

**Blackhall Primary School Parent Carer Council**  
**Meeting – 2 April 2025**  
**Minutes**

**Members Present**

Kate Chandler	P1 rep	Jane Browning	Chair
Amy O'Brien	P2 rep		
		Kate Walker	Vice Chair
Chloe Riddell	P4 rep		
Emily Orr	P5 rep	Colin Chisholm	Treasurer

**Other Attendees**

Kirsty Martin	Head Teacher	Hal Osler	Councillor
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**1. Welcome and apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillor Max Mitchell, Depute Head Teacher Anna Hazel-Dunn, Julia Pearson (P3 rep) and Sine Munro (P6 rep).

Representatives of the Pupil Council were welcomed to the meeting.

**2. Approval of minutes and action points from last meeting**

Minutes of the last meeting were approved. Remaining action points are as follows:

- a. Chair to draft text for website about opportunities to volunteer on PSA and PCC (outstanding)
- b. Internet safety/ phone use (on the agenda for discussion at today's meeting)
- c. Chair to raise with Councillor Hal Osler issues about budget timelines and school ipad security (discussed at the meeting but Chair will follow up via email with Councillor Osler. Specific confirmation will be sought that the security issues raised do not affect the ipads at Blackhall Primary).

**Action:** Chair to draft text for website about opportunities to volunteer on PSA and PCC.

**Action:** Chair to raise with Councillor Hal Osler issues about budget timelines and school ipad security (discussed at the meeting but Chair will follow up via email with Councillor Osler. Specific confirmation will be sought that the security issues raised do not affect the ipads at Blackhall Primary).

**3. Pupil Council update**

PCC received a fantastic update from Muir and Leonard with a powerpoint presentation arranged by Robyn, Muir, Clara and Leonard. Key items they have been working on include:

- Asking to change the colour of the paint in the changing rooms from blue for boys and pink for girls.
- Reviving the Wonder Woods and sensory garden using a generous gift left to the school.

- Ensuring children who have school lunches can sit with children who have packed lunches and vice versa. Children can now sit together as they please. Well done Pupil Council!

They will now be working on:

- Scooters getting borrowed and ridden by other children.
- Writing to Tom Farmer to ask for additional funds for the playground.

#### **4. Parent Carer Council priorities**

##### **a. Playing Field**

The Chair had a meeting with the PSA Chair, Headteacher and Business Manager discussing the next phase of the playground development. Phase two will focus on the area to the left of the gym hall. The original plan had been to put bark on this area, but the cost of tarmac is the same and bark would need replacing. This area will now be changed to tarmac and there will be a portion of grass available for loose parts play. The cost of this is approx £14k and the aim is to get this done before the end of the school year. A number of options are being considered for how to fund this, including asking Blackhall Sports Committee for another grant.

The health and safety issue in the P1 playground has also now been fixed with money from the PSA.

The Wonder Woods and Sensory Garden will be revived following a generous donation.

In terms of Phase three, there is not yet a firm plan in place due to complexities with grantmakers needing to understand where the rest of the funds will come from. The PCC discussed the current and increasing challenges with the playing field and the need to urgently address this. It was proposed that a letter be sent to the Council setting out all the different issues and concerns, the different options for funding and to ask for help and support to resolve this at pace.

**Action:** PCC reps to support Chair to draft letter to the Council about Phase three of the playground development. Councillor Osler will seek to arrange a meeting with the relevant officials.

##### **b. Parking**

Parking seems better. Double yellow lines have now been agreed on some of the side streets and around Ravelston Park. Speeding remains a key concern and the Councillors are working on how to resolve this.

##### **c. Offer of free garden tools**

Chair has received an offer from a charity working with Saughton Prison about reconditioned garden tools. It was agreed that it would be a good idea to put in an application as it would be particularly helpful for outdoor learning.

**Action:** Chair to apply for gardening tools from Saughton Prison. Mrs Mitchell (outdoor learning teacher) to advise on which tools to request.

##### **d. Community gardening grant**

There is an opportunity to apply for a community gardening grant of £5k. PCC members will support the application process.

**Action:** PCC members to support application process for a community gardening grant.

#### **5. Head Teacher Report**

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

### *School roll/staffing*

The current roll is 370; the predicted roll for 2025/6 school year is currently 349, though this changes on a daily, if not hourly, basis. This is very close to the threshold of 350. If numbers drop below 350 there is a budgetary/resourcing consequence for the school of £24k. P1 intake is lower than expected due to the number of children deferring. There will be no composite classes next year—14 classes across the school.

The staffing situation is complex: Two PSAs are temporarily reducing their hours and Anita Ashcroft will be leaving the office. Megan McKinney has resigned and two teachers are taking career breaks. Two teachers are returning shortly from maternity leave. The Business Manager has resigned.

Two NQTs have been allocated to Blackhall for next session. Edinburgh will be down 100 classes across the whole estate, coming into next session.

This situation means it is hard for SLT to plan ahead and strategise.

### *Money/ Finance*

Finance Committee met last week. The generous donation from the family has now been spent. Staffing is by far the greatest cost. Currently there is an overspend of £3k which can be easily accounted for due to unforeseen circumstances.

### *Recent Events*

P7 class show was fantastic and World Book Day and World Downs Syndrome Day were both a big success. The ASN coffee morning took place and went well.

The new times for Parents/ Carers meetings seemed to work well and the teachers appreciated it. Headteacher is keen for feedback on the new approach.

**Action:** PCC reps to seek feedback on the new timings for Parents/ Carers meetings.

### *Online safety*

The online safety information session was well attended and went well. PCC agreed it was very informative. The main message was about the internet as a 'place' and needing to keep ourselves informed as parents and carers. Headteacher is finding a way to share the slides. Some concerns were raised over mobile phone use. The school will continue to ask for there to be no mobile phones in school or the playground.

Councillor Osler advised that the Council is seeking guidance from Scottish Government on next steps following the introduction of online safety legislation in England.

**Action:** Headteacher to share slides from online safety session.

### *Upcoming events*

Parent/ Carer open afternoon is the first week back: 24<sup>th</sup> April. Parents and carers are encouraged to get involved in the learning! Reminder that this is an opportunity to see what is happening in class and join in with your child. It's not an opportunity to observe the class for an hour.

#### *Other*

After the break the school will trial P3s having lunch at the same time as P4-7s.

The school photographer has changed from Tempest to Clear Photography. Class photos have been booked for 12<sup>th</sup> May. This is the same day as Interscholastics competition —this will be coordinated so it can work.

### **6. AGM/ Membership of PCC next year**

The AGM is currently scheduled for 12<sup>th</sup> June but this is the P7 party night so it is likely that this will change.

The Chair noted that they did not intend to stand again for the next year. Therefore a nomination for a new Chair will be required for the AGM—PCC thanked the current Chair for her hard work.

**Action:** PCC reps to inform Chair whether they will remain on PCC in advance of the AGM.

### **7. AOB**

#### *School lunches*

Tasting session for new school lunches will take place on 9<sup>th</sup> May.

It was noted that there is a lot of wasted food at the end of the day, but permission must be sought from the parent/ carer body in order for children to have seconds. An 'opt out' policy was proposed.

**Action:** PCC reps to ask year groups for feedback on the proposal to provide all children who want it with 'seconds' after lunch unless they and their parents and carers 'opt out' and share with Headteacher.

#### *Bikeability*

Bikeability is starting soon for P5s. Bikes will be stored separately to the bikes and scooters in the playground.

#### *School attendance letters*

The letters sent to parents and carers about children's attendance at school across the Royal High Cluster was discussed. It was agreed that PCC would write to the four ward Councillors to ask about the evidence base for the letters, to raise issues about waste and administrative burden and to understand if/ when the letters would be reviewed.

Blackhall were sending them out once a term, they are now being sent out annually.

**Action:** PCC to write to four ward Councillors about the school attendance letters

#### *Playground supervision*

The level of supervision in the playground was raised. Headteacher is out as there are not enough PSAs. PSAs are watching and supporting children as much as they can within the staffing constraints. Generally playground behaviour is good.