

Parent Council – School Report

Monday 9th December 2024



FIDELIS - JUSTUS - PRUDENS

1. General Update

Cllr. Maureen McKay

Councillor McKay was a regular and much loved attendee of many of our Parent Council meetings over many, many years. Always willing to offer support and challenge in equal measure, Cllr. McKay was an important voice for her constituents and others unable to attend meetings, and was always candid in her input. Cllr. McKay supported many school events and always offered her opinion with grace and humour. All school staff to have worked with Cllr. McKay, both recently and in the past, would like to put on record our sincere and heartfelt thanks for the love and dedication she demonstrated to our school and the wider community she served as an elected member.

Eternal rest, grant unto Cllr. McKay, oh Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon her, may she rest in peace.

May Cllr. McKay's soul, and the souls of all faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace, Amen.

Park School Consultation

Two events were held during November whereby interested parties, including parents/carers, could attend and ask questions of representatives of East Ayrshire Council, Grange Academy, Park School and St. Joseph's Academy.

Education Scotland are due to conduct site visits in January, and will want to speak to a small group of parents/carers. Details of their input will be confirmed in the New Year. The formal consultation period ended on 6th December 2024, and the Parent Council will be kept informed of any further developments once the final recommendations are shared with EAC Cabinet.

Prelims

The prelim diet remains ongoing at the time of writing. The vast majority of prelims occur prior to Christmas, with a handful of practical prelims in Expressive Arts, PE and Practical Cookery, as well S6 Advanced Higher, taking place before or after the main diet.

General attendance has been good, and anyone to have missed papers will have the opportunity to sit their prelim at a later date. Prelim grades are not usually shared until January, given the need to allow for marking and cross marking to take place.

Reporting and Parents' Evenings

The following Parents' Evening and reporting dates occur prior to our next Parent Council meeting.

S1 Parents Evening – Tuesday 7th January 2025

Personalisation and Choice/Options Process

Information Evenings prior to the 25/26 options process will take place as follows:

S4 and S5 – Thursday 9th January 2025, 6.30pm

S3 – Tuesday 14th January 2025, 6.30pm

S2 – Thursday 16th January 2025, 6.30pm

Further information will be provided on the evening(s) with interviews commencing shortly after each information evening.

Learning and Teaching – School Improvement Plan

Mrs Buchanan continues to lead our Learning and Teaching focus for the session, which is differentiation. A range of pupil and staff focus groups were concluded today, with feedback used to inform next steps as part of our self-evaluation cycle. The feedback received will be collated and shared at our Parent Council meeting in March.

ASN

Last year, members may recall that we presented to the Parent Council on Health and Wellbeing and Anti-Bullying. This year, we will present on ASN provision within St. Joseph's. Mrs Hoy (PT SfL) and Mr Boyle (DHT) will join us in January to provide a general overview of ASN provision.

Catholic Education Week/Fortnight

Staff and pupils represented St. Joseph's at each of the following Masses across Education Week. The volume of staff and pupil representation across our deanery was fantastic, and it was wonderful for staff to join with our local parish communities to celebrate the value of Catholic Education within East Ayrshire. In school, Fr. Kevin led us in prayer for our Prayer Breakfast, supported by a number of pupils and staff.

Saturday 16th November

5.30pm, St. Sophia's, Galston

6.00pm, St. Joseph's, Kilmarnock

Sunday 17th November

9.30am, St. Paul's, Hurlford

11.00am, St. Joseph's, Kilmarnock

Saturday 23rd November

6.00pm, Our Lady and St. Patrick's, Auchinleck

Sunday 24th November

9.00am, St. Thomas the Apostle, Muirkirk

9.30am, St. Matthew's, Kilmarnock

11.00am, St. John's, Cumnock

11.30am, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Kilmarnock

Sky Academy

A number of S1-S3 pupils enjoyed recent trips to the Sky Academy, in West Lothian. Pupils learned about the way in which broadcast media is delivered from behind the camera, with the opportunity to deliver a news report on the impact of AI.

Longer Distance School Trips

Communication has or will be shared about the following planned trips. As always, thanks are extended to staff for giving of their own time to take these trips.

- Generation Hope 2025
- London 2025
- Paris 2025
- Lake Garda 2026

Christmas Fayre

Our recent Christmas Fayre on Saturday 23rd November, raised around £2000 in total for the school fund and, by extension, various charities or causes for the benefit of pupils. Thanks to all stall holders, helpers, and those to have attended on the day. The event built on the initial reintroduction last session, and we look forward to further growth in 2025.

As well as the Christmas Fayre, school staff, led by Pastoral Care, are also gathering presents and gifts for those families less fortunate within our school community, and so every year. These gifts will be distributed discretely closer to the break.

School Show – Confirmed

Our School Show in June of this year will be Sister Act Junior. More information to follow after Easter.

2. Staffing

Technical Teacher (Full Time)

We are still unable to attract any applicants for the post of Technical teacher. Previously communicated arrangements remain in place for S4 and S5 sections. S3 sections in Practical Woodworking were collapsed.

Given ongoing challenges, we are now unlikely to source a permanent staff member. We will continue to request that a temporary post be advertised up to the Easter break. Thereafter, consideration will be given as to whether or not it is viable to offer Technical during session 2025/26.

Teacher of Support for Learning

Mr Crawford has now moved on to a permanent post elsewhere. Interviews for this post are scheduled to take place during w/b Monday 16th December.

Classroom Assistant Vacancies

Unfortunately, we find ourselves in a cycle of appointing preferred candidates who then change their mind about taking the post after interview. We have two vacancies, and have asked for permission to advertise over Christmas and into the New Year.

AP Base

A preferred candidate has been identified for our AP Base provision. Pre-employment checks are ongoing. We hope the preferred candidate will be able to start in January 2025.