

Blackhall Primary School Parent Council
Meeting – 29 November 2023
Minutes

Members Present

	P1 rep	Colin Chisholm	Treasurer
Julia Pearson	P2 rep	Kate Walker	Secretary
Chloe Riddell	P3 rep	Jane Browning	Chair
	P4 rep	Ian Cameron	Vice -Chair
	P5 rep		
Caroline Irvine	P6 rep		
	P7 rep		
Tashya Abhay	ASN Rep		

Other Attendees

Kirsty Martin	Head Teacher	Frances Ross	PSA Rep
Vicky Nicolson	Councillor		

1. Welcome and Apologies

Apologies were noted from Willie Malcolm (P1 Rep), Emily Orr (P4 Rep), Sine Munro (P5 Rep), Linda Rennie (P7 Rep), and Councillors Hal Osler and Max Mitchell.

2. Approval of minutes and action points from last meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 20 September 2023 were approved. The action point on providing an attainment newsletter was completed by the Head Teacher on 29 September. The action points on playing field options were discussed under item 6.

3. Parent Council accounts

It was agreed that the Chair and Secretary would be added to the account mandate as counter signatories. The other signatories on the account would be reviewed. It was agreed that the Parent Council would contribute towards the coaches for the Christmas pantomime trip.

ACTION - Colin Chisholm to organise mandates.

4. Head Teacher Report

The presentation is included as an appendix to the minutes. The following points provide additional information to the slides.

Staffing

A new Depute Head Teacher would join at the start of December to allow for handover before Mr Gardner goes on parental leave – this has been communicated to parents via email. The school generally has good rates of staffing attendance. Recruitment for PSA posts in the Edinburgh Council area, including at Blackhall, has been readvertised.

Parking/Road Safety

This continues to be an issue with parents parking inconsiderately or unlawfully. School pupils had been out with banners at school pick up time recently to warn about the dangers of doing this. Councillor Nicolson expressed some hope that there would be further discussions at Council level regarding the possibility of improved traffic control measures, following an incident at the bottom of Ravelston Dykes.

Resilience

The Head Teacher reassured parents that the school would always take bullying seriously. That being said, there was a need for children and parents to consider whether something was truly bullying behaviour when considering whether to and how to report it. It is important to help children to build resilience as well as ensuring their safety. A method used in class is asking if this is a 'big deal' or a 'small deal.'

School safety

The Head Teacher discussed school safety, including how the school makes plans to keep all children safe and respect everyone's right to be included. The school is proactive about safety and does not "wait for something to happen". Sometimes safety may mean that part of a class has to be moved to another area; however this is not common. Further information would be provided to parents on this. The school has good support from central resources to help children with additional support needs or who may be struggling in class. It may be worth considering whether a parent training session on this could take place in future.

ACTION – Head Teacher to provide information on school safety plans to parents.

Outdoor learning

The outdoor learning sessions taking place in school now are different to those provided by Earth Calling. This is for two reasons – first, the outdoor learning provided is aligned with the curriculum; and second, doesn't require additional funding, which is relevant for the budget the school receives. All classes would carry out learning in a similar context but the level of task would vary depending on the year group.

School reports

The school is currently considering how to provide these by electronic means rather than using paper. They would also consider whether attendance letters could be provided in electronic format.

Numeracy

There is a focus on numeracy this year within the school. Maths week is taking place w/c 4 December with the open morning being held on Friday 8 December for parents to come in and see the learning. The Head Teacher discussed the different methods and strategies for teaching maths and numeracy, including SEAL numeracy, teacher observations and assessment and looking at benchmarks for learning at each stage. Numeracy homework was discussed and the tendency for this to be a link to a website/game which could perhaps be contrasted with the fuller information provided in relation to

reading and literacy - homework is also being reviewed as part of the school's focus on numeracy this year.

5. School safety

This was covered under item 4.

6. Playing Field update

The Council has informed the school that, if the playing field area is to be used for sport, then covering it with new grass is not possible due to climate change/wetter weather. The Head Teacher has discussed the possibility of renting out the field but it is not big enough to make this financially viable. Further suggestions from the parent cohort were put forward including: a basketball/netball court, a running track, play equipment, a smaller field area with more woodland, more tarmac, raised beds for planting. A Council official is visiting the school on 5 December to discuss possible options. PC and PSA chair will be invited to attend.

Post meeting update – council official visiting on the 21st December.

7. The Promise

The P3 Rep provided a brief overview of this – more information can be found [here](#). This will be discussed in more detail at the next Parent Council meeting.

8. Updates from year reps

Many of the items raised in advance were covered in the Head Teacher Report. The question of an update on the possible camp for Primary 6 (1 overnight) was discussed. The school is waiting on more detailed quotes for this and will keep parents updated. Overall there was quite a lot of support from parents for the idea.

9. AOB

The Chair confirmed that she continues to keep an eye on the Edinburgh Parent Council Chairs' email account and would raise anything of cross-cutting interest.

Dates of next meeting: Wednesday 21 February 2024 (in person at school)