cited this recent research report: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/understand-the-impact-of-smartphones-and-social-media-on-children-and-young-people and added the issue is complex and needs a lot more research.</p> <p>Parents added that, as the issue is full of conflicting information, it would be great if the school could provide information for parents and guardians to make informed decisions regarding how their young person(s) used their phone – and what apps/websites could help them when looking at screen time and access to social media and inappropriate content. JB added that “We personally have found it helpful to frame smart phone issues in the wider context of addiction and addictive behaviours. Drop the shame and provide support.” She also volunteered to deliver an online safety session for Earlston.</p> <p>AC suggested creating a committee that could focus on this. GT and JB expressed interest in supporting this.</p>	<p>Action/ committee group to created. Looking to tie pupil and parents voice together?</p> <p>Mr Johnson + school staff, along with parental volunteers</p>
<p>4. Mr Johnson – Senior Leadership remits</p> <p>Candidate recommended for DHT role (Mrs Jill McDonald is retiring). Start date is to be confirmed.</p> <p>Discussion – traditional year head model vs proposal (see attachment). This involves each DHT having a Year Head role in the BGE (S1 – S3) and the Senior Phase (S4-S6) Guidance teacher remains the same in both models</p>	<p>All members voted to approve the proposed change in DHS remits.</p>
<p>5. Year representatives and Channels of communication – Last November, members of the Parent Council discussed having year group representatives for every year of the school – the issue being where</p>	<p>Communication policy still to be developed – offer from many</p>

<p>information was shared/collated and how best to feed back to the school. The discussion did not go further at that time but, as the Parent Council has more wonderful members, we should revisit this.</p> <p>AC will go back to those minutes and find the names of those who offered to be representatives, as well as new representatives, with the hope of finding a solution for channelling parent comments and feedback. She will discuss this with RK, who offered to work on establishing a Communication Policy.</p> <p>‘Slack’ was discussed as a possible vehicle for communication within PC sub groups</p> <p>Could an ASN group be created? (nearly 50% of children have ASN needs atm)</p> <p>JB also asked if it was possible to support a parent group for ASN children as well as year groups, stating that it has worked really well at Melrose Primary and she feels a bit lost without that peer support. This was met with approval from the Parent Council, and AC thought we could look at providing this as part of the discussion on communication policy and year group representatives. HS volunteers with Dyslexia Scotland Border Branch and offered to help with the ASN support group.</p> <p>In the meantime, our Parent Council email is ppearlstonhighschool@scottishborders.npfs.org.uk and we encourage any parent or guardian of pupils at EHS to get in touch with any feedback, concerns or comments. Thank you.</p>	<p>parents to be involved including RK</p> <p>Alice to ask parents who previously volunteered as year reps to see if they still want o be involved.</p>
<p>6. Spring Fling Ceilidh (20th March)</p> <p>Another meeting to organise Ceilidh is needed or further communication in some form to plan this event.</p> <p>This is scheduled for Friday March 20th for all students of EHS. Price is to be £5 a ticket via ParentPay, with a discount for families, and open to P7 children coming up to the High School next year. All students must be accompanied by an adult.</p> <p>The timings for the event will be roughly as follows:</p> <p>7-8 pm: Ceilidh (MH on Fiddle and calling, EF on Piano, TS on drums), with refreshments organised by the Parent Council.</p> <p>8:00 - 8:15pm approximately: Scottish Solos – performances from students of EHS</p> <p>8.15 approximately - 9pm: Ceilidh finishing with an Orcadian Strip the willow and Auld Lang Syne.</p> <p>AC and CS will be asking for volunteers to help with the running of this, many thanks in advance for anyone’s help with this fun fundraising activity.</p>	<p>Look for volunteers – please names to Alice / Charlotte through the Parent Council email address</p>

<p>7. Treasurer's report Travis not present</p> <p>Brief mention of latest budget and status of new signatories. The addition of Alice Caldock and Charlotte Shortel as new signatories for the Parent Council bank account was approved. Bank balance as of November was £7,047.39.</p>	Alice to investigate
<p>8. Prelims – feedback opportunity will be given to teachers, pupils and parents. This is planned.</p> <p>It was reported to the Parent Council that some students who needed their prelims to be rearranged had not had the opportunity to sit their assessments. This led to a wider conversation that AJ wanted to gain more feedback on; with this intent he will be approaching teachers, pupils and parents/guardians for more details on what could be better next time; consulting with only the Parent Council would not be enough. It was agreed that providing more information around the rationale for prelims and what it could look like instead needed to be shared, in order for parents to make informed decisions around this type of assessment and the possibility of renaming it from 'Exam Diet' could be applied also. AJ will seek further feedback in the coming weeks.</p> <p>Comments that no study leave and no study periods (S5 pupil example) compounded the pressures.</p> <p>Could some information be included regarding prelims in the survey? Text / video?</p> <p>A focus group could also be an option for feedback around prelims.</p>	<p>Can Parent Council encourage engagement in parental survey responses.</p> <p>Suggestions for questions in the survey – these can be emailed to Parent Council email address.</p>
<p>9. Mrs McDonald's retiral: Depute Head Jill McDonald is retiring in February. The group had a discussion around a suitable gift, hoping to set a protocol for those teachers who are long in service to the school and retiring, for example if working for 10/20/30 years then X would be gifted. AC will take on suggestions and seek approval for these in the next meeting and provide the flowers for Mrs McDonald's final day at EHS.</p>	Alice
<p>AOB – Protecting our Values policy (Katie McLeod – DHT) leading the group.</p>	Group call coming out to all parents – can we promote and encourage parent responses.
<p>AOB - S3 – Parents' Evening It was brought up that the system for booking appointments for Parents' Evening made it difficult for many parents to acquire slots. AJ understood the issues but sadly cannot change the way these appointments are made, but if parents/guardians were unable to see a teacher, then please</p>	

<p>approach your child’s guidance teacher to discuss ways of obtaining further information from the class teacher.</p>	
<p>AOB - · Weird Spam Many parents got a groupcall saying that their child had ‘overdue fees’ – many for subject areas not actually being done by their young person, such as hockey. When they contacted the school, the response was it was a “check to see if they read their emails.” AJ apologised for this confusion.</p>	<p>Mr Johnson to investigate.</p>
<p>Date of next meeting – Wednesday 4th March @7pm - hybrid</p> <p>Future meeting dates:</p> <p>Tuesday 21st April @7pm Thursday 11th June @7pm</p>	
<p>Agenda items next meeting:</p> <p>Nominated from Louise Johnson - House points system – what if any rewards do winning houses get? Could / should the Parent council support with this?</p> <p>Could / should the Parent Council support with the Blue Box Coffee stall on match days for S1 – S3 rugby and all S1-6 hockey events?</p> <p>Could we plan a Parent Council representation at all Parent Evenings / School Events to promote awareness and engagement?</p>	

