

Blackhall Primary School Parent Carer Council and Parent Staff Association
AGM – 13 June 2024
Minutes

Parent Carer Council Members Present

Willie Malcolm	P1 rep	Jane Browning	Chair
Julia Pearson	P2 rep	Kate Walker	Secretary
Sine Munro	P5 rep	Colin Chisholm	Treasurer

Parent Staff Association Members Present

Frances Ross	Chair	Felicity Chisholm	P3/6 rep
Nick Ramage	Secretary	Elaine McLeod	P3/6 rep
Clare Lacy	Treasurer	Carol Walker-Lyon	P7 rep
Wendy Stuart	P6 rep	Laura Briggs	P1 rep

Other Attendees

Kirsty Martin	Head Teacher	Andrew Gardner	Acting Depute HT
Other parent/carers and school representatives			

1. Welcome and Apologies

PCC apologies were noted from Chloe Riddell (P3 rep), Tashya Abhayaratna (ASN rep), Amy O'Brien (P2 rep for 2024/5) and from Councillors Hal Osler, Vicky Nicolson, Jule Bandel and Max Mitchell.

PSA apologies noted were Louise McFadyen (P7 rep), Morag O'Donnell (P4 rep), Claire Yates (P7 rep), Darlene Connor (P7 rep), Lisa Eardley-Brown (P4 rep), Faye Bowden (P4 rep), Kate Chandler (P6 rep).

The minutes of the PCC meeting of 8 May 2024 were approved. PCC action points on (i) The Promise/providing information for care experienced families and (ii) the Travel Plan for the school/contacting Cramond Primary school re their road safety audit were carried over until the start of next term. The PSA minutes of 15 June 2023 were approved (proposed by Frances Ross, seconded by Carol Walker-Lyon), no action points were noted.

2. Annual Reports from PCC and PSA Chairs

The presentations are available as part of the slide pack on the school website.

(i) PCC Report

The Chair noted the action points above, carried over to 2024/5. A response from Edinburgh City Council was still awaited on the travel plan. The PCC had been busy this year with a focus on: the playing field, care experienced families, the Pupil Council, parking at the school, P6/7 camps, outdoor learning and numeracy.

(ii) PSA Report

The Chair noted that there had been lots of events during the past academic year, including holding a summer social for the first time and the first school fair since after Covid. Organisation of pre-loved school uniform is now much improved. A lot of money had been raised which meant a significant amount could be contributed to the school playground improvement work. For next year, it would be important to try to have more reps to share out the workload/different tasks; and also to consider a greater variety of events in order to reach more families within the school.

3. Approval of annual accounts

(i) PSA

The annual accounts had been signed off by the independent examiner, subject to approval at the AGM. These will be added as an Appendix to the minutes and put on the school website. It had been a record year of fundraising – in the region of £21k.

(ii) PCC

The annual accounts were to be signed off and added as an Appendix to the minutes. Edinburgh City Council gives an annual allocation to the PCC. In past years this has been used to contribute to pantomime etc; however it is proposed this year that the money will be made available as part of Phase 2 of the playground improvement (the cost for Phase 1 already having been met – see below).

Annual accounts approved, subject to sign off of PCC accounts by the independent examiner (Post-meeting update – this has now been received).

All agreed that PCC money should be put towards Phase 2 of the playground improvement fund.

4. Election of Members of 2024/5

PCC members were elected per details in the Appendix. The PCC is still looking for a P1 parent/carer rep and a new secretary. Calls have been put out for a new P5 rep and new ASN rep by the existing reps, who will be content to continue next year if no one comes forward.

The PSA needs a new Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary next year but all of these posts looked to have been filled – this will be confirmed later in the year.

5. Head Teacher Report

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

Staffing

Gail Middlemiss has secured a HT role at Dalmeny and will therefore not be returning to Blackhall. An advert will issue for a new DHT in due course. Andrew Gardner will continue as acting DHT until the post is filled.

Classes

There is some fluctuation in numbers re the new P1/2. At the moment there will be 2 x P1 classes, a P2/1 composite and a P2.

Parent-Carer Involvement

The HT stressed the value of parent and carer support to the school, for example speaking on STEM topics and supporting the swimming gala, and thanked all who had been involved.

Finance Committee

This was a new Committee for this year and had had 3 successful meetings. Budgets remain very challenging.

Playground improvement

The playgrounds at school had now been “zoned” for different activities which helped to make break times more enjoyable for all. Sufficient funds had been raised to implement Phase 1 of the Playground Improvement works (playing field) – this was thanks to the incredible generations contributions from the PSA, Blackhall Children’s Sports Committee and school parents/carers and supporters via the Just Giving page. An application had been put in for the works and it was hoped these would be completed by October.

Active Schools

The school had raised the start time for the swimming and inter-scholastics events with the Council as these presented challenges in terms of transport. Wider active school opportunities/events for the school need to be free which is a challenge – this may be something the Finance Committee could explore next year. It was also agreed that eligibility of children to enter the inter-school competitions was a difficult issue – the Council needs to decide if these are to be competitive events or not. This is a city-wide issue.

Attainment Data

Although Blackhall figures are still very good in a regional and national context, there were some figures in the P4/5 returns which were lower than 85% (the national expectation) – this is being actively looked at, including in terms of how we assess children.

6. Forward look – plans for 2024/5

The PSA and PCC Chairs did a short presentation on plans and ambitions for next year. It is hoped that the PSA and PCC can be merged together as a wider parent/carers representation group or forum. The slides give details on the proposed structure. There would be sub-groups dealing with different aspects such as: fundraising, football and (in the short-medium term), the playing field improvement. It would be very helpful to set the football activities up under the remit of a separate charity as this would help with management of accounts and also would open up the potential for applying for a Sports Scotland grant to help with the playing field.

Other schools already run a similar model with both PSA and PCC activities brought together under one group. It is thought that there would be two Treasurers across the group and 2-3 reps per class

who would share out the work. A couple of points regarding charitable status and Council contributions needed to be checked before this could go ahead; however given that other schools run this model, it is not thought that these will be significant barriers.

This is a proposal for next year and it is expected it may take up to a year to fully implement. It would be important for this to be supported by parents/carers and to have some momentum with the work. At the start of next term, the PSA and PCC would hold separate first meetings as normal, where these proposals could be further explored.

The playground improvement work had made good progress this year, with generous contributions from the PSA, parents/carers and supporters and Blackhall Children's Sports Committee as noted above. Other opportunities for fundraising next year would be taken forward. The school had also benefitted from match funding from parents/carers whose workplaces participated in such schemes, and could continue to do so. Other grant opportunities may also be available. Finally, our application to participate in Tesco's Stronger Starts scheme had been accepted – tokens would be available in local stores from July-September 2024, with the award ranging from £500-£1500. Parents/carers have been emailed about this.

Those attending the meeting were generally in favour of the approach to merge the PCC and PSA.

7. AOB

Minutes of previous PCC and PSA meetings were approved – see above.

Dates for 2024/5 meetings: TBC