

JAMES GILLESPIE'S SCHOOL COUNCIL

NEWS FOR PARENTS AND CARERS APRIL 2010.

Chair's Report

The first months of 2010 have been taken up with **campaigning to protect the education budget**, both at local school level and at local authority level. Meetings were convened by the Edinburgh City Council Children and Families Department, and by the parent network in Edinburgh, EPCN. Whilst we were successful in reducing the impact of budget reductions on each school, there is no doubt that harsher proposals will come forward for next year, so JGHS parents are keen to be involved earlier in the process. We were not convinced that all alternatives had been fully explored.

Some cutbacks have been made to centrally managed budgets for 2010 –11, such as a reduction in the number of young people entitled to free bus passes for travel to and from school. We know this will affect some family budgets quite severely. If you have been affected by any of the changes to any aspect of the education budget, do please let the School Council know.

February saw the **HMIE** team in school, assessing and evaluating James Gillespie's. Parents participated in interviews, focus groups and questionnaire responses. The final report has been distributed via school, and recognises many of the strengths of the school. More information on the HMIE website www.hmie.gov.uk

Communication is at the heart of most of the matters that parents ask us to take up. Information about courses, curriculum, all aspects of school activity, welfare, and out of school sports clubs – there are times when we know that this is not reaching everyone. We have recently had a very helpful meeting with the School Management Team. Matters discussed included: improvements in the school website, consideration of the use of electronic communication to circulate school newsletters, clearer procedures for contacting Support for Pupils staff, and a commitment from the School Council to assist with distribution of information via our parent email list.

The School Council has a working group on Communication, so if you have ideas and would like to get involved, please contact us: council@jghs.org.uk Volunteers needed to help with the school website overhaul, reviewing School handbook and introductory information for families joining the school, and other pieces of work. More information about our other working groups overleaf.

Ann Henderson, Chair, School Council 07786 660258

Events Group

The annual Burns' supper and ceilidh was held at the end of January and was an enjoyable evening. There were fewer adults than usual, probably because of the school inspection.

Wine was served at a very successful South Africa Evening in school on 4th March and at the Spring Fling on Wednesday 31st March. We will be serving refreshments at Diversecity on Friday 18th June, and additional helpers will be most welcome.

In the past we have sold teas and coffees to parents at parent consultation evenings. However, at the recent S2 evenings we were only able to serve teachers. This was because of a lack of sufficient volunteers. We hope to resume "normal service" at the forthcoming S3 evening on 9th June but we do need people to volunteer to help at these events. It only takes up a small amount of your time and is a good way to meet other parents and to support the school's activities.

If you would like to help at any events, please contact Jo Clayton - jo.clayton@blueyonder.co.uk. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sheena Purdom

JGHS Buildings Renewal

The project board is meeting regularly, and design ideas are being discussed with staff, students, and parents. Deputy Head Teacher Neil McCallum is the link to the new build project. The notes from our December 2010 meeting with the Project team can be found on the School Council website, along with more recent news

<http://www.jghs.org.uk/twiki/bin/view/Council/BuildingsRenewal>

The Project Board is looking at two options for decant 1) Split site with Darroch 2) Total off site at Tynecastle. There is no date set yet for the report (with a recommendation to be forwarded to Children and Families), As soon as a date is set for the report, the school community will be advised, and there will be time for consultation and engagement. The proposal remains for building work to start in August 2012.

Nigel Goddard

Forthcoming School Council Meetings

An **open meeting for S3 parents and carers** is to be held on **Thursday 29th April** at 7.15pm in the School Library. Do come along, find out more about what to expect in 4th year, and let us have any questions or suggestions for School.

Next full School Council meeting Tuesday 8th June Details to be advised

NEWS FROM SCHOOL – March Newsletter now available online –
<http://www.jghs.edin.sch.uk/frontpage/newsmoonths/1003%20Newsletter%20Mar%2010.pdf>

No access to email? Let us know, leave a note in the school office, and we will ensure you receive the newsletters.