

Falkirk High School Parent Council Minutes
Monday 20th January 2025
Meeting held at FHS - 1900 hrs.

Agenda item	Detail	Action
(1) Welcome and Apologies for Absence	Attendees: Rachel Attinasi (DHT), Erika Cooper (Co Vice Chair), Christine Dougall, Karen Findlay, Leona Hepburn (Staff Rep), Stuart Kelly (HT), Jen MacPherson (DHT), Ruth McCall (Treasurer), Gail McEwan, Clare McLaughlin (DHT), Robert Menzies (DHT), Catherine Millar, Fiona Shearer (Co Chair), Iain Sinclair (Councillor), Karen Sinclair, Lily Stroud (Staff Rep), Rachel Walker, Kelly Whittington (DHT) Apologies: Tammy Bell, Lorna Binnie (Councillor), Gillian Millar, Jacqui Pearson (Co Vice Chair), Cailinn Rosie, Pamela Sinclair (Co Chair) Everyone was welcomed to the meeting and introduced themselves.	
(2) Minutes of Previous Meeting 19.11.24 and Matters Arising	- The minutes from the previous meeting of 19th November 2024 were approved. - Re the car park issue, it was noted that the planters are arriving w/c 20th January to narrow entry and exit. A work order is in place for signage, and this will hopefully be completed during the February holiday weekend. The situation is reportedly much better now. - Changemaker bins have been bought – Thursday 23rd January is the official launch date.	
(3) Headteacher's 7 Minute Briefing and (4) Staffing	During the briefing the following points were highlighted: - Litter Lotto – The school has signed up to the Falkirk Council Litter Lotto League. Pupils use an app to take a photo of themselves putting litter in a bin. Someone in FHS has won £1000 and the school is moving up the national league. Pupils can win coins and trade them in for vouchers. This is a national initiative that the council has signed up to. The school has received £200 back which is going towards the Changemakers. QR codes on bins round the district. - Christmas Events – the X-mas Factor was very well-received. Pupil behaviour at the dances was exemplary. Both were a great end to the session. The school is consciously increasing the number of rewards-based activities available to pupils. - Family Programme – various initiatives and certified courses for parents to be involved in. More activities planned in this area. - Scottish Certificate of Qualification Framework (SCQF) - Health & beauty wider achievement programme was offered and over 50 pupils attended hair and makeup sessions prior to the dances. A pupil-run salon will be launched where pupils can gain SQA and industry-recognised qualifications. - Upcoming dates - Inclusion Workers – to support young people and families struggling to get young people into schools. There are 2 in FHS working between FHS and Graeme HS. Really positive opportunity to improve attendance. - Staffing. Staffing figure will be received soon. Very difficult to get teachers for some subjects in particular e.g. Home Economics.	

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	Supplementing health faculty with PE teachers. Difficult decisions may need to be made in this subject area. Probationer lists will also be coming out. What is the root cause? People haven't been attracted to these professions. Maths, Modern Languages, Technical, Computing teachers all have national shortages. People not being drawn into the profession in these subject areas. Hopefully FHS will be better in a year but has been very challenging. Things have improved in some areas but still shortages in others. Mr Watson has started a secondment as an Acting Quality Improvement Officer until June 2025. Mrs McLaughlin has taken over his remit and Mrs Attinasi has been appointed to Mrs McLaughlin's DHT role. There is therefore a vacancy for Mrs Attinasi's job share Robertson Head of House role.	
(5) Pathway Planning	• The group received an update from Kelly Whittington on Pathway Planning for pupils. • 20th February - Engage with Employers Mock Interviews with S5s and S6s. Hope to match people with careers they're interested in. • 6th March – Apprenticeship event with several employers in attendance. S3 to S6 will be visiting. Ask an Apprentice section and pupils can ask them any questions. We'll share info on Parent Council Facebook page. • Pathway planning started 2 weeks earlier this year. Started before Christmas and in January the pathway process started. It was discussed with pupils the first week back. Free choice initially which forms a timetable for pupils. FHS accesses other institutions – Forth Valley College, consortia arrangements, Open University, Leaps (Edinburgh University). A lot of work is being put into this and the information is up-to-date on the pathway's website https://sites.google.com/view/fhspupilpathways/home. • How likely is it that first choices will be granted? Take all choices in and usually first choices can be accommodated but things become more complicated after pupils start classes and then want to change. The consortia arrangements are challenging due to staffing and budget issues, but staff do what they can to accommodate these. Various levels available across senior years within the SCQF framework. • Parents should be seeing choice forms prior to them being submitted. This will be made clear in upcoming comms.	
(6) Learning and Teaching Update	• Clare McLaughlin delivered an update to the group on learning and teaching highlighting the following areas: • Staff have had sessions with Bruce Robertson with the latest one being on differentiation. A Pupil dashboard is available so staff can see pupils support needs at a glance. Much more accessible for staff. A new profile is created for each new pupil. Even if the pupil has come from out with Scotland, there's an effort to get as much information about them as possible. Ms Gouthier has been sending out tips of the week to staff. Support Station Pilot – easy access on a trolley in the classroom to support items. Ipad accessibility sessions. Pupil support parent's session tomorrow night (21st January). Staff identified which areas they wanted more information on e.g. early level learners, supporting pupils with English as an Additional Language.	

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	• This has been a really positive process for staff and has emphasised that the profile of young people is changing and they need to learn in lots of different ways. Realisation that staff need to adapt. Really well-received. Going to move onto assessment and feedback. • Different initiatives have been recommended e.g. professional reading group, staff engaging in podcasts on their commute etc. Different ways that staff can develop themselves and learn.	
(7) Community Mental Health	• Event planned for 4th March with stalls and agencies offering support to young people and families and providing the opportunity to learn. There will be signposting to appropriate agencies and workshop sessions. Many different things are done in school but it's also important to signpost other agencies that are available to provide support. Looking for ideas on what we can tap into. Suggestions included Falkirk Football Club, Sustainable Thinking Scotland, Cyrenians, Andy's Man Club, Stenhousemuir Football Club, Scott Martin Foundation, parkrun and junior parkrun, yoga taster, mental health nurses. Parents to email the school with any suggestions.	
(8) ACOB	Prelims • Prelim study leave – several questions were submitted prior to the meeting. • Why are there 2 diets – December and January? This is as a result of pupil and parent feedback (used to be just January and much more condensed). Some pupils went straight from prelims into portfolio assessments etc. so it was done to ease workload. There has been more positive feedback from this system than the previous one. The appeals process is also different system now. The school can only appeal for illness and exceptional circumstances on the day. The prelim exam forms one part of the wider picture. • Study leave – it was brought up that there is none for prelims. This is a Falkirk Council directive and there's no plan to change this. FHS is third in the authority for S4 attainment which is due to time invested in pupils in school. Staff are available and various supports are in place within school. • Only study leave for exams for S5 and S6, not S4. Again, FHS follows Council guidelines. This is a welfare issue i.e. knowing where young people are and that they're ok. • Pupils are expected to go back to class after exams. The school has a duty of care and can't have pupils wandering about while the rest of the school is in class. It's recognised that it's a stressful time for pupils and the school tries to offer as much support as possible. A lot of learning hours would be wasted if pupils were granted study leave. Additionally, it's a 4-week exam period which is a long time to be out of school with no support. • The study leave directive has been in place since 2015 and will not change unless there is a central decision to change it. Conversations can be had on a case-by-case basis with parents if there are any specific issues. It's good for young people to still have a structure and purpose and it can be difficult for some to be self-motivated and study on their own. There are supports like anxiety clinics available that are really useful.	

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	School and Parent Council Use of Social Media - As a school, FHS is phasing away from X due to bots etc. and towards Bluesky however it is not necessarily safe either. Nothing definitive has been decided at the moment. Faculty X accounts are migrating towards Bluesky. We could consider a Parent Council Instagram. - There's a section of the FHS website for the Parent Council which is kept up to date. Maybe use the school website more. Use socials more as an advert forum. However, it's still good to celebrate successes and day-to-day. There's no straightforward option which allows for various types of communication to be disseminated while remaining accessible and secure. Clash between prom and residential trips - It's very difficult to avoid clashes in June and residential trips are constrained by travel company dates. Compounded by the fact that S5s attend the leavers prom. The residential trip dates came in afterward the prom date was decided. It's very difficult to manage the calendar so that all activities are accommodated – residential trips, prom. reward days, Duke of Edinburgh etc. Parent Council Prom Donation - The Parent Council normally donates £500 to the school towards prom expenses. This was agreed for this year. Parent Council Mailing List - Fiona Shearer is trying to put together a mailing list for Parent Council members and attendees to use for distributing the agenda, minutes and other comms. Summer Fair 'Dress Down and Donate' day - Is it possible to have a summer fair dress down and donate day? Bring in something for the fair – raffle prize etc in exchange for dressing down. We struggled last year to get donations and get whole parent community involved. It was suggested that we coincide donations with in-person parents' evenings and have a desk or trolley as you come in the door. This will be trialled for the upcoming S2 parents' evening on 27th January. Summer Fair Date - This has been confirmed as 7th June.	
(9) Date of Next Meeting	The next Parent Council Meeting will take place on Tuesday 18th March at 7pm.	