



ST JAMES' PARENT GROUP MEETING

Monday 10th November 2025 at 18:00

Minutes

Committee Members: Christina Waltham, Marie Prior, Claire Ferguson, LeeAnn Nelson, Sari Cabrera Valdivia, Luisa Kemp and Michelle Stelmaszuk

Chair – Claire McLaughlin and Michelle Martinson

1. Welcome and opening prayer

Claire McLaughlin welcomed everyone to the first Parent Group meeting of the 2025/26 academic year including Head Teacher – Mrs Fitzsimmons, Deputies - Mrs Pacitti and Mr Healy, Principal teacher - Mrs Gillies and Father John Eagers.

Please note that 13 parents from the wider school group were present.

It was noted that the group were not in a position to discuss the Community Learning Facility within their remit, it has not been raised with the Parent Group by the wider Parent Forum.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Michelle Martinson and Marie Prior.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting , 15th September 2025

The minutes were issued to the school forum 19th September 2025. Minutes were accepted with no change.

4. Parent Forum Feedback

The Parent Group issued a link to the Parent Forum for the opportunity to provide items they wish to see on the agenda and require feedback at the meeting, the following items were highlighted;

School Trips

We are currently waiting on a Government update on this item, so we intend to hold this on the agenda for the next meeting.

5. Treasurer / Finance Update

Vice-Treasurer, LeeAnn Nelson updated the group on the finances for the start of the year. The account has approx £10,000 at present, however £3,000 is ringfenced for Renfrew Local



Partnership, £1,500 is ringfenced for the Tesco funding to deliver the outdoor learning gardening project.

Christmas expenditure still to come, santas gifts, cakes, tea and coffee supplies, and parent group stall stock.

2026 leavers event and hoodies still to go.

Due to changes with business accounts, a service charge is being applied to the Parent Group bank account. We have reviewed other accounts and spoke with other Parent groups who have faced the same issue, but no alternative is available at present. We will continue to review but we are paying approximately £5 a month.

The group has been attempting to get the accounts audited by external auditors to ensure compliance and transparent accounting. Michelle Stelmazuk has a contact who has agreed to carry this out for the group. Verbally noted the accounts have passed and this will be signed off formally.

6. Pupil Group - Junior Road Safety Officers

Next we heard from our JRSO;

Their job is to help make sure everyone travels safely to and from school – whether you walk, cycle or come by car. They are looking out for ways to make our school area safer – like checking crossings, looking at parking and reminding people not to rush.

Their overall aim for the year is to increase awareness of road safety within the school community. The first action this year was to recruit new members to the JRSO team.

One action for the group is to address the lack of space near the Primary 1 gate for bikes and scooters. At the moment, the bike and scooter racks are on the other side of the school, which makes it difficult for younger pupils to use them. They want to explore ways to create a safe and convenient area near the Primary 1 gate so pupils can store their bikes and scooters more easily.

They want to create information leaflets for families with key road safety messages. They plan to share these with everyone during assembly so children can take them home and talk about them with their families. They highlighted that it has been noticed by the pupils that drop-off and pick-up times aren't always safe or organised. Some children are being dropped off near red lights or zebra crossing which can be dangerous. They have a very busy year ahead of them and are looking forward to putting their ideas into action and seeing the difference they can make.

They updated us on the Renfrewshire Road Safety Calendar competition. The whole school joined in and shared lots of brilliant ideas to fit the 'Road Safety Hero' theme. The JRSO picked their five favourite entries to send to the council, and shared ideas for Road Safety Week. They also highlighted some of their concerns in their action plan, and how to take that forward.

Next week is Road Safety Week, another key action for the group is for the school to take part, the theme is 'Safe Vehicles Save Lives'. The JRSOs are running a school-wide competition where you



can design your very own safe vehicle and create a poster for it. At the end of the week, they will pick one winner from each stage who will get a mystery prize! Throughout the week classes will also have lots of fun activities and tasks to help everyone learn about safe vehicles. Lastly, next Friday is going to be 'Be bright, be seen day'. Pupils were asked to wear bright accessories with their uniform if they have them so they can stay safe and be noticed on the roads.

7. Fundraising

Claire Ferguson gave an overview of the funding awarded over the summer.

Tesco Grant Funding - £1,500

The St James' Primary Parent Group were recently successful with our 'We Grow Stars' funding application to Tesco and their Stronger Starts initiative and secured funding to purchase plants, fruit and vegetables and gardening tools and gift these to each class in the school.

Broadloan Gardens in our local community have come in to support the teaching staff with this project and support the focus on outdoor learning. They have been preparing a shopping list and advices on how to get the most out of the project.

The school have also been fortunate enough to be shortlisted for the Tesco Stronger Starts funding this quarter to further strengthen the outdoor learning initiative for funding so keep getting those blue tokens and voting in the local store - runs to 31st December 2025.

Renfrew Local Partnership - £3,000

The St James' Primary Parent Group were also successful in application to the Renfrew Local Partnership Fund to purchase new playground lining and markings. We were successful in this bid and awarded £3,000 for this project.

Installation takes place this week during the school day but there will be no disruption to the daily routine of the classes and school timetable.

Focus for 2025/26 academic year

The Parent Group asked the wider group to think about what the focus for 2025/26 will be.

Claire mentioned there are a number of funds available, like Renfrew Local Partnership, expected applications will be accepted in Feb 2026, National Lottery, Glasgow Flight path - Next Board meeting is Dec, applications due 3 weeks prior.

It was mentioned that the school would like a focus on outdoor learning and outdoor play kits, things like seating, boards, playground equipment, as well as a container for the equipment to be stored safely. This will be discussed further in the New Year.

8. Disco



The Parent Group would like to extend their thanks to the helpers and teaching staff for their support at the Halloween disco, where we were able to raise £400.

9. Christmas Fayre

The Christmas Fayre has been booked for Thursday 27th November 2026.

This is our biggest fundraiser of the year. Preparations are well under way, however we do require a number of helpers to support set up on the days leading up to the event and then helpers required on the night - email will go out this week

Feedback for improvements on previous fayres included, early access to stalls for helpers, which we have been able to arrange and can offer to those helping out.

10. Trinity High School Estates Meeting

The Parent Group Chairs were invited to attend a meeting being held on behalf of the Trinity High School Parent Group. All Parent Groups from feeder/cluster schools were invited.

The subject matter is the initial discussion regarding the Renfrewshire Council proposals that due to the expected numbers of pupils expected to Trinity High School in the years to come, the current estate is not fit for purpose and the numbers expected.

An update letter was issued to catchment parents, which included further information. The main issues for the group include;

- Short listed locations
- School remaining in Renfrew
- Maintenance of the current estate
- Current poor learning environment
- Economic impact if the school is moved out of the area
- Transport links
- Timelines

It is expected that further information will be shared by Renfrewshire Council in March 2026. Which will be subject to statutory consultation and full business case.

11. Head teachers report

Agenda Item 4

The Scottish Government has taken steps to provide pupils in schools with the opportunity to experience residential outdoor education.

But while it was backed in principle in March, it cannot proceed unless the government tables a financial resolution - and so far, that hasn't happened due to questions around the impact on staffing, the costs of transport etc. This bill is at stage 2 and it's still to be decided upon as to



whether to become an act. We will await further information around this and seek guidance as required.

Agenda Item 6

A fantastic presentation from our Junior Road Safety Officers and staff who lead this group. The good news is, their hard work as a group is really paying off as is the work of our fantastic Parent Council who in November 2024 had invited to our meeting Gerry Hannah (Head of Climate, Public Protection Roads, Environment, Housing and Infrastructure) to discuss with him the improvements that were required to make our routes to school safer. I am delighted that you can now say you are working in collaboration this department as we begin to see the improvements that are being requested by these actions. After a productive meeting with Andrew Diansango from the Renfrewshire Road Safety Team in August and then a follow up e-mail to Gerry Hannah the road relining has begun, we have been offered a new bike shelter and a bike repair station and hopefully further requested work to follow. We will keep you updated as we go.

12. Correspondence

The Parent Group are seeking feedback on how we communicate with the wider Parent Forum and seek their views. The next meeting 12th January 2026, would people prefer on Teams or in person, a poll has to be issued to obtain feedback and will be noted at the next meeting.

13. AOCB

None

14. Date of next meeting

12th January 2026, St James' Primary School, Renfrew, 6pm.

15. Closing Prayer with Father John

Many thanks to all in attendance for their views, input and support.