

Peebles High School

Parent Council

**MAY 2021
E-NEWSLETTER**

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**WELCOME TO OUR LATEST
NEWSLETTER AND UPDATE
ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE
PARENT COUNCIL THIS
TERM.**


INTRODUCTION

With the vaccination programme, lockdown easing, we are hopeful that the remainder of the session will be much improved particularly for S1-S3 young people.

In addition to our normal activities, we are turning our attention to planning with school for August and the new session.

Learning and Teaching improvement will be a laser focus for young people, their wellbeing and a new school Vision for the coming years leading to developing our shared priorities for next session.

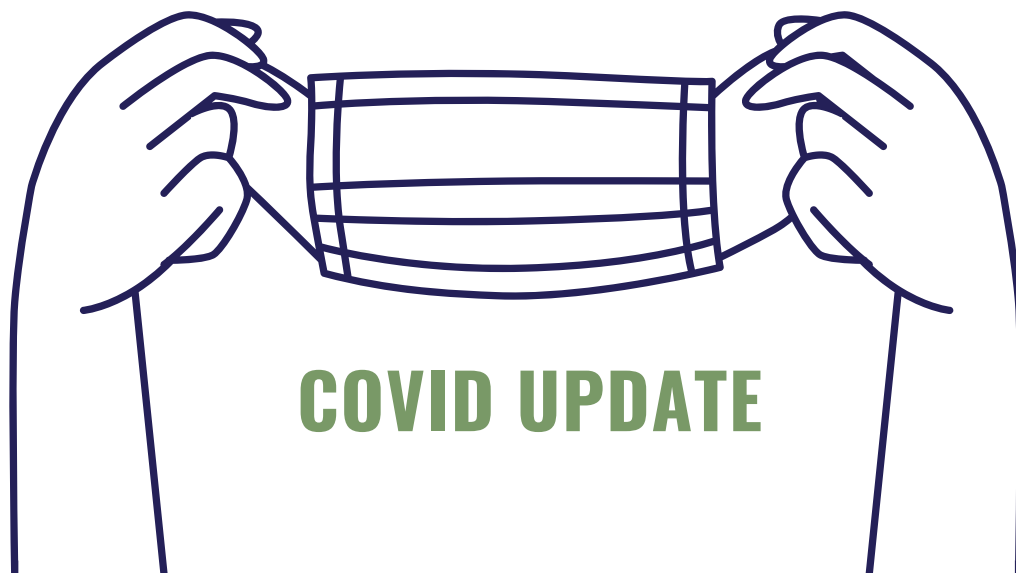
In addition, we have revised the way we work and our constitution to allow for a more manageable workload for volunteers. We are excited too about the plans for our school rebuild and all the possibilities that brings for future generations.

A decorative graphic featuring several gold stars of various sizes and curved lines with small gold circles, resembling a constellation or a stylized border, set against a white background.

A particular message to all our young people leaving this term, you have all been through a lot, but you are

amazing

We hope you will take the world by storm and the last 2 sessions will fade in your memories and you have the very best of futures



This half year has been, yet again, a very challenging one after last session's fire and lockdown. This time it was Covid's 2nd wave with the closure of schools from 18th Dec 2020. Then the move to online learning and the huge challenge of Plan B's partial return to school.

Teachers valiantly improved online learning which has been hugely appreciated by families and the availability of ipads has been something to be very grateful for.

However, the universal reduction in face-to-face teaching for young people, the exams being re-organised, lots of extra tests, the resultant stress on young people and teachers cannot be underestimated.

Thank you to the school for all you have done in the most testing of times.

THANK
YOU



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

"The Parent Council had 98% satisfaction in the last school survey from parents and carers – thank you so much for your appreciation of the work we have done on your behalf, this was so wonderful to hear from Mr Noon at the last Parent Council meeting. We are more than relieved that we have gone some way to help you all.

As I leave the school after 12 years, I would like to thank Mr Wilson and all the staff in school for all they have done in my time here especially in 2 of the hardest years on record.

I would also like to thank the Parent Council working groups and helpers for all their hard work this session. I especially want to highlight the post holders who have worked tirelessly as volunteers giving up so much of their family time to support the school community. As any leader knows you are only as good as the team you lead and I cannot thank you all enough, your values are role models to others especially your altruism. A particular thank you and sadly goodbye to Vanessa Rice, a tireless campaigner for students with additional support needs and all her work with communications (like this). We will miss you so much!

Such incredible achievements for all in the worst of times. Thank you so much to you all and the very best of luck going forward."

Glenda Barton, May 2021

PARENT COUNCIL PRIORITIES

Top Priorities



Continue to represent parents' voices and support the school in delivering the very best of education and school life for all pupils



Ensuring we are an inclusive school, meeting the needs of all learners and this is being led through our **Neurodiversity** group



Learning and teaching effectiveness is the biggest single priority impacting outcomes of young people. We are working with Mr Noon and Dr Carvalho



Reviewing the current curriculum and asking the question is it time just now to change or not?



The School rebuild and improving the current site. We are working with the school and SBC on this



Eco Group - Ensuring that our school meets the challenges of the Climate emergency



Get our **"Friends of Peebles High Charity"** up and running and trying to fundraise in a Covid safe way



University Aspirations - Giving our young people every opportunity to reach for their stars with their aspirations in further/Higher education

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

The working groups along with their aims, objectives are on our website [please click here](#) if you want to know more about them

A summary of activities is included in the following pages

PARENT COUNCIL UPDATES



FRIENDS OF PHS CHARITY / FUNDRAISING

We had intended to hold a garden party to thank the community and Galashiels Academy for all they did to support us during the fire but Covid got in the way but as a thank you to Gala, and in discussions with them, we have a prizegiving cup engraved from us in grateful appreciation to be given to a student showing the most "respect shown to others" on an annual basis.

With the formation of our Friends of Peebles High School Charity we have the following great news!

- The school has received a total of £21,889 from the **fire fund** (see next page for some examples of purchases - although with Covid teachers have still some orders to process)
- Remember our **2021 calendars?** – even during the height of Covid they made over £2,500 net profit! Congratulations!
- The **PHS Lottery** has brought in a total of £3,780! Thank you so much for buying tickets.
- Our Eco- committee application for a **grant from the Scottish Community Asset Fund** of £2,407! Buying plants and garden equipment for the school allotment.
- Regarding our SIP (School Improvement Plan) priority of Learning and teaching, we were able to donate £2,000 this session (and this remains an annual goal for the next 2 years) to support iRIS classroom observation cameras, software, and training for staff to further professional development in their teaching skills.
- We bought **books** for the teacher professional development library (£500)
- We bought **two double basses** for music
- We helped **replace fire damaged teacher equipment**
- We offered **sponsorship** of students to an Eco-event with Bill Gates (virtually)



Peebles High School Support for Learning
@PeeblesSfL

We are all thrilled with our gorgeous gift from @PHSparents 🥰 (one for every member of staff in school!)

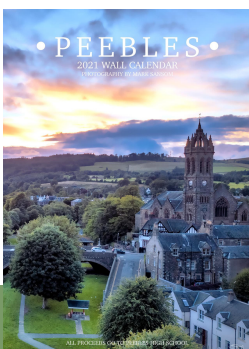
Thank you so much for your generosity & for your ongoing support.

Merry Christmas! 🎄🎅🎁

#collaboration #partnership

#teamwork

- Peebles Heart decorations to all staff at Christmas (supporting local business)
- We funded **Christmas decorations** for a project for senior school and to improve morale
- We made a **donation for vouchers** for Senior Student Council to run an S1-S3 hobby programme
- We have received a **rebate of £5,000 from SBC** for trips we paid for during the fire and this was covered by the insurance



PARENT COUNCIL PRIORITIES



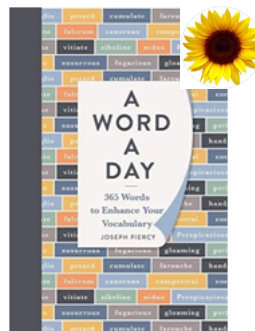
SOME EXAMPLES OF RECENT PURCHASES



Apple pens



IRIS cameras for lesson observations



Textbooks and Journal subscriptions



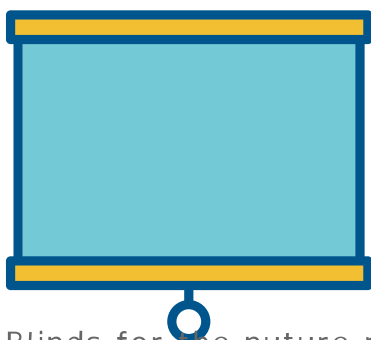
Art Stylus pens



Sports Equipment




Teacher professional learning



Blinds for the nature room

PARENT COUNCIL PRIORITIES

REPRESENTING PARENTS



We have held a meeting (sometimes 2!) per month with special agendas for EVERY year group this year

In addition, we have organised and hosted the Senior Phase Event, then a P7 transition evening with students and families (200 attendees!) plus 2 Duke of Edinburgh evenings.

Our thanks to SLT members for attending and all staff in particular Mr Wilson for being willing to answer all and every question!

Furthermore, we represent the PC at the monthly SBC meetings, The SBC PC Chairs (Borders) meetings and the National parent forum meetings on e.g., SQA exams, online learning and Connect meetings on wellbeing and online learning as well as running our Facebook/Twitter/Website and email accounts. Thank you to everyone for their hard work running these.

LEARNING AND TEACHING

The framework has been completed and assessed by HM inspectorate and was well received. It's also been shared with staff, students and parents and all staff will be using this now with their lessons.

Now, with the help of the iRIS cameras, hopefully there is an opportunity for teachers to get time for reflection on their practice.

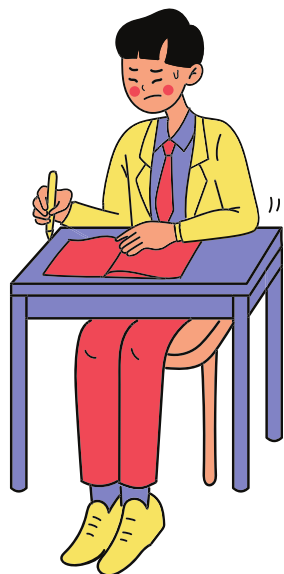
This is a role model in best practice collaborating with the PC on the School Improvement Plan and we are delighted with progress made, great job Mr Noon and Dr Carvalho.

Not seen the entire thing? - head over to our website here <https://phsparents.org.uk/minutes> and review the "April Minutes" under Mr Noon and Dr Carvalho's section.



PARENT COUNCIL PRIORITIES

EXAMS / SQA



After the exams were cancelled and the alternative certification model was introduced, we worked with school as there were several worries about this and thank you to school for the presentations from Mr Fagan.

We also have the compounded problem of loss of space in school. The universal view from families is schools and staff are doing their very best, but the Alternative Certification Model to assess young people after such a long time in lockdown with lost learning is proving to be very challenging to implement on the ground across Scotland.

The amount of testing has been hard on young people with the additional pressure of SQA scrutiny. We are looking for some flexibility by the SQA and the Govt. to give the grades they need to succeed in spite of this and we have lobbied for this throughout the second lockdown and since.

Good luck to all our students and thank you again to school for your efforts.

BUILDING



- We continue as a working group to work with SBC as partners in the rebuild with the good news a minimum of £46M available. SBC attended our March meeting to update us and our working group in April to ensure alignment with the PC Vision for our new school.

Key Highlights:



- New building will be on the current rugby pitch and contemporary design
- This is to avoid impacting learning in the old building during construction
- Enhanced sports facilities are hoped for with a new 3G pitch
- Public Consultation is expected towards the end of May
- An online meeting will be held for families and will be notified soon via Groupcall
- Completion is expected in 2025
- After Christmas all the new outdoor shelters we had worked towards were installed both in the Atrium garden and beside the modular classrooms- they look terrific and have been well used by many students including support for learning. Thank you so much !

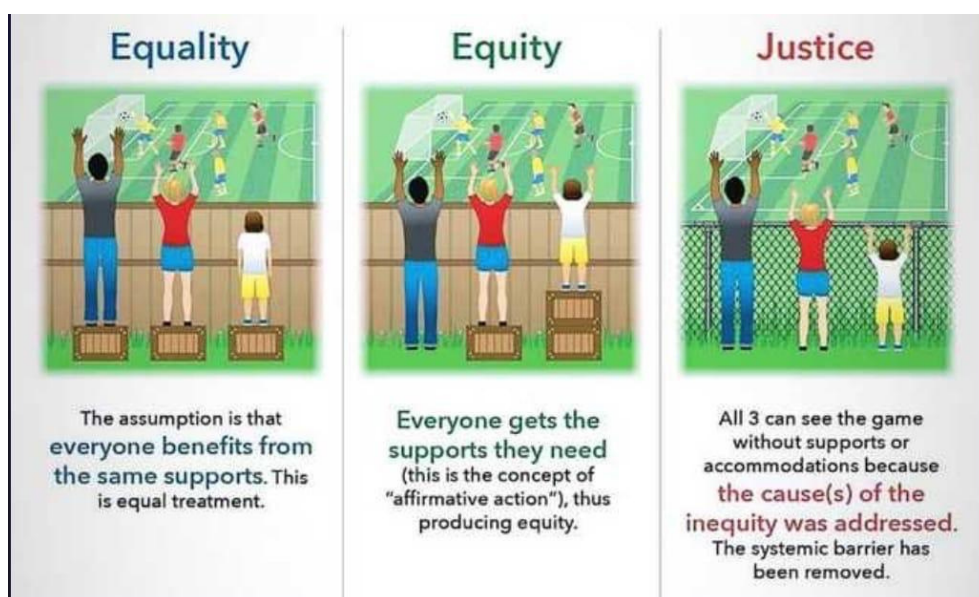


PARENT COUNCIL PRIORITIES



NEURODIVERSITY

- The Scottish Govt. has promised implementation of the 2020 paper on inclusion and the possibility for a minister for neurodiversity.
- Our group have worked closely with SfL who are doing an amazing job both with teacher development and resources. Also, they are still supporting our enhanced provision in Halyrude which we have been advised will return to the main school site soon.
- However, the recent changes to exams highlighted the stretch on AAA for students doing tests and the role that all teachers not just SfL have in being skilled to support all students – we now know that 23% of students in PHS have additional support needs and we aim to work with school to include this work in the SIP learning and teaching framework in the “context” section.



CURRICULUM REVIEW GROUP

Thank you for all the hard work on the curriculum review as you know this has been delayed until the national review is completed when this work will play a key role in informing next steps.

A curriculum that is for “all” is the aim not just for the few.



PARENT COUNCIL PRIORITIES



ECO GROUP

Great work continues with the removal of plastics again from the school and the great work in gaining the grant to develop young people's skills growing food in a sustainable way, with the purchase of new equipment, seeds, and plants for the school garden. Thanks to all for all the hard work on this fantastic project. A collaboration between staff, students, and parents!



UNIVERSITY ASPIRATIONS

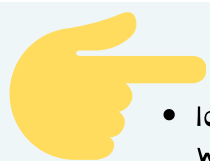
- Fantastic success this session. It's been inspiring to see S6 students working together to support their University applications. We now have a number holding offers for both Oxford and Cambridge!
- Plea for helpers from our parent body / community to help support insights and further opportunities for life after school particularly in the Arts/humanities and law. This begins in the new session for our S6s prepare for admissions interviews and exams.
- In March we offered support to the S5s making their final subject choices and continue to support them before the end of the session with their applications next term.
- **Please contact phspc@outlook.com- we need you!**



INTERESTED? / WANT TO KNOW MORE?

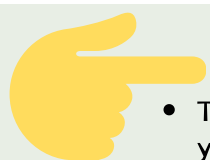
The working groups are open to new members so please do not hesitate to come forward even if you feel you have not a lot of time to give!
Email PHSPC@outlook.com who will put you in touch with the relevant team

GET INVOLVED



WHAT WE DO

- Identify and represent the views of parents on matters relating to the education and welfare of our children;
- Communicate and report back to parents and carers
- Work actively with the school, its pupils, parents and local communities to help every child reach their full potential;
- Lobby and advocate for the needs of parents and our children;
- Develop and engage in activities that support the school in relation to the education and welfare of our children, including influencing the School Improvement Plan (SIP);
- Raise funds for additional facilities and resources for the school and provide further financial support in relation to educational and extra-curricular activities of our children;
- Work with school staff to create a welcoming school which is modern, inclusive and vibrant.



WHAT WE DON'T DO

- The first port of call if you have a concern is the school - please **always** try to talk to your child's pastoral teacher first to resolve worries or concerns;
- As much as is humanly possible, we are there to represent the views and interests of the whole of the parents / carers population - members and meeting attendees are kindly asked not to push their own personal agenda, or use the group to escalate isolated issues

TOP TIP

If you want to read more, you'll find guidelines through The Scottish Parent Teacher Council (search for : "guidelines for PC committee members from Connect)

OUR VALUES



- Purposeful** – with clear objectives and priorities
- Respectful** – of the views and work of others
- Team-based** – working well across groups
- Ambitious** – with high aims to deliver as quickly as possible
- Inclusive** – of others impacted by our work
- Altruistic** – working for the good of all pupils in the school
- Active** – positively challenging to affect change at all levels
- Effective** – in achieving our aim



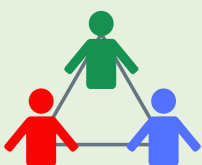
COME AND GET INVOLVED!

(solemn promise: you can do as much or as little as you want!)

- We meet monthly (roughly) - join us when you can!
- Contribute your thoughts, ideas, and feedback either at the meetings or outside of those
- Get involved as and when in mini working groups (specific topic / set timescales)
- Consider a more formal role that makes the most of your skills. Your arm won't be twisted we promise!. The roles are continually tweaked to ensure they fit into our busy lives - details of those are on the school website (parent zone / parent council)
- There are also occasional opportunities to support specific events - keep an eye out for those



CONNECT WITH US



PHS Parents



@PHSParents



[PHSParents .org.uk](https://www.phsparents.org.uk)



PHSPC@outlook.com