

**Blackhall Primary School  
Parent Carer Council  
1<sup>st</sup> April 2026  
Minutes**

**PCC Members Present**

Catherine Campbell	P6 rep	Emily Orr	ASN rep
Jane Browning	Vice- chair	Kate Walker	Chair
Kate Chandler	P2 rep		
Colin Chisholm	Treasurer		

**Other Attendees**

Kirsty Martin - Head Teacher  
Anna Hazel Dunn - Depute Head Teacher  
Councillor Hal Osler  
Councillor Max Mitchell

**1 Welcome and Apologies**

Apologies were received and noted from Morag Waller, Julia Pearson, Chloe Riddell, Amy O'Brien and Sine Pederson

The PCC Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, noting that this is the last normal business meeting of this academic year. The next meeting is the AGM on the 11<sup>th</sup> of June.

**2 Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes were noted and approved.  
The Chair confirmed that all actions are now closed.

**3 Playground Update – GOOD NEWS**

The meeting in February to discuss the proposal from a private developer to develop the land behind the school – was attended by approximately 12 parents/carers. It was noted that Mrs Martin had sent an email with additional information after the meeting. There have been a number of questions, concerns and reservations are being raised by those not in attendance at the Feb meeting.

The Councillors provided an update on the council budget which was agreed in February. Good news being that there has been capital budget for 2026/7 allocated for playground improvements across all schools in Edinburgh. This followed the issues highlighted by Blackhall PCC and PSA at the Education Committee. Councillors identified that there are issues across the city with school playgrounds. Even better news is that there has a specific budget ringfenced for Blackhall Primary School.

Edinburgh Council is keen to use Blackhall as a 'test site' for how to develop existing school playgrounds to improve the environment for children. There will be a council led consultation with the children, staff and parents.

The councillors thanked the PCC and PSA for raising this issue, in particular over the last couple of years – this was key to raising awareness of councillors on the education committee on the lack of specific funding or council staff responsible for playgrounds. They noted that some of the Education committee were amazed at what Blackhall had managed to fundraise, but noted that not all schools are able to do this.

In total £1.5million has been allocated from all schools, this includes yearly funding for an officer to inspect playgrounds and identify which schools should be prioritised. The specific funding for Blackhall is £150k.

It was noted that whatever is put in place, will be the responsibility of the school to maintain. Therefore that needs to be part of the considerations in planning the space.

Current timeline is being proposed as

- Consultation after Easter Holidays – out for 2 weeks
- Analysis completed by mid-May
- Follow up meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> of May with school representatives and Councillors
- Outline plan and timelines for work to be shared by 8<sup>th</sup> June
- More detail to be developed over the summer for review in August
- Work expected to start in Sep/Oct

**Action: Year reps to encourage completion of the consultation.**

#### **4 Support for Low Income Families**

Demographic of the school is becoming more mixed, with proportions of families in SIMD1,2 and 3 rising. This coupled with rising cost of living, may mean that we have increasing levels of families that could require support to access specific support tailored for low-income families.

There are a number of things that the school and PCC can do to help, but this needs to be balanced carefully without stigmatising families.

A first start could be to improve signposting to the different support available on the school website. Other things to look at are

- Uniform bank – how can we expand this? Would require additional parents to help. The Edinburgh Police fund for Children can provide grants for coats and shoes for example.
- Cost of school day e.g. panto cost
- Food available at school e.g. breakfast clubs
- What community bodies could we work in partnership with

**Action: Chloe Riddell willing to come into school to meet with Kirsty and Anna, to develop a possible plan**

**Action: Chair to speak with other PCC across the city to see how they support low-income families, especially where families are likely to be from different SIMD groups.**

**Action: Kate Chandler to meet with Anna Hazel-Dunn and Business Manager to see how the uniform bank could be expanded.**

Chloe has provided information that there is council trauma co-ordinator who will be able share information for the website.

Consideration to be given about how support services could come into school for example on parents evening. Is there support the council can provide around income maximisation. Where would people access this information just now? Especially with Blackhall Library still being closed.

**Action: Chair/Chloe to email councillors to see what support services can be accessed.**

## **5 Headteacher Update**

Slides attached for full details.

Highlighted points

- Class sizes are rising slightly especially in the lower years of the school. Average class size now 26.2 from 24.7. Still well below maximum numbers for a class.
- Expecting 14 classes next year – two for each year group
- Overall role not expected to change much – predicting approx. 368
- Budget continues to be a challenge as not wholly transparent. Remaining within budget.
- Coffee mornings are going well and are being well attended. The next one will be focussing on transitions – not just transition to high school. Date for the diary 8<sup>th</sup> May

A number of issues from year groups have been raised.

P2

- Online learning does not happen unsupervised in class, concern about seeing adverts when given links to You-tube.
- Homework, an alternative solution to be looked at to remove the current use of maths games online
- Baked potatoes are not nice. Noted that the pupil council have also emailed catering about this.

P3

- Head Lice continuing to be an issue, asked if pupils be made to tie their hair up. This is not possible. Regular checking and treating are the answer for head lice.
- Asked for confirmation that classes will be mixed again for P4. Yes this will be the case for all classes.
- Noted that some parents looking for additional curricula challenges, as they may be acting out in class as they are bored
- Concern noted about the ongoing issue of inconsiderate parking
- Asked why there are not enough red felt tip pens in the classroom. Noted that these were used heavily at Xmas time. There are red pens available though. Children need to be encouraged to put lids back on pens to help them last longer.
- Asked if there are official rules on when kids can walk to school themselves. There is no official school position. From June P3s will not need to be handed over to an adult at the end of the day, but the children will be told that if an adult not there as expected they come back to the teacher.

P5

- Asking about the option of developing a fire pit. This is going to be considered as part of the grants received that are supporting the development of the pond area.

P6

- A request for school to keep the iPads overnight, as some families having difficulty with limiting access to the iPad at home. It is not possible for school to keep them. School going to look into whether it is possible to install an app that limits access after a certain time.
- Earth Calling hoodies. Some children upset at not being able to wear EC hoodies to school, they see it as part of their identity. Some children not happy to change at the end of the day. Blackhall school uniform is their identity during the school day. If there are specific ASN issues this should be discussed with the school. This rule is not anti Earth Calling, it is about encouraging children to wear school uniform. Same rule is in place for any other after school activity.
- The result of the vote for colour of P7 hoodies has caused considerable concern for some children and parents. The choice of baby pink was a clear winner in the vote. There is no intention of overruling this result, it is important for all children to have had a voice and accept the majority decision.

Each year Mrs Martin needs to write a School Improvement Plan. This year she would like this to be more collaborative and will be sending out a survey to parents and carers after the Easter break to gauge opinion and views on what the school should be focussing on for the academic year 26/27.

## **6 Membership for next year**

All members asked to consider if they will be continuing next year.

**Action: Please let the Chair know of your intentions in advance of the AGM. If intending to step down, it would be useful to ask year groups for someone to pick up the mantle.**

Julia Pearson has noted that after 4 years, she is intending on stepping down. A P5 rep will need to be identified. She was thanked in her absence for all her support for PCC.

Emily Orr noted that a Digital Rep for the Council's reference group next year will be needed if this role is continuing.