

EARLSTON HIGH SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes: Wednesday 4th March 2026, 7pm Hybrid in person and online meeting

<p>Attendees:</p> <p>Vice Chair: Charlotte Shortel (CS) HT: Alex Johnson (AJ) Gavin Tweddle Heather</p> <p>Online attendees:</p> <p>Chair: Alice Caldock Sarah Milne Hilary Shand Andrea Hall Hilary Thomson Rose Leslie Karen (no surname on transcript)</p>	<p>Apologies:</p> <p>Travis Burne Louise Johnson Alex Heneveld</p>
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Agenda Item	Actions identified Who? When?
<p>Issues arising from previous minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A committee exploring mobile phone used was suggested; no follow up yet but could this be implemented via the school? Alex wishes to explore this in the school and will come back to the PC with questions ➤ Year representatives and Channels of communication are being contacted via groupcall to ask if they would be keen to represent their child's year. The idea is that this will be factored into a communication policy and clear lines of communication can be established for ease of getting feedback/comments/concerns/ideas, as well as new potential groups such as ASN. AC has had a few replies offering to represent S1, S3 and S5 and others from the PC happy to represent S3 and S4 respectively. <p>Richard Kennedy has offered his time to meet with Alex to look into establishing a communications policy.</p> <p>AJ fed back that, after a review of support, that protocols need to be revisited for the demand from parents/carers to have a response from the teacher that day. Urgent: phone in, if not, do be patient with guidance and support department. Discussion around auto responses; but these need to be investigated, as you would have an auto-response for every email.</p>	<p>RK to discuss communication policy with head teacher. AC keen to support. The creation of a policy could help with the establishment of groups such as a mobile phone committee and ASN network. In the meantime, our Parent Council email is ppearlstonhighschool@scottishboarders.npfs.org.uk and we encourage any parent or guardian of pupils at EHS to get in touch with any feedback, concerns or comments.</p> <p>Concerns were noted around the amount of work needed to maintain a group.</p>

<p>Parent reps: could reps have an email address e.g. S3rep@... However, making it an email address from SBC would probably not be approved, for security reasons. We need to be aware of the social media channels, as some people may not want to sign up. Many current PC members are approached by others in their respective child's year groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Spring Fling: posters went up and parentpay is active. We would appreciate volunteers to help run the event (Friday 20th March) We have had 14 tickets sold so far. P7 clusters have been informed and posters to go up in school. ➤ New signatories have been sought but the bank has been slow. ➤ Prelims – has there been a feedback opportunity yet for teachers, pupils and parents? Short answer: no. Alex is working with Hilary to create something that is robust to use in future years. Andrea Hall fed back her S5's experience, that her child knew the questions from peers sitting the exam earlier in the week and the implications as a result of that. 	<p>Action: identify year reps for change of timetable, set up communication channels. Create a form with year, child's name and their contact details.</p> <p>Unfortunately, due to low ticket sales, this event is now cancelled.</p> <p>AC checked in with the bank on its status - and it is still pending. Changeover due for March 29th.</p> <p>AJ to send this out once it is completed.</p>
<p>Headteacher's Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A behaviour policy meeting (which did have people saying they would attend) unfortunately had no attendees. ➤ Surveys: SBC are requesting all schools to complete a survey that is the same for all year group settings. This means the same form will be for primary and secondary, so many parents may think that completing one will mean it represents all year groups. It was asked at the meeting if this could be workable on mobile. ➤ Course choices: 100% of all students in S2 going to S3 got all their choices – this is unheard of! <p>Staffing Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing Meeting on Friday for Session 2026-27 • Angus MacDonald DHT appointed – March 23rd Start • Morgan Ratter successful for Permanent Modern Studies Post • Long Term Absence Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark Naysmith Ongoing Phased Return • Cecila Wilson CDT – Phased Return completed • Jason Callahangh CDT – Returned from Operation • Heather Grant Humanities – Anticipated return ~ Easter 	

Pupil Achievements

- Junk Kouture – Dublin World Final
- Hockey
 - S3 (with 2xS2) are in the Scottish Schools Junior Challenge Cup final in Glasgow
- Rugby
 - 2 x Pupils representing Edinburgh U18's (including the captain) and could be selected for Scotland U18.

Pupil Support Review – 2 days

- A Depute Headteacher and Principal Teacher from Balerno HS
- A Depute Headteacher from North Berwickshire High School
- Headteacher from Hawick High School
- Inclusion and Wellbeing Headteacher for SBC
- Equity and Inclusion Lead Officer/Virtual School Headteacher

Communication

- Strapline
- Earlston High School is committed to supporting positive mental health and wellbeing for all members of our school community. Please note that we endeavour to meet a 3 working-day turnaround for staff to respond to emails and calls. As our school roll and demands increase, we thank you for your patience and understanding with this.

Prelims-Review

- Hilary Shand supporting

Surveys Coming out

- Groupcalled
- Concern around duplication for multiple schools (parents)

Attendance

	2024	2025	2026
August	92.2	94.6	
September	90.9	91.5	
October	91.5	91.9	
November	90.9	92.0	
December	89.3	86.6	
January		93.2	91.2
February		92.1	89.3

- Mr Johnson notes that there was a national dip in attendance Dec – Jan.

1. House points system – what if any rewards do winning houses get? Could / should the Parent council support with this?

Cinema trips, early lunch,

The PC would be happy to help with a suitable reward. Could AJ check in with the school for reward ideas?

<p>2. 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>➤ Why just these two sports groups? There is a lot going on in the school beyond that. Unless you're involved with these sports groups, it's unlikely people will volunteer.</p> <p>Blue box was a pilot to sell coffee and raise money for school funds. Worked well for rugby; hockey was significantly less. Now, it is not sustainable for Alex and Louise to run, but they wish to expand this more and have support running these.</p> <p>People working the coffee box do not need a qualification; it uses sumup and the money goes toward school funds. The box is static and situated in the school. Could DofE students/those interested in work experience run this?</p>	<p>Parents of sports attendees to be approached first to help run it.</p>
<p>3. Could we plan a Parent Council representation at all Parent Evenings / School Events to promote awareness and engagement?</p> <p>➤ What would this look like? A poster? A sign up? Information leaflets? A person you can approach at a table? We are perhaps not at this point this year, but we could be.</p> <p>A small leaflet with a QR link to the email address and/or information about the Parent Council could be created for the P7 visit on the 3rd of June.</p>	<p>It was noted that, if we wanted to have a presence at parents' evenings, we would need to implement this in the next academic year, as some parents' evenings have already passed and it would not be seen as fair to have representation at some and not others. However, perhaps representation in the form of a poster/signup could be used instead of a representative.</p> <p>AC to create the leaflet/QR links.</p>
<p>4. Suggested scale of budget for retiring teachers/teachers moving on from EHS. Suggested: 10 years: £30 20 years: £40 30 years+: £50</p>	<p>Approved</p>
<p>5. Study Leave Space/Common Room for S6</p> <p>A comment was raised via our PC Whatsapp Group that there used to be an S6 common room but due to the space being mistreated, the privilege was removed. The parent reported that there are no classrooms available during study periods. The S6 tables are described as cold and uncomfortable, with limited WiFi access, which makes studying difficult.</p> <p>While the library is more comfortable, it is reportedly noisy, including the reading room, and students may be asked to leave. It is unclear what action, if any, was taken when this issue was previously raised. The parent has asked whether this matter could be submitted to</p>	<p>AJ responded that, given the size of the cohort, there would be no space suitable as a common room.</p> <p>However, current S6, current S5 and S6 parents/carers will be approached to respond to the current study leave setup – and identify any pain points in the current situation.</p>

<p>the PTC before the next meeting, as the current cohort will be on study leave and largely finished if it is deferred to a later agenda.</p> <p>His concerns for addressing this prompted AC to forward his comments to the head teacher, who responded the next day with the following:</p> <p>“Throughout study leave the reading room will be available for any young person who wishes to have a quiet space. The librarian will manage this when she is in (only part-time), out with those times it will be incumbent on the young people to ensure it remains as a productive space. They can always reach out to SLT or Guidance if there are any concerns. We will make sure this is well known to young people and their parents/carers.</p> <p>Outwith study leave, S6 have the hall if it is not being used and/or outside the hall for studying to which some do, and some don’t. The windows are often opened by other pupils during interval and lunch but can be closed by anyone as it’s just a turn handle that winds the windows open/close as required. I often close them when I feel it is too cold.”</p> <p>There was a discussion after this where some parent council members fed back their response to the replies, with some feeling the answer was not answering the request and others who felt that study areas have been offered and were suitable for their young person. AC replied that two separate issues being discussed: a study space and a hangout area.</p> <p>We know now that actions will be taken to inform the S6 cohort and their parents/carers that there are options for studying in school. We also have been informed that, due to the size of the cohort and the demands for classrooms, there is no space suitable for a common room for future year groups.</p>	
<p>6. Treasurer’s report</p> <p>Current balance: £8,607.71 Outstanding payments for PC reps 2025-2026: Expenses for department chocolates and card(s); Flowers for JMcD’s retirement.</p>	<p>AC to stay in touch with the bank to chase up new signatories.</p>
<p>Date of next meeting – Tuesday 21st April @7pm</p> <p>Future meeting dates: Thursday 11th June @7pm</p>	
<p>Agenda items next meeting:</p> <p>Funding of mortarboards for S6</p> <p>Potential supply of a phonetic register, for pronunciation of student names, especially for cover teachers.</p>	