

Blackhall Primary School Parent Carer Council
Meeting – 21 February 2024
Minutes

Members Present

Willie Malcolm	P1 rep	Colin Chisholm	Treasurer
Julia Pearson	P2 rep	Kate Walker	Secretary
Chloe Riddell	P3 rep	Jane Browning	Chair
Emily Orr	P4 rep	Ian Cameron	Vice -Chair
Sine Munro	P5 rep		
Caroline Irvine	P6 rep		
Linda Rennie	P7 rep		
Tashya Abhay	ASN Rep		

Other Attendees

Kirsty Martin	Head Teacher	Frances Ross	PSA rep / parent (until end of item 4)
Sarah Mitchell	Teacher – Outdoor Learning (until end of item 5)	Isla, Sadie, Millie, Elliot and Robbie	Pupil Council reps (until end of item 4)
Hal Osler	Councillor	Max Mitchell	Councillor

1. Welcome and Apologies

Pupil Council representatives in particular were welcomed to the meeting. There were no apologies.

2. Approval of minutes and action points from last meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 29 November 2023 were approved and action points noted as closed.

3. Pupil Council/Rights Respecting School

The Parent Carer Council was delighted to receive short presentations from the Pupil Council representatives, who explained their role and some of the actions that the Pupil Council had taken during the year, including: feedback to the City Council about school meals; and suggesting a repaint of the changing rooms to move away from pink/blue colours. Further detail is included in the Head Teacher's report.

3a. Outdoor Learning

Sarah Mitchell gave a short presentation on her approach to outdoor learning, explaining: the yearly and termly planning that goes into this; the way that the learning is adapted to the stage of learning (i.e. not all classes get the same lesson although the broad theme/activity may be the same); and the links made to class topics such as the Victorians/Ancient Egypt and whole school topics such as the DREAM and STEAM projects. Mrs Mitchell has attended training relevant to taking on this role and is also now helping another local school to build their outdoor learning programme.

4. Head Teacher Report

The presentation is available on the school website. The following points provide additional information to the slides.

Numeracy week

There had been an evaluation of the numeracy week that took place in December. Overall, the feedback was very positive, with all teachers agreeing that the learning had improved. The week may take place slightly later in the term this coming year.

School grounds/maintenance

It was noted that a number of items in the school grounds were in need of repair or maintenance. The school is taking action on all of these – some of them require Council staff/contractors to attend at the school before they can be fixed.

Playing Field

Several options for this have been suggested. Astro-turf is not an option due to cost. A meeting is taking place w/c 26 February to discuss the different options and feedback will be provided.

Budget

Education budgets for the coming financial year are looking extremely tight (see also item 7). The school Finance Committee is meeting on Wednesday, 26th March.

Staffing

Gail Middlemiss, Depute Head Teacher, has been asked to remain at Dalmeny Primary until at least October. An advert has issued for maternity cover for Mrs Paterson's P3 class. Andrew Gardner is due to return from parental leave on 18th March.

Classes

The plan for 2024/25 is to keep 15 classes in total at the school. It is highly likely this will include a composite P2/1 class. Classes will be mixed again.

Communication with the school

Parents and Carers were reminded to email the school admin email account for any queries rather than emailing teachers directly. The school generally has a good response time; however, it is allowed 10 working days to respond to emails (5 working days for a complaint). It would be helpful if parents/carers could bear this in mind when following up on any correspondence.

Upcoming Events

Parent Carer Consultations will take place for most classes on 12 and 14 March. The P7 show will take place earlier than usual this year to avoid a bottleneck of events. The Spring Assembly on 28 March will have a multi-faith approach.

5. The Promise

More information can be found [here](#), with an easy-to-read version found [here](#). The Parent Carer Council discussed the importance of children and parents/carers being aware of those who are care-experienced, which may be children and/or their parents. Such awareness is closely linked to our work in being an inclusive and rights respecting school. It was agreed that the Parent Council would be renamed the Parent Carer Council - the Chair will note this action point within the wider PC Forum. It was agreed that further information on The Promise, including support available for care experienced families, would be provided in a separate communication that would be put on the school website. Any further ideas from parents and carers as to how the school can be more inclusive and supportive in respect of families who are care experienced are welcome – please let the school or your year representative know.

ACTION: Parent Council to be renamed Parent Carer Council. **Chair** to convey this to PC Forum.

ACTION: **Chloe** to provide materials to **Kate** who will collate the information and arrange for publication with **Chair/HT**.

6. Playing Field

This was covered under item 4.

7. Edinburgh City Council Education Budget

There had been a recent proposal to cut the Education budget by £8.2m – that is now not happening as money has been found from elsewhere. There remains a concern as to what will happen to budgets for the next financial year (i.e. 2025/6, which would be agreed in early 2025). Possible risks include non-statutory staffing roles which would be likely to affect support for Additional Support Needs. The Parent Carer Council agreed that there was a need to keep a watching brief on this and consider whether correspondence with the Council was needed next year. It was also noted that the timing of budgets being put forward did not sit well with the cycle of Parent Carer Council meetings and this would be reviewed next year.

ACTION: **Chair/Secretary** to consider dates for Parent Carer Council Meetings in 2024/5 to take account of this.

UPDATE: The Council budget for 2024/5 was approved on [22 February](#).

8. Updates from year reps

Some of the items raised had already been covered under the HT report. A point was raised about learning in the month of December/wearing of Christmas jumpers for the whole month. The Head Teacher reassured members that learning continued during December and it was important for primary school aged children to have engaging Christmas activities to support the learning during a very busy time of the year. This year there would be a Christmas jumper amnesty so that pre-loved Christmas jumpers could be donated, to keep costs down for parents and carers.

9. AOB

Travel Plan – The Head Teacher and Chair had attended a meeting with a City Council representative recently to discuss how travel/traffic options surrounding the school could be changed, following the recent travel survey (which received 105 responses) – this could include: installation of a crossing outside the school, extension of yellow/white lines, and other improvements at junctions. It was noted that some of these could take some time to achieve. A plan is being drawn up and will be shared with the parents/carers and with local Councillors

ACTION: Chair to share plan with parents/carers and with Councillors when available.

Dates of next meeting: Wednesday 8 May 2024 (in person at school)