



Peebles High School Parent Council Constitution



The objectives of the Parent Council are to:

- Identify and represent the views of parents on matters relating to the education and welfare of our children.
- Work actively in partnership with the school, its pupils, parents and local community to help every child maximise their potential.
- Work actively in partnership with national and regional authorities.
- Lobby and advocate for the needs of parents and pupils at all levels.
- Develop and engage in activities that support the school in relation to the education and welfare of the pupils, including influencing the design and implementation of the School Improvement Plan.
- Support the 'Friends of Peebles High School' Charity.*
- Work with school staff to create a welcoming school which is inclusive for all parents.
- Act in a manner consistent with the values of the school and ethos of the parent council.
- Be open and inclusive.

Membership of the Council will be as follows:

- A minimum of three parents of children attending the school.
- Aim to have sufficient regularly attending members of the Council to have a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Events Coordinator, Task Force Coordinator and Communications Officer.
- Aim to include at least one representative parent from each School year and each cluster catchment area thus involving a good representative cross section of parents.
- To ensure as inclusive a Council as possible, any members of the Parent Forum will be welcome to attend any Council meeting without committing to attend future meetings.
- For a meeting of the Council to be valid, a quorum of no less than 3 ordinary members will be required.

Ethos

Parent Council members should be:

- 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 aims

Appointment of Council members

All parents of a child at the school are automatically members of the Parent Forum and are therefore eligible to participate in any of the activities that parent led groups contribute to the school. Any Parent Forum member is eligible to become an ordinary member of the Parent Council if they wish to commit to regularly attend meetings and are happy to receive direct communications.

There are several formal roles that are usually filled by ordinary members who have previously served on the Council for a period of at least one year. Nominations for these 'post-holder' positions can come from anyone within the Parent Forum but should be formally nominated by an existing post-holder and seconded by another post-holder to be put forward for consideration and a vote. Only existing members can vote for nominated candidates.

Any shortfalls in the make-up of the Council will be made up by subsequently calling for volunteers.

Termination of Council membership

If a Council member acts in a way that is considered by other members to undermine the objectives of the Council or is inconsistent with the values of the school or the ethos of the Council, their membership of the Council and any sub-groups will be suspended. Such action should only be taken after a vote of post-holders which can be initiated by any two members and would be confirmed in writing to the member.

Post-holders

The Parent Council will be chaired by a parent of a child attending Peebles High School and it is expected that other post-holders will also be parents of pupils attending the school at the time of selection. Post-holders will be re-selected on an annual basis at the AGM and roles can be shared between 2 or more members. The Secretary to the Council need not be a member of the Parent Council or Parent Forum and will be paid an annual honorarium as agreed with SBC.

Chair and Vice-Chair should, in the first instance, be chosen from existing post-holders. If no existing post-holder is nominated, then an initial search from within ordinary members and then onto the wider parent forum should be undertaken for someone displaying the right qualities and level of experience. Any viable candidates, as above, should usually be nominated and appointed by majority vote of the existing post-holders and confirmed at a Parent Council meeting before being ratified at an AGM.

The Parent Council will aim, as a matter of principle, to make sure no one person remains in the Chair for more than three years, or four years under exceptional circumstances where continuity is desirable.

The outgoing Chair should preferably be available as a member of the Parent Council to act as mentor for the new Chair for a period of one year. If no suitable candidates are nominated, the post-holders can agree to Chair / Vice-Chair as a forum for an interim period until a suitable replacement is nominated.

Parent Council Working Groups

Any member of the Parent Forum may be a member of any working groups formed by the Parent Council. Details of any such groups will be given on the school website. Friends of Peebles High School is the permanent working group responsible for fundraising. Other

working groups are expected to emerge from the school improvement plan and would be expected to contract in partnership with the school on the purpose and outcomes of the work and be reviewed at least annually. It is expected that working group members are representatives of the Parent Council and will be asked to uphold our values in all dealings with stakeholders and in particular school staff.

Members of working groups will not have to attend Parent Council meetings, although it is intended that the Working Group Lead or another representative will. Working Groups may create short-term subgroups for a specific purpose. Subgroups should have a nominated Coordinator and will report to the Working Group Lead.

Parent Council meetings and operation

The Parent Council will meet at least once in every school term. Meetings will ordinarily be conducted on a face-to-face basis, however may be held on a virtual basis to allow higher levels of attendance or due to external factors preventing a physical meeting. Such meetings shall use recognised video or tele-conference software and be treated in all other ways as formal meetings.

The agenda should include matters of interest raised by the Parent Forum that can then be progressed further by the Council, one of its working groups or subgroups. Any members of the Parent Forum will be welcome to attend any Council meeting and participate fully in the meeting. Post-holders may meet more regularly to discuss routine or confidential matters.

If the Council is unable to unanimously agree a course of action at any meeting, a vote shall be taken, subject to there being at least 12 members present (either post-holders or ordinary members). Each member present at the meeting will be allocated one vote for each Council meeting they have attended in the previous 12 months (for example attending four previous meetings will equate to four votes). The Chair will have a casting vote in the event of a tie. Should there be fewer than 12 members present, the vote will be carried over to the next meeting of the Council. Should there continue to be fewer than 12 members present at that meeting, the issue will be referred to the wider Parent Forum for consultation and the decision based on the outcome of that consultation.

Any two post-holders can request that an additional meeting be held, and all members of the Parent Council will be given at least one week's notice of date, time and place of the meeting.

Non-parent attendees

The Parent Council may invite non-parents to attend Council meetings. The Rector will attend meetings as of right, but two or three other members of staff may attend regularly where required, and the Head Prefects may also attend as pupil representatives if desirable. Other members of staff might be asked to a specific meeting either to introduce them to the Parent Forum or to discuss a relevant agenda item. Similarly, Scottish Borders Council representatives and other community or business organisation representatives might be asked to meetings where there are relevant items being considered.

Co-opted members

No less than two-thirds of the regularly attending Parent Council will be made up of Parent Forum members, with the balance being the optional appointment of co-opted (non-parent) members to assist the Council with its functions. Any co-opted members will be invited to serve for a period of one year after which time the post-holders will review and consider requirements for co-opted membership.

Special meetings

If 20 members of the Parent Forum request a special general meeting to discuss issues falling within the Council's remit, the Council shall arrange this. The Council shall give all members of the Forum at least 2 weeks' notice of the meeting and, at the same time, circulate notice of the matter, or matters, to be discussed.

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The Annual General Meeting will be held in June of each year. A notice of the meeting including date, time, and place will be sent to all members of the Parent Forum at least 2 weeks in advance. The meeting will include:

- A report on the work of the Parent Council and its Working Groups.
- A report on the work and financial position of the Friends of Peebles High School Charity.
- Rector's annual report to Parent Forum.
- Selection of Council members and post-holders.
- Discussion of issues that members of the Parent Forum may wish to raise.

Minutes

Copies of the minutes of all meetings will be available to all parents and teachers at the school through publishing a full copy on the dedicated parents' website and copies will be available on request from the Secretary to the Council and from the school office.

Accountability

The Parent Council is accountable to the Parent Forum for Peebles High School and will:

- Make a formal report to it on its activities at least once each year on behalf of all the Parents.
- Aim to use all available means of maintaining a regular flow of communication with Parent Forum members. This may include newsletters, parent evenings, Social media and Groupcall, Parent Forum discussion meetings, articles in the Peeblesshire and a dedicated section on the School website.
- Notify the Parent Forum in advance of each meeting with details of the proposed agenda and an invitation to attend.
- Endeavour to work in close partnership with the School, in terms of the Rector and staff, and with Scottish Borders Council and will therefore aim to keep both fully informed as to the Council's activities and priorities.

Changes of Constitution

The Council may change its constitution after obtaining consent from members of the Parent Forum. Members of the Parent Forum will be provided with a copy of any proposed amendment and given reasonable time to respond to the proposal.

** Friends of Peebles High School is the fundraising working group of the Parent Council which has charitable status. It is therefore run by a Board of Trustees and has a separate constitution but reports to the Parent Council.*