



**PHS Parent Council
17 April 2024
Peebles High School**

Attendees

Ellie Johnstone, PC Chair (Chair)
Kevin Ryalls, Interim Head Teacher (Head)
Alasdair Reid, Depute (AR)

Claire Barrett, PC Secretary
Tristan Compton, PC Buildings Sub-group Lead
Dawn Johnstone, PC Comms Lead
Gillian Moran, PC Events Lead

7 parents joined the Parent Council meeting. ***Parent comments and questions are shown in bold italics with answers given below.***

Showbie

Sarah Wilson – Geography and Tourism teacher and lead for Showbie – joined the meeting to gain feedback from parents on Showbie. The recent HMIE parental survey showed that comms had more work to do to inform parents on their child's progress and Showbie is now in use across the whole school to provide this communication with parents.

A number of issues were raised by parents with some general observations:

Technical issues around not receiving email notifications, sometimes, not always.

Parental access for some subjects and not others

Inconsistencies in how teachers are using Showbie

Clarity around where to look – individual channels or Portfolio?

It would be useful to see coursework deadlines, homework too.

There was discussion around the various teaching platforms – Teams, OneNote, etc. Showbie is additional to these with work needing to be uploaded to it.

Parents *are* seeing more feedback on their child's progress than previously. However it is not consistent across subjects/teachers.

Mrs Wilson thanked the Parent Council for the useful feedback and took away the comments and suggestions made.

Chair's Update

Thank you to the parent body for being flexible and accommodating the short notice cancellation and rescheduling. This update will be very brief as we have a really full agenda this evening. It is very difficult to stand here and talk about the tragic loss of one of our young people, as it is a set of circumstances that no community can ever really be prepared for. In that context, it is important to recognise and give thanks to the school staff, and many others, for the support they provided to all the students. It's the toughest professional challenge that any member of the school staff is likely to face, so it has been reassuring that I have personally received a number of positive comments, including from some students in S5, reflecting on the speed with which the face to face support was put in place. On behalf of the Parent Council, I extend my thanks to Mr Ryalls, the senior leadership team, and all staff, for providing support, whilst continuing to ensure the day to day functioning of the school.

Actions Update

The Chair updated on previous actions as follows:

- Sites banned on iPads, restricting research: No meeting has materialised with SBC yet, so the Chair will bring up at PC Chairs meeting to see how other schools get around this.

Tristan Compton advised he had been at a meeting recently where Inspire Learning stated there is a process for teachers to request sites to be added.

ACTION – Head to take up with Paul Graham (Inspire Learning)

- Communications plan - Head requested Alex Corbishley speak with the school Business Manager: Done
- Parents to come forward if interested in working in the group to help improve Communications: This work is going forward – see Headteacher Update
- Parents to feedback on anti-bullying policy: feedback has been received
- Mr Lee- parent volunteers required to look at parents evenings & prelim feedback: see Headteacher update
- Curriculum choice points - Parents asked to see the previous work/survey results: survey data will be shared at the next PC meeting.

Previous minutes are available on the [phsparents](#) and the [school's](#) websites.

Headteacher Update

School Improvement Plan (SIP) 2024-25

Meeting the needs of all our learners by developing:-

- Mr Reid: Curriculum
- Mr Lee: Tracking and Monitoring of Attainment and Achievement
- Mrs Mooney/Mrs McDowell: Learning, Teaching and Assessment
Planning Learning, Teaching and Assessment in S1-3 including differentiation
- Mrs Moretta: Meeting individual learners' needs including dyslexia, Ready to Learn plans

Regarding Dyslexia - we need to tell people this is the process and this is how long it will take.

Accessibility needs to be taught to teachers and monitored – some things are still presented in an inaccessible way.

Yes, that's exactly what we want to improve on, for dyslexia and autism particularly.

How will this (dyslexia group) feed into PC?

The group has not met yet but the progress will be on the website and in weekly Headteacher updates

Regarding the SIP – at what points do you need parental involvement?

The detail is not there yet. 7 May staff inset day look at the SIP, then present to parents

New build

- Building moving ahead at pace
- Some classes visiting the site
- Plans shared by the Head recently – they are locked in
- October 2025 and Summer 2026
- Waiting to hear when ready for next round of engagement with staff, pupils, parents
- Hall capacity - 317 Bleacher Seat Capacity and 17 Loose Seat Capacity

If we wait until the engagement session it may be too late to feed in ideas etc. from the community.

Reality is we will not be able to choose everything we want.

Fire Drill

- Very well observed by all
- Gate to go in at end of 2G
- Drill Hall, Gytes, Priorsford as places of safety

LRC

- Now being well used by S6

Toilets

- Escalated at Portacabin

Behaviour Survey

- No trends/low numbers with staff/parents
- Positive from pupils – following up all pupils who put in rarely/never

Prelims/Reporting/Assessment calendar

- Parent rep needed to join Mr Lee, S6 and a teacher.

The Head shared the results of the recent Prelim Evaluation (see **appendix 1**) which clearly showed that Prelims should take place in January, with additional assessments throughout the year. A parent rep was requested to join Mr Lee's group looking at this assessment calendar and Tristan Compton volunteered to join this group.

Points raised:

The survey didn't give December prelims as an option, some other schools do this.

January – prelims straight back in after 2 days feels too soon.

How will you track assessments for subjects?

We will trust departments to put in assessments where needed, and track attainment. Attainment review discussions are now held to track attainment – this is new at PHS.

If a pupil is consistently failing how will that be highlighted and progressed?

I want parents to know more about what's going on. Principle is that we will tell parents quickly if there is an issue, and attainment reviews – every single child in every single class (seniors) is discussed. The BGE tracking sheets can have pupils ranked – this will not be seen – but it shows us that if someone has gone down really far over time in a certain subject it shows that. This will start in June.

Communication Policy

The Headteacher shared the new Communication Policy which has been formulated in collaboration with parents and staff:

Rationale

- Clear and consistent communication to and from school
- Positive relationships between school and parents and carers
- Respectful communication
- Reduced workload for school staff
- Clear ways for parents and carers to access and receive information
- Clear expectations in relation to communication and information

Communication from school to parents/carers

Immediate Action – individual or group text, phonecall

- Office - Groupcall text for absence period 1 and period 6
- Office - Phonecall for any injury, illness
- SBC – Transport/traffic updates
- Office - School closure
- PSAs - Groupcall text/phone call for absence each period if on 'Vulnerable Young Person Register'

Action/Important FYI – (email and/or website*)

- Office - Merits texts
- Office - Negative behaviour emails to individuals
- Office – vaccinations
- HT - HT Updates*
- HT - New school updates*
- HT - School handbook*
- HT - School policies*
- HT – Calendar*
- DHT Curriculum - course choice*
- DHT Pupil Support – all forms of support including partners*
- DHT Attainment – Study support opportunities*
- PRINCIPAL TEACHER Pastoral/DYW Co-ordinator – Careers opportunities

Trips, events and clubs information updates

- Trip/event/club leaders – set up Showbie account to communicate with the pupils, parents/carers. Anything requiring a signature will still be provided as a paper form

FYI

- HT/IT Technician - Facebook page*
- HT - Newsletter*

Communication to school from parents/carers

- Xpressions App, email or phone the school office. Parents/carers should not email a member of staff directly, unless this communication channel is agreed and established.
- Our staff are face to face with students throughout the day and will respond with an acknowledgement within 2-3 working days. We ask that parents do not ask for a same day response.

Phone call

The School Office staff will direct calls appropriately:-

- Emergency eg Child Protection – to be referred urgently to Mrs Moretta (Child Protection Officer). Other emergencies might include immediate safety concerns, family bereavement, medical emergency – these will be forwarded as appropriate.
- Please note that bullying can be reported via website on the Not Alone logo [PHS Respect \(Anti-bullying School\) – Peebles High School \(glowscotland.org.uk\)](https://www.phsrespect.org.uk) or on the QR code on school posters. The Bullying policy will be followed – details on this page on website.
- Attendance issues – to be recorded by office.
- If it is for Pastoral issue, office will email Principal Teacher Pastoral with the information. Office will say that if it is not an emergency they should expect a response from Pastoral with an acknowledgement within 2-3 working days.
- If it is a Faculty specific issue, office will email Faculty Principal Teacher, cc Principal Teacher Pastoral with the information. If it is not an emergency, a response from Faculty Principal Teacher with an acknowledgement within 2-3 working days should be expected.
- Office will keep a log of phone calls.

Xpressions App

- We strongly encourage the use of Xpressions App – it saves a lot of time and is easier than phoning to give school info about absences, parents can contact the school at any time outwith office hours.
- When Xpressions is used to contact the school, there will not be a response to the 'absence' or 'late' messages to school. The 'meeting request' or 'general' message will lead to an acknowledgement reply in 2-3 days.

Email

- Pastoral and SLT to have auto reply saying 'Thank you for your email, I will get back to you within 2-3 working days. If your email is an emergency or a child protection matter, please contact the school office on 01721 720291'.
- Office - Attendance issues
- Office will forward emails to one person. Please put FAO in the subject.
- If a member of staff is absent, line manager should tell office to direct emails and calls to them.
- Office will direct to Pastoral Teacher if about a pupil.
- Office will direct to line manager if about a teacher.
- Office will direct to event/trip/club leader if it is about a school event/club/trip.
- All office emails to staff have subject 'Parent contact to office re pupil PUPIL INITIALS FAO NAME OF MEMBER OF STAFF.'
- Acknowledgement email from PHS Enquiries 'Thank you for your email. This has been forwarded to the relevant member of staff who will get back to you within 2-3 working days with an acknowledgement. If this is an emergency or a child protection matter, please phone the school on 01721 720291. Our Communications Policy is on the school website'.

In Person

- Turning up at school without an appointment is not encouraged, unless it is an emergency. It is highly likely that the relevant member of staff will not be available.
- The office will refer the parent/carer to the policy, ask if a member of staff is free and if not they will tell the parent/carer that they will take a message and ask the relevant member of staff to get in touch within 2-3 working days.

Communication between pupils and parents/carers during school day

- Young people should not contact parents/carers to ask to leave school/go home without making school aware first. Young people should report to their Pastoral Support Assistant (PSA) or the main office. PSAs or office staff will contact parents/carers directly.
- Parents should not contact pupils during the day in relation to leaving school during the day without contacting the school office.

Commented [RB1]: Could we encourage parents to put FAO in the subject so it is clear to the office who to forward? Make it clear to parents that an email sent to multiple addresses - only the first on the list would be expected to reply? Or some system, so that at least one reply is received.

Perhaps - the auto reply should also say 'if your email has been sent to more than one PHS staff member, we will ask the first addressee listed to respond to avoid duplication' (or similar?)

Commented [RB2]: Did you consider the option of collating multiple questions about similar topics into an end of week FAQ document to accompany HT Update? Could this be mentioned on the auto-response from PHS Enquiries?

There was discussion about the school Facebook page and how it is working well to show the positive things happening round the school, trips and also extra curricular activities. Parents are welcome to share achievements with the Headteacher to put on Facebook.

Curriculum Update

Mr Reid presented slides on the Curriculum - see appendix 2.

It was commented that our ASN is probably not correct (recorded as 35% but probably more likely 45%) so this would affect the grades.

Questions:

6 Nat 5s rather than 7 is unusual for a school in Scotland, is that back on the table for review?

Fundamentally yes we will look at that again but it has to be planned in, can't happen quickly – there are lots of implications - around BGE entitlement for languages and RMPS, timetabling (for whole school), bus leaving times, courses over 2 years, etc. It would take away the 'free choice model' which enables having a wider course choice.

Re the 20%, what is happening to the 80%?

We need to pay more attention to the ones who switch off a bit. The 20% have the motivation to do well. There are too many who drop off the radar, we need to get better at turning the dial on them, so they could be in that higher group.

Parents expressed this is reassuring that this is being looked at, the 60%, the destinations, different pathways. The flowchart is useful to see the pathway to work. Parents would like to be involved in curriculum discussions.

Parents agreed it is good to have School Service back on the curriculum - so important to have opportunity to learn communication and leadership skills for employment.

Fire alarms in exams – we were told SQA couldn't allow for extra time, for mental readjustment

There have been no malicious fire alarms since January. The SQA invigilators own that – the clock starts again when they sit down. But I can feed that back, re mental readjustment.

Vape sensitive alarms – have been installed in other schools

We have a huge number of staff at break and lunch now and vaping hasn't been an issue lately. The portacabin (toilets) are open again at break and lunch.

How long can leaver continue to access their account?

They are asked to hand in iPad after their exams – we will let them know.

Can those leaving buy their iPad?

No, they have to be handed back.

Deferred to next meeting:

Information & Data

Friends of PHS - this item was deferred to next meeting however Tristan Compton made a plea for more trustees – this is the PTA arm of Parent Council which carries out fundraising. Looking for new members, as much or as little time as you can give. Contact Tristan through phspc@outlook.com

The meeting closed at: 9.45pm

Next Meeting: 15 May.

Appendix 1 Prelim Evaluation (Kevin Ryalls)

PHS 2023/2024 Prelim and Study leave survey results.

2. Are you ..

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

● Pupil	191
● Parent/Carer	178
● Staff	45



3. What did you prefer?

[More Details](#)

● All prelims in January (model us...	311
● Split prelim diet between Dece...	103



8. Which model do you think best supported exam preparation?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

● Full study leave	369
● Partial study leave with classes r...	45



Parent Council Action tracker 2023/24

Meeting	Item/Issue	Action	Who	Update
Apr 24	Sites banned on iPads, restricting research	Head to take up with Paul Graham (Inspire Learning)	Head	
Jan 24	Previous actions prior to K Ryalls joining as HT	PC Chair & Head to go over outstanding actions from previous PC meetings.	PC Chair/Head	
Jan 24	Sites banned on iPads, restricting research	Chair will bring up at PC Chairs meeting to see how other schools get around this.	PC Chair	Awaiting meeting with SBC and will put to next Chairs meeting.
Jan 24	Communications plan	Head requested Alex Corbishley speak with the school Business Manager Parents to come forward if interested in working in the group to help improve Communications	Head/A Corbishley/Business Manager Parents feedback	Alex & Business Manager have been put in touch. Parents & Head worked up Communication Policy – see April Minutes for detail.
Jan 24	Anti-bullying policy	Parents to feedback on anti-bullying policy when it is issued by Mrs Moretta	Parents feedback	Policy emailed to parents 4 th March for feedback. Feedback has been received.
Jan 24	Curriculum choice points	Parents asked to see the previous work/survey results	PC will put link on front page of phsparents website	
Jan 24	My young person's S2 CDT class is touring the school looking for a classroom	Parent to advise Head the detail of this	Parent/Head	
Jan 24	Parents' nights timing	Parents get in touch if interested in working with school on reviewing parents nights.	Parents/J Lee	See April Minutes Headteacher update
Nov 23	Use of mobile phones in school	Mr Wilson/Ellie Johnstone to form a sub group of parents and staff to look at this new mobile phone policy.	Head/PC Chair	

Nov 23	Could the 2G pitch be kept open at social times	Mr Wilson to speak to Mr McMordie & the prefects to discuss if they could monitor the 2G at social times.	Head/Mr McMordie	
Nov 23	New 3G pitch requires boots not standard trainers	Mr Wilson will check with PE dept if there are enough boots in all sizes, to loan out to pupils for use on 3G pitch.	Headteacher	
Nov 23	Toilets – could we split them 3 ways for S1/S2, S3/4, S5/6 ?	Mr Wilson to think about this suggestion of allocating the 3 areas of toilets to specific year groups, as it hadn't been looked at that way before.	Headteacher	
Nov 23	Noisy building work around exam time	Mr Lee – notify BAM of exam dates and schedule noisy work outwith these times.	Mr Lee	
Nov 23	Family sessions on exam prep/revision	Mr Lee to look at running information session(s) for families for preparing for exams	Mr Lee	

Please get in touch around any of the issues raised at phspc@outlook.com

Helpful Info/Reminders

Parent Council Meeting Dates for 2023/24

Wednesday 13 September 2023 – in person

Wednesday 15 November 2023

Wednesday 24 January 2024

Wednesday 20 March 2024 Meeting postponed to 17 April

Wednesday 24 April 2024 Meeting cancelled, per above

Wednesday 15 May 2024 New meeting date, due to rearranging above dates

Wednesday 12 June 2024 (AGM)

Post Holders

Chair – Ellie Johnstone

Vice Chair – Tristan Compton

Secretary - Claire Barrett

Communications Officer – Dawn Johnstone

Equalities Lead - Lorraine Murray

Event Coordinator – Gillian Moran

Friends of Peebles High School SCIO representative -

Property Working Group Lead – Tristan Compton

Taskforce Coordinator – post vacant

We welcome interested parents & careers on the Parent Council as general members or working group members. We simply ask that you try to attend meetings regularly. If you would like to be an ordinary member or join a specific working group, please email your details to: phspc@outlook.com

Any parent or carer interested in supporting the Friends of PHS charity with running fundraising activities should get in touch at <mailto:FriendsofPHS@outlook.com>

Website: phsparents.org.uk

Facebook: **PHS Parents** – can contact us via Messenger

Twitter: [@PHSparents](https://twitter.com/PHSparents) [@PeeblesHigh](https://twitter.com/PeeblesHigh)