



St Joseph's College Parent Council

Contact us at:

stjosephscollegeparentcouncil@gmail.com

January 2019

All meetings are held in the school library, and all parents & carers are welcome to join any meetings (*you do not have to be a voting member to attend and participate in meetings*)

Dates for the rest of the
2018/19 Session:

12 March 2019, 7.00pm

14 May 2019, 7.00pm

(AGM is held in October)

Chair: Mel McGill

Vice-Chair: Ranjit Thomas

Welcome to this first edition of the St Joseph's College Parent Council newsletter – thanks for taking 5 minutes to read it!

The aim of this newsletter is to tell all parents and carers about the discussions we have at Parent Council meetings, with the hope that it gives you confidence that we are working to support the school and therefore your children and their learning.

We absolutely understand that meetings aren't for everyone – so hopefully this newsletter will give you the information without the hassle of coming out in the evening.

Being involved in your child's learning has an enormously positive impact for your child – and that involvement takes so many different forms at this stage, it's not really about being in the classroom with them like you might have been when they were at primary school.

Being involved in your child's learning could mean:

- asking about their day (what are they looking forward to, what did they enjoy, what didn't they enjoy)
- helping them remember that they have homework to do
- supporting them when they are doing that homework (giving them a quiet space to work, being available to answer questions or helping them find what they need in books or online)
- reading newsletters and the Pupil Bulletin so you can talk to them about what's happening in school
- coming to Parent Council meetings where we discuss initiatives and projects taking place across the school, what pupils are achieving in class and in clubs – my favourite thing is hearing about the amazing trips that are offered in every year group, and hearing feedback from parents whose children have been on these trips and the positive impact it has had on them as young people.

Hopefully this newsletter will also give you the chance to see if there are any areas that are of particular interest to you and your family, and perhaps you have been waiting for a chance to give feedback or make comments – the job of the Parent Council is to represent all parents and carers in the school so we need to hear from you if you think we can help in any way.

Let us know at stjosephscollegeparentcouncil@gmail.com

However, please note that any concerns you have or issues you face on an individual basis for your child should ALWAYS be addressed with school staff in the first instance – it is not the role of the Parent Council to advocate for individual pupils.

- **Kindles** – we heard how useful the Kindles donated by the PFA have already been to pupils. We suggested that if families ever wanted to give a gift to the school that *Amazon vouchers* would be a great idea as books and scripts can be used by all pupils in the school as some point in their learning.
- **BorrowBox** – www.borrowbox.com – this is a great app for iOS and Android devices that uses your local library card to allow you to download (‘borrow’) books and audiobooks; many parents use it to download texts their young people are studying in class to allow them to continue reading at home, or to have to hand for essays etc.

- **P7 Transition Event (December 2018)** – there was a lot of discussion about this year’s transition event for the P7s moving up to secondary school in August. We feel it is important to get feedback from this event as we want pupils to be able to feel they have had an insight into what life at secondary school will be like, especially what St Joseph’s College can offer them should they choose to attend our school.
Some parents present who had attended the event felt that the format had improved slightly from last year, including practical workshops for the children rather than having them sitting still in a hall for an hour. There were still issues with this format though as it was felt it was very uncoordinated.
Using D&G College as the venue is understandable as it’s a neutral venue and the Local Authority are keen not to promote one Burgh school over another and to encourage pupils to attend their own catchment school, but it does not allow the P7s to get a feel for a secondary school at all as the learning environment is so different.
The children perhaps did not get much out of it as they were only able to experience one department’s work for 15 minutes and parents were not given much opportunity to speak to other parents or staff.
Whist D&G College is a wonderful learning environment, it is perhaps not appropriate for the transition between primary and secondary as pupils will not need to access these facilities until much later in their learning journey, if at all, although it is acknowledged that the original plan was to use The Bridge which unfortunately was not open in time.

- **WIFI access in the school** – St Joseph’s College is a pilot school in the region to get the system up and running and once the practical side of things are working, policies can be finalised for staff, pupils and parents to sign to agree that the network and devices are used responsibly. Forms will come out to pupils and parents when everything is ready to go.

- **The Ranch** – hurrah, the derelict building has finally been demolished and the area made safe! It’s taken a while, but the eyesore is finally gone and our beautiful school can shine without that blot on its landscape! 

- **D&G Parent/Carer Council Forum** – Search Facebook for ‘Dumfries & Galloway Parent/Carer Council Forum’

This regional Forum is made up of Parent Council members from across our region and their aim is to provide an independent voice for all parents and Parent Councils in D&G. They work alongside Officers in the Education Department to ensure information can be shared but are an independent non-funded group.

- **Useful information:**

- Skills Development Scotland (careers) sites:
 general information: www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk
 for parents: www.mykidscareer.com
 for young people and parents: www.myworldofwork.co.uk
 for pathways: www.apprenticeships.scot
- D& G Developing the Young Workforce: www.dywdg.co.uk
- SCQF/Scottish National Qualifications: www.scqf.org.uk
- For current SCQF levels and how they compare to qualifications you took: <https://scqf.org.uk/support/support-for-employers/understanding-qualifications/>

Both of the associations below are valuable sources of information for Parent Councils, as well as for updates on national educational issues:

National Parent Forum of Scotland -

<http://www.npfs.org.uk>

Connect (formerly SPTC) - <https://connect.scot>
 (St Joseph’s College is registered with Connect and all parents can access their information by creating their own logins)

- **St Joseph’s College Parent Council’s Aims and Objectives**

- To work in partnership with the school to create a welcoming school which is inclusive for all parents and carers
- To promote partnership between the school, its pupils and all its parents and carers
- To develop and engage in activities which support the education and welfare of the pupils
- To identify and represent the views of parents and carers on the education provided by the school and other matters affecting the education and welfare of the pupils.