

James Gillespie's High School Parent Council



Connect Money Matters financial health check

Background

In March 2023, Connect (Scottish Parent Teacher Council) issued some guidance (Money Matters guidelines) for parent groups and their treasurers around the handling of parent council funds. The guidance was accompanied by a checklist (Money Matters health check); it was suggested that PC committee members went through the checklist to assess the PC's usual practice against the guidelines. Both documents are available to read on the PC website.

On 10th May 2023, PC treasurer Ros Ingle and secretary Kirstin Leighton met with JGHS business manager Laura Black and admin assistants Samantha Cosgrove and Jo Sinclair, who administer the ParentPay account. As well as discussing the administration and process of the Small Sums Fund and the PC's fund within ParentPay, we discussed the 3 criteria on the Money Matters health check that involve the participation of the school team.

On 16th May 2023, PC treasurer Ros Ingle, refreshments coordinator Aileen Nimmo, and committee members Vikki Plant and Penny Tarsia met to run the health check on JGHS PC finances.

Between these two meetings the full checklist was covered.

Outcome of the financial health check

We scored green for most of the criteria.

These criteria were discussed with the school business/admin team at the May 10th meeting and the following actions were agreed:

- 3. We discuss how to spend our fundraising money with the headteacher and others in the school community including parents, pupils, support staff, class teachers, etc.
 - The Small Sums Fund application process covers this. The school will also share this info with parents on our App and new school website.

- 4. The headteacher makes sure donations from the Parent Council/PTA are recorded in the school accounts and the school reports back on how the money was spent.
 - The admin team keep financial records. SSF process and feedback forms will provide info on how the money was spent. (See separate 'Financial update for PC meeting May 31st 2023' for further details)
- 5. The Parent Council/PTA makes sure all equipment and resources bought for the school are labelled, for example, purchased with funds donated by the Parent Council/PTA/PSA
 - This doesn't currently happen. At the meeting with the school team, it was agreed that the PC will provide labels and stamps for this purpose. However, at the May 16th meeting, it was decided that this would be too time-consuming for school staff and an unnecessary expense for the PC. We agreed instead that an acknowledgement of the funds donated by the PC for the purchase of equipment and resources would be made on the school website, (social media channels), Friday update and in a written acknowledgement signed by the headteacher and attached to the PC accounts.

The remaining criteria do not involve the school team and were discussed at the May 16th meeting (please refer to the completed checklist document for criteria numbers)

Some criteria are for awareness only, and we will ensure these are displayed on the PC website and in the annual financial report: numbers 1, 10, 18, 19, 24 and 25.

We already comply with some of the criteria: 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 20, 21, 22, plus those below with the provisos stated:

- 2: CEC grant meets all expenses, the surplus is paid back to the school through the SSF
- 6: This is done by the refreshments coordinator, who keeps the float until year end when it is handed over to the treasurer for counting and recording on the accounts spreadsheet
- 8: Cash is banked no more than once a month to avoid transaction charges. It is kept securely until it is banked.
- 16: The guidance recommends that this is done monthly by two people, but our usual practice is for the treasurer to update the accounts approx. monthly or after any transactions or a bank statement received.
- 17: Our practice has been for a verbal financial update at each PC meeting
- 23: Our practice has been to keep financial records for 4 years in keeping with HMRC guidance

The following changes to our processes were agreed to improve compliance with the guidance:

- All staff granted money from the Small Sums Fund will be **required** to provide receipts for what they have spent and feedback on how it has benefitted pupils.
- An acknowledgement of the funds donated by the PC for the purchase of equipment and resources will be made on the school website, Friday update and in a written acknowledgement signed by the headteacher and attached to the PC accounts.

- A written financial update will be posted on the PC website before each PC meeting, and a single paper copy made available at the meeting for parents to read. In order to keep costs and paper use down, we will not print multiple paper copies for parents to take away.
- We will keep financial records for 7 years from now on in accordance with the guidance.

Our completed checklist has been scanned and uploaded to the PC website.