



ST JAMES' PARENT GROUP MEETING

Monday 12th January 2026 at 18:00

AGENDA

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

Chair – Claire McLaughlin and Michelle Martinson

1. Welcome

Michelle Martinson welcomed everyone to the meeting including Head Teacher - Mr Healy, Deputies - Mrs Gillies and Mrs Bradford, Principal teachers - Mr Moran and Mrs Hogan

Please note that 15 parents from the wider school group were present.

2. Apologies

Apologies were given from Father John, Mrs Pacitti and Michelle Stelmaszuk.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting, 10th Nov 2025

Minutes were issued from the previous meeting (held on 10th November 2025), these were accepted with no revisions.

4. Parent Forum Feedback

a. School Trips

(This item was carried forward from the November meeting.)

Mr Healy provided an update on the Schools (Residential Outdoor Education) (Scotland) Act, which has now officially passed in the Scottish Parliament. It is anticipated that the Scottish Ministers will publish further guidance within 3 to 4 months, which will provide schools with the necessary clarity on how the duty will operate in practice.

While the Act is now law, there remain ongoing discussions regarding the specific financing and legal frameworks for delivery. Education Scotland and local authorities will be tasked with integrating these costs into future budgets, with a particular focus on using self-directed support and equity funding to ensure all pupils can participate. However, upcoming elections may impact this process due to purdah.

The core duties of the Act are expected to come into effect no later than September 2027. Regarding capacity, the Act requires Ministers to consult with outdoor centre providers to ensure there are enough equipped facilities to accommodate all qualifying pupils across Scotland, including those with additional support needs.

Mr Healy also highlighted the school's continued commitment to the "Cost of the School Day" policy, which aims to ensure no additional costs are passed to families. This policy



aligns with the requirements of the new Schools (Residential Outdoor Education) (Scotland) Act, which mandates that future statutory guidance must address equality of access and provide strategies to prevent financial barriers for pupils. Rising transport costs were discussed, with examples given of significant increases in bus hire costs over recent years. It was noted that the cost of trips can create stigma and anxiety for pupils whose families are unable to pay, and that covering costs for pupils can be challenging for schools.

Rising transport costs remain a significant concern; examples were shared of the substantial increases in bus hire costs in recent years, which complicate the delivery of the Act's requirement for a 5-day residential experience. It was noted that trip costs can create stigma and anxiety for pupils whose families are unable to pay, and while the new Act suggests utilizing diverse funding streams (such as Pupil Equity Funding and Self-Directed Support), covering these costs remains a significant challenge for the school's budget.

Looking at what is currently on in different year groups (P1&2 Nativity, P4 Communion, P6 Disney Show & P7 Leavers Events) it was mentioned that there might be an opportunity in future, to look at those year groups which don't have a specific big event on (P3/P5). It was also noted that pupils have previously expressed a preference for "days in school" like the 'Big Day In', rather than trips. The school will continue to seek pupil council views and will keep parents updated regarding developments on the Outdoor Education Act. It was noted that while the Parent Group could contribute to funding trips through fundraising, parents would still ultimately bear some costs.

b. Swimming Lessons

Claire Ferguson raised concerns that P6 swimming lessons had been reduced due to two sessions being cancelled before Christmas. It was clarified that pupils are entitled to two hours of tuition and they were originally split over 3 sessions (a 1 hour and 2 30min sessions). The revised schedule now includes one further session of 1 hour replacing the need of two 30 minute sessions.

c. Parent Group Meetings – Format and Inclusion

Feedback on meeting format (in-person vs online) was discussed. Only 37 responses had been received to the survey. It was noted that meetings moved online during COVID, then to a mixed format, and are now back to in-person. In-person meetings were felt to work better for pupil groups, though accessibility remains important.

The possibility of using Teams again was discussed, though this would pose technical challenges as only the speaker would be able to be heard on Teams. The Parent Group agreed to investigate options further, including trying a different meeting day (Tuesday or Wednesday) at a future date. Childcare challenges were acknowledged, and it was reiterated that children are welcome to attend meetings. Improved publicity was suggested, including clearer links in newsletters, email contact details, and making minutes easier to find, potentially via Seesaw.



It was also noted that the date the AGM is currently planned for falls on the day before the confirmation. There was a brief discussion and it has been decided that the date will remain as planned.

5. Treasurer / Finance Update – Marie Prior

Marie Prior reported a current balance of just over £8,500. Outstanding commitments include spending the remainder of the Tesco grant, Disney licence fees, the P7 leavers' event, half the cost of P7 hoodies, two discos, and possible gifts. Monthly fees were slightly higher this month. A potential need to change bank accounts was noted.

6. Pupil Group - Literacy Leaders

An update was provided on the Literacy Leaders initiative, involving pupils from P1–P6 who support younger pupils with spelling, reading, and writing. Each child introduced themselves and explained what they do and what they like about being a literacy leader. Pupils mentioned how much they enjoy their role, they like being able to be helpful, acting as role models, and seeing younger pupils grow in confidence. Thanks again to all the pupils who attended the meeting.

7. Fundraising - Renfrewshire Partnership Ideas 2026 / Tesco Grant Update / B & Q Partnership

B&Q Partnership

St James' has been accepted into the B&Q community scheme for one year. This includes support with materials and staff volunteering time to help improve the school and playground. Potential projects include storage solutions, bookshelves, outdoor learning resources, and playtime equipment. Parents were asked to speak with their children for ideas, noting that 11 months remain in the scheme.

Renfrewshire Partnership

The application to the 2025 partnership had been successful. The money received was used for playground line markings. The 2026 partnership is expected to launch in February or March and will focus on outdoor learning resources such as whiteboards and seating.

Tesco Grant

The Tesco grant was successfully awarded last year. Funds have not yet been fully spent and are intended for items such as planters. The school and Parent Group will finalise a list to access the remaining 25% of the funding.

8. Christmas Fayre - Thank you and feedback

The Christmas Fayre was very well attended and raised approximately £2,000. Thank you to everyone who came along. Thanks were also extended to school staff who supported the event at short notice ensuring that there were enough helpers for the fayre to take place. Any ideas for improvement for this year's fayre are welcomed.



Ideas discussed included soup prepared by kitchen staff (subject to food hygiene requirements), alternative activities such as “Beat the Goalie/Santa/Grinch,”, possibility of card payment and food vans at future events (subject to permissions).

9. P7 Leavers - Hoodies, events, calculators

Hoodies: Audrey will attend on 19 January to measure pupils. Costs will be shared between the school and Parent Group, with the aim of having hoodies ready for May.

Calculators: The school has requested scientific calculators as a leavers’ gift, which the Parent Group will fund.

Leavers’ Event: The date has been changed to Friday 5 June in order to avoid a clash with the Big Day In.

Surveys: Surveys for pupils and parents will be issued to gather views on preferred activities, costs, and timing. Once the results have been gathered, more information on plans for the event will be available.

Event Planning: It was noted that normally the P7s meet in school on a Friday evening and they get on party buses for 1 hour after which they will be dropped at St James or St Columbus church hall for the second part of the evening. There they will have food, a DJ but also provision for quieter spaces like bracelet making or taking photos. Emphasis was placed on keeping costs low and covering expenses for families unable to pay to reduce stigma.

Donations: A request for prom and communion dress and suit donations has been sent out, with items to be handed in by 9 February. Anyone is welcome to have a look at the donated dresses and suits.

10. Head teacher’s report

In Mr Healy’s first head teacher’s report as acting head teacher he covered the following topics:

School and Pupil Achievements

Since our last meeting, there has been a lot of positive news regarding our pupils. Our yearly literacy event was a great way for us to share work and help foster a love of reading across our school community. It was also a great way to announce that the school had officially achieved the Reading Schools Gold Award! This prestigious accreditation recognises our commitment to building a vibrant reading culture that reaches beyond the classroom and into our wider community. Our P1 and P2 classes delighted us all with their fantastic Nativity performance, showing great confidence and wonderful singing. This festive spirit continued with the Whole School Sing-Along, a fantastic event that brought nearly 600 pupils together to share their class songs—putting us all in the festive mood! The Choir had a busy and very exciting run-up to Christmas! They loved sharing their wonderful singing with the wider community, performing at the Renfrew Christmas lights switch-on and spreading lots of festive cheer at our School Christmas Fayre. Their favourite songs were ‘I Wish It Could Be Christmas Everyday’ and ‘Last Christmas’, which they sang with huge smiles and lots of



Christmas sparkle.

Our first Meta Missions Day was a fantastic celebration of creativity, culture, and collaboration! Pupils became global explorers for the day, diving into hands-on activities that brought countries to life while putting their meta-skills into action: skills like adaptability, initiative, sense-making, and collaborating—all essential for life and work.

JRSO update

Our JRSOs' hard work has paid off, as has the work of our Parent Council. In November 2024, they invited Gerry Hannah (Head of Climate, Public Protection & Roads, Environment, Housing, and Infrastructure) to our meeting to discuss the improvements required to make our routes to school safer. I am delighted to say that work is now in progress to install a new bike shelter/scooter rack (located in the lower school playground) and a bike repair station (located in the upper school playground) in the coming weeks.

Staffing Update

As communicated via email to our parent/carers, there have been a few new staffing appointments.

Due to Mrs Fitzsimmons' secondment to headquarters, I have been appointed Acting Head Teacher. Mrs Gillies, our Principal Teacher, has been appointed Acting Depute Head Teacher, and Mrs Hogan has been appointed Acting Principal Teacher.

Report

Cards/Parents

Evening

Based on the reporting consultation, the school are going to move to a new format as this received the majority of votes (79%). The new format will be as follows:

- **Wednesday 1st of April 2026** - Written Reports will be issued to parents/ carers.
- **Thursday 28th of May 2026** - Parents Night 2 will be held. At Parents Night 2, the report can be discussed and also you will be informed of any updates or changes.

11. Correspondence

No Correspondence was received.

12. AOCB

A query was raised regarding times for Communion and Confession; the following dates and times were confirmed (as included in the newsletter):

Tuesday 10th March - First Confession in St James' Parish Church, Renfrew (P4A/P4B at 6:30pm and P4C/P4D at 7:30pm)

Saturday 9th May- First Holy Communion in St James' Parish Church, Renfrew (P4A/P4B at 10am and P4C/P4D at 12pm)

13. Date of next meeting

Monday 16th March 2026, St James' Primary School, Renfrew, 6pm.