

DCHS Parent Council Meeting [all online]

Tuesday 11 November 2025 from 6.30pm

Parent Council Meeting

MINUTES

Next meeting will be Tuesday 13 January, 6.30-8pm

Attending

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

Rachel Robertson(Head teacher)

Elliot Smith (Active Schools Co-ordinator)

Ruby Foster (House Captain)

Farah Hamza (House Captain)

Nabiha Arif (Head of School)

Simon Preston (Parent Council Chair)

Abi Bremner (Secretary)

Rachel Blythe (Treasurer)

Jenni Longstaff (Social Media)

Naomi Sandilands

Carol-Ann Miller

Claire Ritchie

Omobowale Adeniyi

Heidi Raudenheimer

Jairos Ramba

Wai Kit Li

Joelle Lacouture

Elizabeth Harper

Sawas

Graham Hatton

Suzanne

Pauline

Councillor Jack Caldwell

Councillor Amy McNeese-Mechan

Apologies

None

AGENDA ITEM	COMMENTS
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1. Notes from the last meeting and action points

Action points:

- **Calculators in exams** – there had been an issue with pupils not being able to use their own calculators in 2025 formal maths exams due to changes in Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) criteria. **Rachel Robertson to speak to current invigilators about this once exams approach.**
- **Parent council recruitment** – Simon noted that some of the current post holders would be standing down in May. If anyone was interested in taking on one of the roles, they could talk to the current team to get them up to speed on what was involved. **Anyone who is interested should contact Simon.**
- **Exam performance data** – Rachel Robertson had presented on this at the last meeting. Results had generally improved, apart from Advance Highers. The parent council had requested a more in-depth briefing, including results from non-SQA qualifications. Rachel Robertson noted that she had prepared some slides to discuss at today's meeting. **Agreed: to see if there was sufficient time today and, if not, set other date for this.**
- **Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) checks** – the PVG scheme was a government scheme involving background checks on anyone working with children or vulnerable adults. It had been suggested that all Parent Council members might need PVG checks as the Parent Council made decisions which impacted on children. Simon's view was that this was not the case as the school was ultimately responsible for taking action forward. **Simon to write a policy which made the role of the Parent Council clear.**
- **Toilets policy** - Abbeyhill Primary School Parent Council had been leading a challenge to the council's new toilets policy, which it believes is at risk of excluding trans pupils. This work is ongoing. **Anyone who was interested in getting involved should contact Simon.**
- **Children with additional support needs** – Carol-Ann had been working on this on behalf of the Parent Council. **Anyone interested in ongoing issues should get in touch with Carol-Ann.**
- **Drama trip** – the Parent Council had agreed to fund a trip to see Warhorse for drama students. Rachel Blythe reported that the cheque for this had been issued.
- **Maths class options** – concern had been expressed at the last meeting that children and parents weren't always aware of the consequences of children being places in Applications of Maths rather than Maths classes. Rachel Robertson noted that it was not yet time for children to be making course choices. **She would ensure clearer communication on**

	<p>this point when we reached that stage of the school year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duke of Edinburgh – the school had not been able to identify a teacher who could support children who wanted to do a Duke of Edinburgh award. Rachel Robertson would cover progress in her update. • Lockers – Pauline asked whether the Pupil Leadership Team (made up of representatives from each school year group) had submitted a funding application for installing lockers. No application had been received. It was suggested that this was not a priority for the current group of students (having been initially progressed by S6s in previous years, who had now left school).
2. Introductions	Due to the number of attendees, there were no introductions.
3. Update from pupil heads of school	<p>Nabiha (Head of School) discussed their approach to prom. This was an event for S6s at the end of the school year, which was organised and paid for entirely by the students. They had undertaken several fund-raising activities, raising £380 so far. The intention was that fundraising would cover a £10 deposit for everyone. With approximately 100 attendees, they were looking at £1,000 in total to be paid to the venue soon. Nabiha asked whether the Parent Council could fund the £1,000 deposit, to be paid back as fundraising progressed.</p> <p>Simon noted that a request would have to be made via the standard application form for consideration. A link to this was posted in the meeting chat.</p> <p>Nabiha also noted plans to set up a “pay it forward” option in parentpay, so that parents could pay extra if they could afford it, to subsidise tickets for those who could not.</p>
4. Active Schools	<p>Elliot Smith, the school’s new Active Schools co-ordinator, introduced himself.</p> <p>Elliot was based in Dundee and covering maternity leave in Edinburgh Mondays to Wednesdays. He was keen to get more S1 to S3s involved in activities. Options now available included basketball, volleyball, dodgeball and a fitness club.</p> <p>Previously, Active Schools had used a number of paid-for external providers. Now, the emphasis was on local clubs and teacher and pupil (S4 to S6) support for activities. Senior pupils could access training to support this, with “young ambassadors” being recognised through events and awards.</p> <p>Parents raised the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An S2 had dropped out of their activity because attendance was predominantly S3s and S4s. Elliot noted the potential for a whole school survey to identify barriers to participating.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether options were available for senior pupils to get experience in the actual sports skills they were teaching, as well as leadership/coaching. Elliot noted that the courses available focussed on generic skills but that these were interchangeable and relevant to many of the sports on offer. • The planned activity for children with additional support needs may require more support than other activities. If it was after school, the parents of the children involved may be available to help. <p>Elliot could be contacted at Elliot.smith@ea.edin.sch.uk</p>
5. Head teacher's update and questions from parents	<p>Rachel Robertson provided an update to the parent council. This is provided as Annex A to these minutes.</p> <p>The key points were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing – an update on staffing issues. • Duke of Edinburgh – as the school hadn't been able to find a teacher to support Duke of Edinburgh awards it was working with Bangholm Outdoor Education Centre to deliver this for pupils. Bangholm would provide training and expeditions while the school would support pupils with updating their activities. • Relationships for Learning – the school would be reviewing its behavioural management policy. Parents were asked to fill in a survey and would also get an email about taking part in focus groups. Rachel Robertson noted that this was a planned review, rather than being related to current attention in the media. However, it was a good time to be looking at this issue because there had been lots of recent developments. A parent asked if this related to "behaviours of concern" – behaviours which are reported to the council, often because there was a risk to the pupil, other pupils or staff. Rachel Robertson clarified that this wasn't directly linked to the review. • There was a question on resources for parents to get an overview of what was being covered in classes and what homework was being allocated – teachers were working on providing this for S1s and would then move on to S2s. • There was another question on follow up from teachers if parents hadn't been able to get an appointment with them at parents' evening – there were no specific arrangements for teachers to get in touch. However, if a parent wanted to discuss something with them, they should get in touch with their child's guidance teacher in the first instance. • There was a question about Active Schools clubs – further information in Annexe A and the presentation from Elliot Smith.

<p>6. Chair's update</p>	<p>Simon provided an update to the Parent Council. The full notes are provided at Annexe B to these minutes.</p> <p>The key points covered in the Chair's update were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tracking – Simon had spearheaded a review of tracking reports issued by the school, due to his concerns that the reports and the system used to access them were not fit for purpose. He had eventually been able to set up a working group with parents and a council improvement officer. They had now produced two practical guidance documents (for S1 to 3 and S4 to 6) which should be in use early next year. • City of Edinburgh's Education, Children and Families Committee – relevant activity is highlighted in Annexe B, including news on the Inclusion Review and mobile phones in schools policy. The council has agreed to ban all phones in primary school and is monitoring pilots in high schools. Rachel Robertson confirmed that she had had no official communication about a likely ban in high schools but was watching the pilot projects with interest. <p>Councillor Caldwell noted that the council was also consulting with parents to identify wider issues – eg. around pupils who needed to be able to communicate with home. He would update Simon when the consultation was launched.</p>
<p>7. Treasurer's update</p>	<p>Rachel Blythe, the Parent Council treasurer, noted that, at the last meeting there was £2,827 in the account. There had been payments of £200 (Warhorse drama trip). £20 (Show Racism the Red Card event) and £40 (gambling licence for raffle). The current balance was therefore expected to be £2,567. We were also expecting an annual payment of around £800 from the council. This would put the balance up to £3,300 plus.</p> <p>Action: audit of last year's accounts still outstanding – Rachel was working on this.</p>
<p>8. Social media and comms update</p>	<p>Simon noted that Jenni had been handling social media for the Parent Council for a number of years, but wishes to stand down soon. The purpose of this item was to give potential volunteers a flavour of the work she does.</p> <p>Jenni noted that, when she had been chair, she took over this task too. She had been focussing on connecting with related communities, such as other schools and alumni.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twitter/X– this had been a key platform but was now hardly used by the council or the school. Councillor McNeese-Mechan noted that she used bluesky and that activity there was building. Rachel Robertson noted that the school could not make an individual decision to move platforms, and would have to wait for a decision from the council.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facebook was the other platform on which the Parent Council was active. <p>It was noted that it might be possible to recruit a different parent to carry out work on each platform. This would spread the load.</p>
9. Fundraising update	<p>Simon introduced Graham, who had agreed to take a lead on fundraising activity (with the fundraising committee) following the last parent council meeting.</p> <p>Graham noted that they had simplified the application form for requesting funds from the Parent Council. It now focussed on a few key questions. It had been used for the Give Racism the Red Card event request and had seemed to work well.</p> <p>The group had also been working on their plans for a winter raffle. They had set up a website, got the relevant licence and were now getting and confirming prizes. The expected timescale was 21 November for the launch and 12 December for the draw.</p> <p>Action: Graham to send Jenni photos of confirmed prizes so she could promote them on social media.</p> <p>Councillor McNeese-Mechan noted that she and Councillor Caldwell would also be happy to promote it.</p>
10. Any other comments or questions	<p>Winter opening schedule for school playground – the school had previously had problems with anti-social behaviour and drug use in the school playground after school hours. This had resulted in Amey (the building management company) restricting access to the playground. Rachel Robertson reported that there had been no recent issues. She met regularly with Amey to review the situation and they had recently signed off on a risk assessment.</p> <p>Update from head teacher on exam and other attainment performance data –there had been no time to discuss this at today's meeting – agreed: to allocate specific time at the next Parent Council meeting in January.</p>

Dates for future parent council meetings are as follows:

- Tuesday 13 January 2026
- Tuesday 10 March 2026
- Wednesday 13 May 2026 (including AGM)

ANNEXE A

Headteacher's Update and responses to parent questions

1. Staffing Update

We are sorry to announce the resignation of Mr Mark Holden (Curriculum Leader Technologies). Mr Holden will leave Drummond on 2 December to take up a new post in another Local Authority. We thank him for his notable 11 years' service to the school and wish him every success in his new role. The advert for this post is currently live on the My Job Scotland website.

We have recently approved an employment break for Ms Flanagan (Teacher of Mathematics) and have commenced recruitment to backfill this post as soon as possible. In the interim, we have contacted parents and carers of S1 and S2 pupils to advise that we have made some minor changes to S1 and S2 timetabling to ensure that every class has contact with a dedicated Maths teacher as often as possible through the week.

Ms Alison Stewart (Teacher of Business Education) has also submitted her resignation and will leave Drummond at the start of December. We have started the process to recruit a full time, permanent teacher to fill this post.

We offer congratulations to Ms Naomi Cairney (substantive Pupil Support Assistant) who is acting up as Pupil Support Officer to cover Ms Hannah McPherson's maternity leave. Ms Cairney works with pupils who access our Enhanced Support Provision. This week we welcomed Mr Jacob Blease (Pupil Support Assistant) to our Support for Learning team.

Similarly, we will soon announce a new Transition Teacher for the Drummond Learning Community (Drummond CHS, Abbeyhill PS, Broughton PS and Leith Walk PS). I take this opportunity to thank Mr James Curtis for his dedicated service while covering Ms McRae's secondment.

2. Duke of Edinburgh's Award

Many parents and carers will be aware of the challenges we have faced in delivering the Duke of Edinburgh's Award to pupils in the absence of a staff lead in school. I am very grateful to CEC colleagues at the Bangholm Outdoor Learning Centre for supporting us this session so that pupils can complete DofE. We are delighted to report that there are currently 28 Drummond applicants; 14 Bronze, 13 Silver, 1 Gold.

We look forward to celebrating their successes as they complete their awards. We will continue to work with Bangholm staff with a view to bringing the award back 'in-house' next year.

3. Relationships for Learning Policy

This month, we are undertaking a review of our Relationships for Learning Policy (<https://drummondhigh.org/relationships-for-learning-policy/>) which supports us to manage behaviour in school. We will be collating the views of pupils, staff, parents and carers and encourage parents and carers to complete this survey to let us know what you think: Relationships for Learning (Parent views) (3) – Fill in form. The closing date for responses is Friday 28 November.

We will also send out (by email) details of focus groups which will be held in person during the school day to hear more on this topic from different groups of stakeholders. The data we collect will be used to make revisions to the policy as appropriate.

4. Questions from parents and carers

- **A friend whose child is at another CEC school shared a resource that provides an overview of in-class learning and homework. If Drummond have something similar, I am not aware. If we don't - is it something we could have?**

We are currently working with Curriculum Leaders (lead teachers in each subject area) to produce a similar resource for Drummond. We will start with an S1 overview and hope to have this ready to share in January for the second half of the year. We'll then move on to an S2 overview.

Some departments already have this information available eg: <https://drummondhigh.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/social-subjects-term-by-term-copy.pdf>

- **Will there be any short follow-up reports from teachers to parents they didn't see at the parent evening?**

The next Tracking report will be issued week beginning 8 December. Please contact your child's Guidance teacher if you require additional information.

Related to this, we are seeing parents regularly booking appointments and then not showing up to see teachers, which either prevents others booking in or creates problems in running to schedule if parents 'slot in' unexpectedly if a teacher is sitting with no-one in front of them.

We respectfully ask parents to only book appointments with the teachers they want to speak to so that we can free up spaces for others. Thank you.

- **Regarding Active Schools — the coordinator mentioned activities such as multi-sport, dodgeball, volleyball, badminton and girls' football, which all appear on this list: <https://drummondhigh.org/sports-and-lunch-clubs/>. Could you please clarify whether this list already includes the Active Schools clubs as well as the school-run clubs, or if there is a separate list for Active Schools activities? I had been expecting two separate lists, so just wanted to check how it's organised.**

Elliot Smith (Active Schools Coordinator) hopes to join the meeting. Most clubs are captured on the link above. Elliot has also advised the following:

- I am waiting for PVGs for volunteers for a dance club on a Friday afterschool.
- I'm going to run an Active Schools stall next week to gain interest regarding current and new clubs ideas, including Handball.
- I am hoping to get an indoor curling club for pupils with Additional Support Needs.
- Finally, there is interest in a boys football club, I will try and get this up and running on a Wednesday afterschool with S5-6 leaders.

ANNEXE B

Chair's Update

Pupil Tracking:

Significant progress has been made on improving pupil tracking information across Edinburgh. Since parents first raised concerns about the system earlier this year, the Parent Council has worked closely with Council officers and parent reps from other schools to simplify the process and make reports easier to understand. Two new plain-English guides have now been developed — one for S1–S3 and one for S4–S6 — explaining levels, progress, and how parents can access and interpret reports. The documents are now being finalised with graphics and are expected to be shared city-wide in early 2026.

Inclusion Review:

The Council's Inclusion Review has found good practice across schools but highlighted inconsistency and complexity in how support for pupils with additional needs is managed. A new Inclusion Framework is being developed to make responsibilities and processes clearer. It is due to be published and reported to the Education Committee in January 2026.

Mobile Phones and Smart Watches:

The Council has agreed to introduce a city-wide ban on mobile phones in all primary schools, with an impact assessment underway and a final report due in January 2026. Most primaries already restrict phones and support including smart watches in the policy, with exemptions for medical or caring needs. For secondary schools, pilots are underway at Portobello and Queensferry High Schools using lockable pouches. A final decision and timeline for secondary schools will follow consultations and further reports expected by March 2026.

Parents' Mental Health Survey:

Edinburgh Council and the NHS are running a survey for parents and carers to help improve communication and support around children's mental health and CAMHS (the NHS's Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service). The survey is open until 19 November at www.surveymonkey.com/r/HGJV73F.