

JGHS Council Bulletin

No.6 Dec 2009

You can contact the School Council by email : council@jghs.org.uk
or Telephone: Ann Henderson (Chair) 667-1646

See the School Council web site <http://council.jghs.org.uk> for more information and news updates
Sign up for e-mail updates via the website, or leave your postal address for us to send out mail

Update from the School Council Chair Ann Henderson

The School Council represents all parents and carers in the James Gillespie's High School community. We meet regularly, and there are different ways in which you can become more involved. A major part of our work has focused on improving communication – between each other, and with the School. We know that this does not always work perfectly, so we would encourage you to contact us with suggestions or problems that you have experienced, and feedback with what works well.

Sign up to our Bulletin

If you would like to receive regular updates from the School Council, send your email address to:
council@jghs.org.uk

Looking Ahead This is a challenging time for the School, for staff and for students and their families. On the one hand, we have the exciting news of funds allocated for a new building, with a project board agreed and a schedule for a new school by 2015. On the other hand, the current economic situation brings difficulties to many, and the specific proposals for budget cuts from the city of Edinburgh Council threaten the provision of front line services including education. The School Council will be keeping parents informed and involved as best we can. We look forward to working together.

Ann Henderson

Forthcoming School Council Events

Wednesday 6th January 2010 7pm
Events Group meeting in Staff Room
(All welcome)

Friday 29th January 2010
Burns Supper and Ceilidh
School Hall

Tickets: jo.clayton@blueyonder.co.uk.
Open to all parents (£20)
and to 6th Year students (£10)

Tuesday 2nd February 7.00pm for 7.15pm
School Council Meeting in Library
Topic to be advised.
All welcome.
Head Teacher update included on the agenda.

If you need any assistance to be able to come along to our meetings, including transport or child care please let us know as soon as possible as we may be able to help

If you cannot make it along to any of the meetings but still want to know more about what's happening, what we are planning, how you can make suggestions or get involved please get in touch by any of the contact methods listed above

JGHS Council News

James Gillespie's - a new building by 2015?

Capital funding has been announced from central government and from Edinburgh City Council. The Project Board has now been established. Head Teacher Alex Wallace sits on the board, and Depute Head Neil McCallum acts as liaison for the Project. The School Council has held several parent discussions on ideas for the new build, and the Project Board recently gave us a very helpful presentation. Reports are on the School Council website. A feasibility study is underway considering options for partial or full decant during the construction period, scheduled to commence 2012.

Edinburgh City Council Budget proposals 2010 -2013

Children and Families Department advise us that their budget is proposed to be cut by £14 million. For the education budget this has been translated into a 2.5% cut for each school, for each of the next three years. (a 9% reduction by 2012 -2013) This comes on top of a budget reduction last year, with significant savings already made. Essential costs previously met centrally, such as water rates and refuse collection, have also been passed back to schools at local level now, with no additional funding allocation.

The Edinburgh Parent Council Network, the Secondary School Head Teachers and the Primary School Head Teachers, have made clear that this will be completely unsustainable. Schools cannot make these cutbacks without impacting on the education of our children and the morale of staff.

The School Council is making representations to the City Council. **You are asked to make contact with all your elected Councillors**, to let them know your concerns. A suggested draft letter is on our website.

Edinburgh Parent Council Network is also hosting a petition and a Facebook page:

<http://tinyurl.com/yg82bmx>

<http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/Edinburgh-school-budgets/>

School Heating System Emergency Action needed now

As many of you will be aware, the heating system broke down again last month resulting in some students being sent home. The winter weather means that this is likely to happen again, causing great disruption to both students and staff. Edinburgh City Council has advised the school that money has been set aside to replace the boiler and to install thermostatic controls on the radiators (most of these cannot be controlled at the moment, resulting in significant energy waste and an uncomfortable working environment) However, to allow a full procurement process to take place, this will not be addressed until the next financial year. We believe this cannot wait – we are pleased that money has been set aside, and the problem is recognised, but we want action now. **Please**

write to Councillor Marilyne MacLaren, Convener Children and Families
Marilyne.MacLaren@edinburgh.gov.uk

stressing that this be treated as an emergency and funds should be released now. Please copy your correspondence to Gillian Tee, Director Children and Families

Gillian.tee@edinburgh.gov.uk and Bill Ness, Head of Property Management
bill.ness@edinburgh.gov.uk

TIMEKEEPING - Let's work together to improve this at James Gillespie's!

Considerable staff time is being spent managing latecomers, supervising detention, and dealing with the consequences of classes missed or late arrivals into lessons. Parents are asked to support the School by doing all that they can at home to ensure students arrive at school on time. The school day starts at 8.30 a.m.