

# JAMES GILLESPIE'S HIGH SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL

## ANNUAL REPORT 2021 – 2022

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### 1. Parent Council Members and Post Holders 2021-22

#### Post Holders:

Chair:	Sarah Scott
Secretary:	Kirstin Leighton
Treasurer:	Ros Ingle
Communications:	Hilary Snaith/Laura Bird
Events/Hospitality:	Aileen Nimmo

#### Parent Council Members:

Nicolas Boyes  
Chris Brickley (part of year)  
Karen Burke  
Anna Christal  
Graeme Davis  
Cath Downie  
Rob Dunbar  
Vera Eory (part of year)  
Ruth Fowler  
Sarah Jordan (part of year)  
Ailsa Macintosh  
Lynne Mackintosh  
Cressida Peake  
Vikki Plant  
Katy Ruggeri  
Steffi Schultze  
Lisa Sutherland  
Penny Tarsia  
Charles Warlow

## **2. Chair's Introduction**

As Chair I would like to express my gratitude to all the Parent Council (PC) members and post holders during what has once again been a challenging year.

In addition to holders of specific posts, there were also nineteen members of the Parent Council who have contributed to the running of the PC in a very many ways. I would particularly like to thank all those who contributed to keeping PC meetings running through the year, as we continued to operate and refine a new meeting platform.

Four members have left the Parent Council this year as their eldest child reached the end of S6: Graeme Davis, Anna Christal, Karen Burke, and Cath Downie. They had all been member of the PC for many years and contributed greatly to the PC's work as post holders and as members. We are grateful for all they did over that time.

The PC would also like to thank Ros Ingle for her work as JGHS PC Treasurer since 2019. This school year will be her last one in that post, and she has kindly offered to work with a new Treasurer to ensure a smooth transition.

As parent representatives, the PC would like to express our gratitude to the staff at JGHS who continue to help so much with the work of the Parent Council. This includes the admin team, teaching and support staff, the senior leadership team, and the Headteacher, Donald Macdonald. Of course, one of the major events in the school year was the retiral of Donald Macdonald in the summer after 10 years in that post. There was an excellent response from parents to an appeal to mark his departure and to set up a pupil award in his name (<https://jghsparentcouncil.org/2022/07/01/goodbye-to-mr-macdonald/>).

One of the main tasks in the coming year will be for the PC to work with the Council in re-cruiting a new Headteacher for the school.

We would also like to convey our appreciation to the parents and pupils who throughout the year have brought their comments, questions and ideas to the Parent Council and helped to keep its work focussed on the concerns of the school community.

## **3. Parent Council Meetings**

As in the previous year, Parent Council meetings were held entirely online in 2021-22 due to covid restrictions and limitations on access to the school. The increased attendance seen in the first year of online meetings continued with numbers at meetings often reaching about one hundred, which is much more than in-person attendance at meetings before the pandemic.

PC agenda topics/areas for action in 2021-22 have included:

- Capacity and Rising Rolls
- SQA assessment arrangements
- Active Schools and extra-curricular activities
- Education reform
- Pupil Support and Wellbeing

- HT recruitment

Six meetings were held altogether (including the AGM), with all meetings attended by Donald Macdonald as Headteacher and other members of senior staff delivering presentations of specific topics. The teacher presentations and speakers at Parent Council meetings were:

**September 2021:** Ian Porter (DHT) – welcome for S1 parents

**November 2021:** Bob Shankland (DHT) on SQA arrangements and Ian Porter (DHT) on support for mental health in the school

**March 2022:** Ashling Dolan (CL Maths) on the maths curriculum

**May 2022:** Nikki Graham (Mental Health Coordinator) on the role of mental health coordinator

In addition, Eliot Ambrose (Active Schools Coordinator), attended the meetings in November and March to give updates on the progress of Active Schools extra-curricular activities under the new funding arrangement based on donation-giving.

#### **4. Parent Council Engagement**

The PC has continued to represent parents' views, particularly at Locality meetings with Council Officers and at the Consultative Committee with Parents (CCwP) with Councillors from the Education, Children and Families Committee.

JGHS PC has worked with other PCs across Edinburgh on issues such as:

- The resumption of Active Schools activities
- The operation of covid rules
- Parental engagement and access to school building
- SQA assessment arrangements

We have also participated in the Council's new forum for parents of children with ASN in mainstream schools which was set up during the year.

The Parent Council also collected parents' views on the consultation by the Scottish Government on education reform and submitted them as part of a Parent Council response. <https://jghsparentcouncil.org/2021/11/25/views-from-parents-on-education-scotland-and-sqa-consultation/>

## **5. Financial Summary**

The annual financial statement is available as a separate document.

We would like to express our thanks to Ros Ingle for her work as Treasurer and for organising and managing the Small Sums Fund and to Dougie Stirling for carrying out the auditing of the accounts again this year.

## **6. Fundraising/Events**

As in 2020-21 it has not been possible to hold events in the school during the year. Fundraising has been carried out via Parent Pay and Easyfundraising and a full report is provided in the financial statement. We are looking forward to school events re-starting this year and working again with volunteer parents, whose time and effort is always much appreciated.

## **7. Communications**

The PC took the step in August 2022 of acquiring our own Teams account for the purposes of hosting Parent Council meetings during the year and into the future. It is planned for 2022-23 to operate a hybrid system of in-person and online meetings. We also re-established our own mailing list which has been used to communicate with parents on issues such as the Festive Fundraiser and Mr Macdonald's retirement collection.

Information on PC activities and meetings has continued to be shared via emails direct to parents through the school, and via the Head Teacher's Friday email update. We are extremely grateful to the school's admin team for all their support with this. The Parent Council website is used for updates on PC activities and posts relating to the school community. It is regularly updated and is the place where recordings of PC meetings and presentations can be found.

The PC also carried out a survey of parents and carers over Easter 2022 to canvass views about the format of parent consultation evenings, and other events involving parents, after the lifting of covid restrictions. We were delighted that the survey had a good take up with over 160 responses. The report on the survey is published on the PC website and the results were passed to the school to assist in their planning.

<https://jghsparentcouncil.org/2022/05/18/results-of-survey-about-online-parent-consultations/>

## **8. Contact Information**

**Email:** [jghscouncilcomms@gmail.com](mailto:jghscouncilcomms@gmail.com)

**Website:** <https://jghsparentcouncil.org/>