

**DCHS Parent Council Meeting [all online]
Wednesday 3 September 2025 from 6.30pm
Parent Council Meeting
MINUTES**

Next meeting will be Tuesday 11 November, 6.30-8pm

Attending

[Note that not all attendees were there for the whole meeting]

Rachel Robertson (Head teacher)

Ruby Foster (House Captain)

Rose Armit (House Captain)

Farah Hamza (House Captain)

Elliot Obose Igbnoke (Head of School)

Simon Preston (Parent Council Chair)

Abi Bremner (Secretary)

Rachel Blythe (Treasurer)

Jenni Longstaff

Laragh

Vlad Hasiu

Grant Aleksandar

Alan Lodge

Chihaho Tagashira-Nakaga

Naomi Sandilands

Caroline Messer

Amanda Skimmer

Srinjoy Milra

Ross

Carol-Ann Miller

Elizabeth Harper

David McMullan

Adam Burgess

Gail Fergusson

Drew Carter

David

Lisa Ramabou

Dominic Job

Ann Pratt

Suzanne

Tara Lynch

Felix Owens

Rauf Ahmed

Martina Barton

Graham Hatton

AGENDA ITEM	COMMENTS
<p>1. Notes from the last meeting and action points</p>	<p>Simon (chair) summarised the points of discussion at the last meeting for the benefit of new attendees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher recruitment – the school had not been able to recruit a computer science teacher and, at the time of the last meeting, there was a shortage of maths teachers too. Schools in Edinburgh had now moved to standard start and finish times for classes to make it easier for pupils to attend other schools for teaching. • Lockers and benches – the issue of buying some lockers for the school had been an agenda item for some time. The Parent Council had money available to support school priorities. We were awaiting an application from the Pupil Leadership Group on this issue. • Planters in the playground – the school had secured two of the planters from Leith Walk. These had been planted by parents and, in the longer term, would feed into school work on eco issues. • Inspection – the school had had a full inspection last year. The report is available on the Education Scotland website. At the last meeting the head teacher had talked through the improvement plan which followed on from the inspection feedback. • Tracking reports – parents and carers received information about their child's progress via tracking reports, which were produced three times a year. There had been concerns from parents about the accessibility and understandability of these. Simon was taking forward work with the council to tackle this. • Phones – phones in schools had been the subject of media commentary at the time of the last meeting because some Edinburgh schools had decided to ban them. Drummond does not current do this, but is following the experiences of the pilot schools. • Fundraising – there had been no fundraising by the parent council in recent years. However, a fundraising group had recently been set up to address this. Funds raised by the parent council were used to support pupils e.g. through the funding of school trips or the purchase of equipment. <p>Action points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rachel Robertson (head teacher) to send improvement plan survey to parents – this had been done. • Calculators in exams – there had been an issue with pupils not being able to use their own calculators in maths exams due to changes in SQA criteria. Rachel Robertson to follow this up with the head invigilator. • Parent council recruitment – Simon was still looking for volunteers to take on parent council roles when the current

	office holders left. In particular, there was a need for someone to help (initially) or take over the management of the parent council's social media presence. Anyone who is interested should contact Simon.
2. Introductions	Due to the number of attendees, there were no general introductions. Simon introduced himself as Chair, Abi as secretary, and Rachel Blythe as treasurer.
3. Update from pupil heads of school	<p>Elliot Obose-Igbnoke (head of school), Farah Hamza (house captain, Clairmont) and Rose Armit (house captain, Annandale) introduced themselves. They explained that the role of pupil leaders was to be the link between pupils and the senior leadership team at the school. They were able to feed back pupil issues and concerns so that appropriate action could be taken.</p> <p>They were keen to make a lasting impact through their work this year. Farah highlighted the importance of effective pupil-leadership communication to address school issues and Rose was keen to look at options for improving mental health support at the school.</p>
4. Head teacher's update	<p>Rachel Robertson provided an update to the parent council.</p> <p>Recruitment</p> <p>The school had been successful in filling all vacancies apart from the computer science role. However, they had recruited a business studies teacher, meaning S1s and 2s would get some IT-related learning. Pupils were able to attend computer science classes in other schools.</p> <p>Attainment</p> <p>The school had been able to collate pupils' SQA results to give some initial indications of attainment across the senior classes. Rachel emphasised that the data only included SQA exams (Nat5, Higher and Advanced Higher). The school offered a range of other qualifications at similar levels, for which information was not yet available. Rachel expected the overall percentages to improve when this information was available.</p> <p>Agreed: Rachel Robertson to present further attainment information at the next parent council meeting.</p> <p>There was a general upwards trend in attainment. Figures for this year were, with a few exceptions, the highest in the past seven years, or the highest excluding lock-down years when assessment was by teachers rather than via exams.</p> <p>Rachel gave the following responses to questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information about other qualifications would be available at the end of September. This would allow comparisons with the national picture, the local authority picture and the school's "virtual comparator" (this is an average of all national data

	<p>matched to the specific profile of Drummond – e.g. in relation to size and free school meal uptake).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil numbers had increased significantly recently, from under 300 around six years ago to over 600 now. The number of pupils staying on to S5 had doubled in the past five years. Some of the reasons for this were sustained efforts to promote the school in the local community and a generally increased birth rate. Attempts by the council replace the school with a Gaelic-medium education school had had a particularly galvanising effect. • The figures presented were percentages of pupils achieving particular benchmarks (e.g. 5 Nat 5s at C or above) across all pupils in that year group (whether they had been presented for exams or not). • Advanced Highers were one area where attainment had gone down. This was suspected to be because some pupils had lost motivation when they received unconditional university offers. It was noted that some Advanced Higher classes were taught with Higher or Nat 5 classes. But this was done given careful consideration to matches across the course curriculum. Where pupils were not offered six classes per week, they were given specific study periods. • It was noted that Advanced Higher could be particularly useful for those considering university study in a related area as it built very relevant skills.
5. Chair's update	<p>The key points covered in the Chair's update were:</p> <p>Parent council social media</p> <p>Simon introduced Jenni who managed the parent council's social media accounts. Jenni explained that this was primarily the facebook account, but activity on X was reducing due to its lack of popularity. Jenni's daughter was now in S5 so she expected to be standing down soon.</p> <p>Action: anyone who was interested in helping out with this should contact Simon</p> <p>PVG – Protection of Vulnerable Groups, Scotland's personal vetting scheme</p> <p>There had been some concern that changes to the approach by Disclosure Scotland (the organisation that manages the PVG scheme) means that all parent council members have to be checked. The key issue was whether we make decisions about young people. In Simon's view, because we don't make decisions directly (and instead, feed into decisions made by the head teacher), we did not need to be vetted.</p> <p>Action: Simon to draw up a policy that makes the role of the parent council clear in this context.</p> <p>Tracking reports</p>

	<p>As discussed previously, there had been some significant concerns about the accessibility of tracking reports to parents. Some of this was about the online system used to access them and some of it was about the report itself. Simon had arranged a meeting with representatives from other schools and staff from the Council's improvement service to take place in the near future.</p> <p>Action: anyone interested in joining in with this work should contact Simon.</p> <p>Toilets policy</p> <p>Abbeyhill Primary School Parent Council had been taking the lead on challenging the Council's emerging approach to trans pupils' access to toilets.</p> <p>Action: anyone interested in getting involved with this should contact Simon.</p> <p>Digital resources for parents with children with additional support needs</p> <p>The Council was consulting on what it called its digital "front door" – access to online resources. The intention was to streamline access to information and services, with a focus on parents with children with additional support needs. There would be a focus group on 11 September to look at what works and what doesn't work in the current online set up. This project was at an early stage, so there would likely be more opportunities to feed in.</p> <p>Action: anyone interested in getting involved should contact Simon.</p> <p>Simon also took the opportunity to introduce Carol Ann, who had been spearheading the parent council's work on children with additional support needs. Carol Ann highlighted ongoing issues with access to holiday hub provision. The council had changed the criteria for accessing this support, and people in the parent group were pushing back on this.</p> <p>Action: anyone who would like to get involved in additional support needs issues should contact Simon.</p> <p>Wider parent council meeting</p> <p>Representatives from parent councils across the city would be meeting online on 10 September to discuss issues with the Council. In terms of legacy planning, it would be good if other parent council members were involved in this work.</p> <p>Action: anyone interested in attending future meetings should contact Simon</p> <p>Research in schools</p> <p>The Education Committee of the Council had agreed to require an opt-in approach for parents of children taking part in research at school, rather than relying on the consent of the</p>
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	<p>child alone. They had also agreed to request national guidance on this issue.</p> <p>Use of iPads (“Empowered Learning”)</p> <p>Parent councils had feed back to the Council on issues around the use of iPads. There were acknowledged advantages (eg. access to learning resources, digital literacy) but also drawbacks (eg. distraction, lack of parental control, loss of handwriting skills).</p>
6. Treasurer’s update	<p>Simon introduced Rachel Blythe, the parent council treasurer. She reported that there had not been any change since the figures reported at the AGM in May (£2,827 in the account). However, the parent council has agreed a request to fund a drama trip, so that money would come out of the account soon.</p>
7. Fundraising update	<p>Simon explained that there was money in the parent council account as a result of an annual grant from the council and also from previous fundraising efforts. The money was used to fund things like Duke of Edinburgh award work, school trip and prizes.</p> <p>However, there had been no fundraising since covid. A group of parent council members had been formed to address this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents were working on organising a raffle. They had a number of good prizes already. It would take place online, in the Autumn. Concerns were raised about raffles being a form of gambling, and assurances given that it would not be promoted to pupils. • Tesco Bags of Help (blue tokens to vote for community groups in Tesco stores) – Rachel Blythe was working on this. <p>Action: anyone who could support the fundraising group was encouraged to do so, with particular need for someone to chair meetings.</p>
8. Questions from parents	<p>There were a large number of questions submitted by parents and carers for this meeting. Written answers were provided by Rachel Robertson (head teacher) and are attached as an annexe to these notes.</p> <p>Additional points raised included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that communication around moving children into different, streamed maths classes had been unclear, meaning that some children did not understand why they were being moved. Rachel R would feed this back. She noted that staff absences had meant that some pupils had been moved to maximise contact time with a qualified maths teacher too. • that communication in previous years about children being placed in maths or applications of maths classes at the end of S3 had been lacking. There was a need to discuss this in advance with parents and pupils, including the

	<p>consequences of not doing maths and the importance of certain assessments in reaching the decision about what level a child was at.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> that the council did keep statistics on behavioural incidents at school where these raised health and safety issues. Rachel R would not be privy to information from other schools but she was confident that the council would be in touch if these showed cause for concern. In addition, there was a staff health and safety group which monitored the health and safety aspects of behavioural incidents. that parents could help support the school to offer Duke of Edinburgh awards – Rachel R noted that this was a significant piece of work so, while additional support from parents was very welcome, there was a need to have a staff member in place to co-ordinate it. She did not have a member of staff at Drummond who was able to do this but would be asking the Council for support from someone from the outdoor learning team.
9. Any other comments	Nothing

Dates for future parent council meetings are as follows:

- Tuesday 11 November 2025
- Wednesday 14 January 2026
- Tuesday 10 March 2026
- Wednesday 13 May 2026 (including AGM)

ANNEXE

Questions from parents and carers

Please see responses below.

Curriculum, Homework & Assessment

1. Will S1 pupils receive homework/home learning, and how often? Is this decided by departments, and when is it expected to start?

We avoid a 'one size fits all' approach to homework and S1 pupils will receive homework at different times for different subjects as appropriate to the content, nature of the course (practical or non-practical) and weekly contact time (eg pupils have 5 periods per week of Mathematics, but only 1 period per week of Religious and Moral Education).

Homework will often be issued via Teams; ipads were distributed to the majority of S1 pupils on Monday and Tuesday 25 and 26 August. If parents and carers are keen to access home learning materials outwith the tasks that are set by class teachers, the City of Edinburgh Council Home Learning webpages may be of use:

<https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/schools/support-home-learning>

2. Are there ability assessments beyond Maths and RME? How many groups/levels are there, and how is placement decided?

We deliver our curriculum in mixed ability classes in almost all subjects (with the exception of Mathematics) and ensure that the needs of all pupils are met through appropriate differentiation. The placement of pupils in Maths leads to broad 'setting' and this is intended to encourage peer support and participation in classes. Where groupings are used by teachers (in any subject area), the differences between learners and how they learn require to be incorporated within all planning so that all learners in a group have the best possible chance of learning. This includes Mathematics.

Placement in Maths classes is kept under regular review through our Tracking and Monitoring processes. Curriculum for Excellence is assessed at Early, 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th level and we remain aspirational for all of our pupils, so that we maximise the number of pupils attaining CfE 3rd and then 4th level by the end of S3. By example, we have supported a young person from a lower set in S1 (where they were able to access peer support and an appropriate level of pace and challenge) through to National 5 in S4, Higher in S5 and now studying Advanced Higher in S6.

3. With differences between classes (e.g. in Maths organisation), how are pupils who fall behind identified, and how is this communicated to parents before a year is lost?

Questions 3-7 are similar and addressed together at the end of Q7.

4. How is progress tracked and reported across the school career?

5. Could you explain the new Pupil Tracking tool, the reporting schedule, and whether three reports per year is manageable and clear for parents?

6. Parents' evenings for S1 appear to be scheduled very late (May/June 2026). Could these take place earlier so parents can act on concerns sooner?

7. Why is Drummond holding only one late parents' evening for S1, unlike other schools which have one earlier (e.g. October)?

Teachers will assess progress through a combination of formative assessment (assessing pupils while learning is happening through questioning, homework feedback, peer assessment and self-assessment) and summative assessment (marks and grades obtained in tests).

Teachers will report on pupils' progress three times every year from S1-S6; these Tracking reports are sent home to parents and carers. We hold a Parents' Consultation Evening for each year group, every year. Please refer to our school website for information about Tracking reports: <https://drummondhigh.org/assessment-and-reporting-calendar/>.

We have amended our timelines repeatedly in recent years and endeavour to strike a balance so that each year group S1-S6 receives reports and Parents Evenings at relevant times (eg related to deadlines for Coursing in S2 and S3). Our Consultation Evenings are spread through the course of the year, with S1 in May, but contact with parents and carers need not be limited to these events. Class teachers and Curriculum Leaders may contact home directly if they have any concerns about a pupil's progress and equally, parents and carers may direct to staff.

If any parent or carer has a query or concern about their child's progress at any time, they should contact the relevant Pupil Support Leader or contact us at admin@drummond.edin.sch.uk.

Teaching & Staffing

8. Teacher recruitment: where are the current shortages, and what is the impact on learning?

Computing is the only subject area in which we continue to experience ongoing challenges with teacher recruitment. However, we are very pleased to have appointed a new member of staff in Business Education, which means that all pupils have an experience of ICT within the Broad General Education (BGE, S1-3). Pupils who wish to study Computing in the Senior Phase are accessing courses through the City of Edinburgh Council's consortia agreement, whereby pupils can attend classes at other schools due to planned timetable alignment.

9. My child has not had any Home Economics classes since starting S1. What assurance can be given that gaps caused by staffing will be addressed?

We have had a 3 week period at the start of this term that has been covered by a supply teacher while our recently appointed Home Economics teacher completed her notice period at her current school. Pupils have been working on theory lessons during this time. Ms Duncan took up post at Drummond on 1 September and practical work will now resume.

10. Why does the top S3 Maths set only have a qualified Maths teacher for 2 periods per week, with the rest taught by a non-Maths supply?

Questions 10 and 11 will be addressed together below.

11. How long will Higher Maths be taught by a substitute teacher, and how will the school support pupils in such a crucial subject?

Ms Flanagan (Teacher of Mathematics) is currently absent from work due to ill health. At this time, we do not have a definite timescale for Ms Flanagan's period of absence or return to work.

Up to week beginning 1 September, Ms Malak has been teaching both Higher Maths classes in full in Ms Flanagan's absence. Ms Malak is a substantive Teacher of Mathematics at Drummond, rather than a supply teacher. Now that the Higher classes are established, Ms Malak will continue to teach 4 or 5 periods (of 6) each week. Where the remaining one or two periods are assigned to a supply teacher, these will be the second period of a double period, so that Ms Malak sets the work to then be completed by pupils. Ms Malak and Mr Steel (Curriculum Leader Mathematics) will both remain available to support the Higher pupils if they need help.

In S3, Mr Steel (Curriculum Leader) will now be delivering 3 periods (of 5) per week to the top set from Tuesday 2 September. This will be kept under review so that all classes across the Faculty are impacted by staff absence as little as possible.

I am very grateful to the Maths department for maintaining a very dynamic approach to their teaching timetables to ensure that all classes have maximum contact with a specialist Maths teacher in the context of long-term staff absence. When Ms Flanagan returns to work, classes will be reassigned accordingly.

Behaviour, Inclusion & Support

Questions 12 and 13 are addressed together, below.

12. How is disruption in class managed so that the learning of others isn't affected, while still supporting pupils causing disruption?

13. What processes are in place to ensure disruptive pupils don't unfairly impact opportunities for others (e.g. whole groups missing workshops)?

Our approaches to addressing disruption to learning are outlined in our Relationships for Learning Policy, Appendix 1. Our Relationship for Learning Policy was published in November 2022 and is due for review by November 2025. This work will include the collation of views from pupils, staff, parents and carers, as well as taking into account the latest guidance from Scottish Government: "Fostering a positive, inclusive and safe school environment, including the use of consequences in schools." We will be engaging each group of stakeholders through surveys and focus groups and encourage parents and carers to provide feedback at that time.

14. A child reported having food thrown at them during lunch. How are lunchtimes monitored and supervised?

A member of the Senior Leadership Team is on duty every breaktime and lunchtime Monday to Friday, supervising in the Concourse. Our team of S4-S6 Prefects support us to manage lunch queues and encourage responsible behaviour – they are doing a superb job of this and I take this opportunity to thank them. We also have Pupil Support Assistants who are on duty in the Concourse and in the playground over break and lunch. Please contact us directly if you have any concerns about your child's experience over lunch.

15. What support is available for pupils with learning difficulties and neurodivergence? How are staff made aware of needs (including those awaiting CAMHS assessment), and how is support offered to less confident pupils?

As with all local authority schools in Scotland, this school operates under the terms of the Additional Support for Learning Act (2009) and its accompanying Code of Practice. Our Support for Learning department is comprised of one Curriculum Leader, 2 full-time and 2 part-time teachers and 11 Pupil Support Assistants. We offer in-class support as well as extracted Curriculum Support Groups (CSG) for literacy and numeracy. Pupil Support Leaders (Guidance teachers) also act as a point of liaison with partner agencies such as CAMHS and we link in with a dedicated Educational Psychologist and specialist colleagues from the Additional Support for Learning Service.

We also work closely with Primary schools at the point of P7 transition to ensure that information about additional support needs and effective strategies can be shared with all class teachers at Drummond; we do this through our Pupil Information Portal (PIP) which is a secure spreadsheet containing confidential information (including pupil voice).

We have a dedicated staff group who work alongside neurodivergent pupils to build confidence amongst pupils, including a pupil-led presentation for Autism Awareness Day as part of week-long celebrations for Autism Acceptance Week in April 2025.

Trips, Activities & Wider Experience

Questions 16 and 17 are addressed together, below.

16. Will there be a school trip for S1 this year?

17. Will S2 pupils have an Outward Bound residential? If so, when, and what is the cost (to allow early budgeting)?

Our Outward Bound residential is offered to S2 pupils; this is to alleviate any financial pressure for parents and carers whose children may also have recently attended school camp in Primary 7.

Departments across the school may offer curricular excursions through the course of the year; the school covers the cost of these.

The S2 assembly for Outward Bound was held on Friday 29 August and information sent home to parents and z

18. Could current S3/S4 pupils join Bronze Duke of Edinburgh this year, and will S5/6 be supported for Silver?

I regret that we remain in a position where we do not have a member of staff to lead the Duke of Edinburgh's Award in school. I have already contacted Fraser Robertson (from the CEC Outdoor Learning team) this term to discuss alternative options for those pupils keen to complete their Bronze and Silver awards.

19. Two years ago there was an activity day at the end of exam leave. Could something similar be organised for 2026, with possible Parent Council support?

We have established a short life working group who are planning for Suspended Timetable to be held in May 2026. They held their first meeting at the start of this term and are currently collating proposed activities (combination of in-school and excursions). Thank you to the Parent Council for offering to support this if possible. Information will be issued by the group in due course.

20. When are S3/4/5 class photos scheduled? Is it still only S1/2/6 each year?

School photographs were suspended during and immediately post-pandemic and were reintroduced at Drummond in session 2023-24, where we targeted S1 and S6.

We regret that while we had booked photographs for pupils during November 2024, we had to cancel this on learning of our school Inspection (due to the date of the photos clashing with one of the days that HMIE were in school). We were unable to secure an alternative booking last year.

Photographs this year were taken for S1, S2 and S6 and we have already booked for next year for the new S1, S4 and S6 (meaning that the current S3 and current S5 will be photographed at that time). This covers all year groups over the 2-year period. If any parents and carers have views or suggestions regarding school photos, please contact Mrs Sloan (Depute Headteacher) at shona.sloan@drummond.edin.sch.uk.

Clubs, Extra-Curricular & Active Schools

21. Where can up-to-date information on after-school and lunchtime clubs be found? (The website links are out of date.)

Updated information was shared with classes on 26 August and the school website updated on 27 August: <https://drummondhigh.org/sports-and-lunch-clubs/>

22. When and where will details of Active Schools and clubs (days/times) be shared?

Our Active Schools coordinator, Jess Lambson, is currently on maternity leave. I am informed that the Active Schools team have issued a conditional offer of employment to a new colleague to replace Jess during her leave and we await confirmation of their start date.

Information about Active Schools clubs will be issued as soon as possible after that. In the meantime, we are in contact with Tamara McKinley, Active Schools Manager, to ensure that Drummond pupils do not miss out on any opportunities in the interim period.

23. Has the extra-curricular offer been updated for this year beyond what's listed on the website?

As above - Updated information was shared with classes on 26 August and the school website updated on 27 August: <https://drummondhigh.org/sports-and-lunch-clubs/>

Practical & General

24. Is there any update on pupil lockers?

As at the Parent Council meeting of 12 May, the Parent Council were awaiting a funding application from the Pupil Leadership Team. I have not yet had an update on whether this was submitted.

25. Are there plans to make Drummond a smartphone-free zone? Are parent networks within school encouraging/supporting this?

Our current approach to managing phones in school to is implement our policy of phones being placed in school bags on silent during lessons. Previous discussions at Parent Council have indicated strongly held and differing views on this topic. We will consider in due course any further CEC guidance that may emerge following the pilots that are in place at other schools within the Local Authority.

26. Some of the website content is outdated. Where should parents go for up-to-date information on subjects, policies, and general school matters?

Our ICT Technician endeavours to keep our website up to date and conducts regular reviews of each page; this is task completed on an ongoing basis through the year. On receipt of this question, we have now edited the policies and procedures page of our website to explain that those that are found on the website are currently used to support our practice in school. Policies and procedures can be accessed here:

<https://drummondhigh.org/information/school-policies/>.

Our School Handbook is a source of general information and can also be accessed on the same page. If you are unable to find the information you are looking for, please contact the school office on 0131 556 2651 or at admin@drummond.edin.sch.uk.

Information about subjects for session 2025-26 is up to date and can be found here: <https://drummondhigh.org/school-coursing/>.