**Leith Academy Parent Council**

**Minutes of Meeting held on 31 August 2023 at 7pm**

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| **In attendance** | **Initials** | **In attendance** | **Initials** |
| Michael Irving (Head Teacher) | MI | Eilidh Macdonald | EM |
| Richard Foggo (Co-chair) | RF | Saba Latif | SL |
| Helen Clifford (Co-chair) | HC | Judith Weir | JW |
| Xanthe Bird (Treasurer) | XB | Kate McDonald | KM |
| Hilary Brown (Co-clerk) | HB | May-Claire Kelly | MK |
| Katy Haslam | KH | Anna Detchan | AD |
| Justine Douglas | JD | Tamara Hanson | TH |
| V Kolisnychenko | VK | Anna McClay | AM |
| Jack Caldwell | JC | Marianne Hopley | MH |
| Rodger Evans | RE | Adam Kautsky | AK |
| Alex Melichar |  | Tom Riddell | TR |
| Evie Smith (Head pupil)  Joseph Cox (Head pupil)  Lilly Schiller Chatwood  Lottie Foggo  Mhairi Finlay  Eve Kilbryde | ES  JC  LSC  LF  MF  EK |  |  |
| **Apologies** |  | Emma Shaw |  |
| Vicky Allan |  | Katrina Milligan |  |
| Jane Park |  | **Minutes** |  |
| Joanna Riddell |  | Hilary Brown (Co-clerk) | HB |

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| **Item** |  | **Action** |
| **1.** | **Welcome and Introductions**  HC opened the meeting and welcomed all in attendance. Introductions were made. |  |
| **2.** | **Minutes from last meeting approved** |  |
| **3.** | **Pupil leadership team**  MI welcomed the Head pupils and members of pupil leadership team.  **School Toilets**  Main issue of discussion was the toilets. Concerns were expressed about water fountains, taps, hand dryers in the boys’ toilets, and lack of hand towels in the girls’ toilets. MI confirmed a replacement / repair for the boys’ (vandalized) hand dryer was requested before the summer.  Other concerns about the toilets including vaping in the toilets and this being intimidating particularly for younger pupils. MI expressed concerns about vaping in general and confirmed that the school is well aware of this issue across society and staff inspect the toilets as often as possible.  It was suggested that Cllr Caldwell could raise the issue of funding from the Council for improvements to the toilets.  Re access to the toilets. MI confirmed that they are closed after break and lunch for cleaning. Then they should be reopened. The two individual, gender-neutral toilets are always open.  **Clubs**  The drama club is working on developing a club with the S1s to help fundraising for the drama department (with Mrs Pereira’s support)  Sports clubs are hoping to broaden their inclusivity with the addition of girls’ basketball and men’s netball.  How can the art department raise money to support shows/events?  **Integrating S1s into the school**  There are plans for prefects to attend tutor group to support S1s. One parent expressed heartfelt gratitude for the pupil leadership team who helped his son during his transition into high school.  The pupil leadership team will support the school working towards its LGBT Gold award charter.  HC noted that the Parent Council is keen to offer financial support for initiatives, including those mentioned, and encouraged the leadership team to come to future meetings to update us on what they need help with. She asked that any request for support with prom be made as early as possible so we know what is required. | MI to keep a watching brief on access, behaviour and upgrades / repairs to the toilets. |
| **4.** | **Head Teacher’s update**  Mike summarised the various end of term events from before the holidays, including the evening of celebration and the school show.  The new timetable seems to be working well and Ben Stewart is still working through timetable options for youngsters who need to make changes following exam results.  The school is looking at delivering equity in various areas, including S6 prom to keep the price down so that everyone can be included. Leavers’ hoodies are going to be produced at the start of the year. Free breakfast is available in the morning for anyone who wants or needs it. S1s all get a free tie. And there’s lots of free uniform available for those who need it. Please hand in any spare items.  See [the school calendar](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fleithacademy.uk%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2023%2F06%2FCalendar-of-Events-23-24-PARENT-FRIENDLY-VERSION-2.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) on the website including a parent friendly version. The school improvement plan is also there for viewing.  S1, S4 and S6 photographs are still being taken.  S1 teambuilding exercise will take place on the school grounds next week.  There was an excellent Fringe Festival experience for a group of students when they met the First Minister ([see Head’s update Friday 18 August](https://leithacademy.uk/heads-news-18-august-2023/))  The Leith Academy F1 team were the Scottish champions and represented the school and Scotland in Leeds. Thanks to the teachers who accompanied the kids in their summer holidays – an over and above commitment from the staff to support the young people.  **School clubs** – sports fayre w/beg 4 September.  **Non sports clubs**  Proposed new club and activities include   * Model UN debating * F1 in schools * Music/choir * Home Economics after school * Maths/chess club * Art club * Drama – including new S1 drama club   MI to note all clubs in the Head’s Update.  **Trips**  MI confirms trips are happening but notes that post-pandemic enhanced considerations make more demands on planning and delivering them. The school needs to deliver on equity, meeting pupils’ needs, value for money, and environmental sustainability. Staff can suggest trips. Then they need to be proofed for all these considerations. NB City of Edinburgh Council has 4 categories of trips, no 4 (overnight trips) being the most complicated. The school propose a trips and the council committee then decide if it meets the above requirements. Cllr Caldwell offered to check and get back to us about the criteria used to reach decisions. |  |
| **7.** | **Parent raised issues**  **Ukrainian families at Leith Academy**  The vast majority of Ukrainian youngsters are still at the school. They did very well in their exams despite the huge challenges they faced. Mike expressed appreciation for staff and students on this. There are some transport challenges because they no longer live on the boat. One parent commended Mike and the school for the welcome they showed the families. MI confirmed that the Council did support the school with resources to engage staff and for other support. *Could we organise another welcome evening for new families to the school, not only but particularly those from overseas?*  **Queues at the canteen**  MI acknowledged that the canteen did not run smoothly in the first week back. It is extra busy because all the new S1s stay in school for lunch till the September half term. It will ease a bit at that point. Things seem to be improving with the shutters all up. MI will supply an updated price list to help speed things up.  **Substitute teachers**  The school has experienced significant staff illness at the start of term which has led to substitute teachers in several classes. | LAPC committee to discuss a welcome event  MI to supply updated price list |
| **5.** | **Treasurer’s Report 31 August 2023**  **Bank Account** – last statement received was dated 30/06/25. The balance at that date was £1453.21. Since then we should have received 2 interest payments, and the refund for the coach to the Highland Show (£305), giving an estimated balance at 31/08/23 of £1767.  Ongoing banking issues  Signatories  Xanthe Bird (Treasurer) confirmed via telephone with the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) that she is now on the mandate along with Diane Anderson and 4 other signatories.  We note that the bank account requires 2 signatories who are current members of the Parent Council.  Xanthe Bird proposes that the Parent Council agree to remove all others who are not current members of the Parent council from the account. The meeting agreed. She further proposes that at least one – preferably two current members be added to the account. Once we have achieved that, we can arrange internet banking. Richard Foggo (RF) and Tamara Hanson (TH) agreed to be added as signatories for the bank account. The meeting approved their addition.  The yearly payment from Scottish Government will be deposited in September. It is pupil headcount related. Thanks to Xanthe for all her work on this complex issue! |  |
| **9.** | **Fundraising**  RF, KM and ES are our fundraising subgroup. We are conscious of equity and inclusion issues and mindful of placing a burden on parents contributing. Also looking for fundraising ideas and volunteers. At present a raffle at the Christmas concert and a raffle at the Evening of Celebration is our norm. Meeting of sub group on 4/9/23 (Teams – half an hour max). All welcome to join and support / make suggestions.  JW volunteered to design a survey for parents asking what they want, and what they can do. |  |
| **10.** | **Date and time of next meeting**  Thursday 23 November 2023 at 7pm |  |