



LINLITHGOW ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL

Linlithgow Academy Parent Council Meeting
Monday 23rd March 2026
7.00 pm – 8.30 pm
Meeting in school and Zoom video conference

Minutes

Attendees

Parent Council Members:	Helen Jenkins (Chair), Kelda Bryson (Co-Vice Chair), Laura McGowan (Co-Vice Chair), Karen Marriott (Clerk), Adam Schofield (Treasurer), Nick Goldfinch, Stuart Hamilton, Jennifer Melville, Julia Miller.
Parent Forum Members:	Thea de Joode, Alice Lane
School Representatives:	Grant Abbot (Head Teacher), Sarah Carney (Staff Representative)
Student Representatives:	Tom Diamond

1. Welcome and Apologies

The meeting opened with a welcome to all attendees, both in person and online. Introductions were made, and apologies were noted from: Laurence Kenny, Elsie Kenny (Student Representative), Pauline Orr (West Lothian Councillor), Sally Pattle (West Lothian Councillor).

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

2.1 Previous Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting of 23rd January 2026 were accepted without amendments.

2.2 Matters Arising

2.2.1 Bus fire incident

Confirmation has been received from West Lothian Council that the vehicle involved had been properly maintained and that no further action was required.

2.2.2 School transport engagement

It was noted that there had been a request from the West Lothian Passenger Transport team to strengthen engagement with parent groups regarding school transport.

Action: Interested parents should contact Helen as Chair who can link them with West Lothian Council.

3. Items from Parent Forum

Discussion items submitted by parents/carers in advance of meeting.

3.1 Mobile Phone Use in School

Concerns were raised by a parent concerning an apparent increase in unauthorised mobile phone usage in classrooms, contrary to the school's mobile phone policy. They noted incidences of students filmed in class by other students without consent, and that this footage had been published on social media. They noted that this negatively impacts those filmed and increased their anxiety about attending school. Questions were raised about the consistency and enforcement of the mobile phone policy if students are regularly using their phones in class.

The Headteacher reminded members that the current school policy involves confiscating phones for inappropriate use, and this is generally effective. However key challenges remain such as managing what pupils access on their devices while in school, including social media and messaging. He noted that many online learning resources (including Microsoft Teams) rely on student access to devices. A total ban on phones would create resource challenges, as schools in West Lothian do not have one-to-one devices unlike some council areas due to a lack of funding at national level.

Members discussed wider parenting and safeguarding issues around use of phones and social media:

- Schools can regulate phone use during school hours but cannot control content accessed outside school.
- There is currently no legislation from the Scottish Government requiring specific parental controls or age limits beyond existing platform rules.
- Practical issues include policing phone use in corridors vs classrooms and ensuring staff capacity to enforce rules consistently.

It was also noted that West Lothian County Council are conducting a review of mobile phone policies across all schools, the outcome of which is expected in June. All schools have provided feedback into the review, but there is currently no clear process for how parent views will be incorporated.

Action: Contact local councillors to ask whether parents or the Parent Council will be consulted in the West Lothian Council review of the mobile phone policy, and if not, how the Parent Council can formally feed into the review. (Helen Jenkins)

4. Focus Topic: Reporting

The Headteacher and Teacher Representative Sarah Carney led a detailed discussion on the school's reporting systems and feedback processes.

It was noted that in the current student reporting system, staff can access and view reports written by other staff members. Reporting operates within a "tracking window" that is opened and closed for data entry. Analysis is provided at various levels within the system that can be accessed by staff. A quality assurance process is in place, led by Principal Teachers in each department, to check data accuracy and promote consistency of standards across teachers in the department.

There are challenges with scheduling reporting timelines for each year group across the academic year and providing teachers with sufficient time to write up the reports within their working time agreement. It is important that the reports are released in a timely way with consideration to key decision points such as feedback from assessments or prelims and in time to influence course choices in the senior phase. There remains a challenge with the S2 timeline where the parents' evening is scheduled before the written reports are available.

There are other complementary ways in which students, parents and carers can receive feedback such as marks from homework, verbal feedback at parents' evenings, and impactful learner conversations in the classroom directly with the student. Using a variety of approaches can reduce the workload of providing detailed written reports at set times for a large number of students for each teacher. An example of this is where detailed written reports have been replaced by parents' evenings where more meaningful, conversational feedback can be given.

There are also pockets of innovation in the school for trialling new ways of providing feedback to students. An example given was in the English department using Directed Improvement and Reflection Time (DIRT). In this scheme, students are given focused tasks to act on feedback rather than rewriting entire pieces and alongside this, progression pathways show what writing looks like at different levels of achievement. There are plans to make these progression examples available on the school website for parents.

It was additionally noted that the School is working on the School Improvement Plan to improve clarity in the Broad General Education phase (BGE) as part of Building the Curriculum 4–18. This includes a specific focus on: clearer explanations of levels and terminology used in reporting and guidance for Heads of House to support the course choice process. Trials are also underway to test how much information can be shared in reports without overburdening staff or overloading parents with data that is not easily understood.

Following the presentation, questions and comments were received from Parent Council members. A summary of these are below:

- That the DIRT trial in English looked promising and that the School should consider uploading English progression pathways and feedback examples (including information on DIRT) on the school website for parents to access.
- Parents/carers can't always see how their student is improving through the levels as the reporting system (Didbook) doesn't allow this access for parents. It was noted that this is a limitation of the system
- There remains confusion about the colour coding, currently shades of green, and a request to change these to different colours. It was noted that various colours/shades have been used in the past and that there is no widespread agreement about the colours except that using red to indicate lack of attainment is not popular.
- It was suggested that side by side visual comparisons of previous and current performance for each student would help illustrate progress. It was noted that parents/carers can access historical reports in the system, but that this is not intuitive as the date filters in the system must be updated manually to view the most recent data.

It was noted that the Headteacher and school staff were already planning for next year's reporting calendar, including: discussion with union representatives; improving the clarity of reporting in the Broad General Education (BGE) phase; exploring options for more impactful feedback/reporting methods (e.g. greater use of learner conversations and targeted written comments); and support for Heads of House in guiding course choices. It was again noted that the need to align reporting with key decision points (especially course choice) was highlighted as a priority for next

The members thanked the Headteacher and others for the informative discussion.

5. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer provided an overview of the Parent Council's finances:

- Current available funds: approximately £2,200.
- Recent expenditures included: purchase of PE equipment and other departmental resources.

Challenges were noted with aspects of the current purchasing system, including the need for more efficient processes when the Parent Council is funding items that must be purchased through the school.

Actions:

Transfer funds for school sports tops to the school's BACs account to enable VAT free purchasing (Laura MacGowan)

Follow up with Debates Club and other departments to obtain bank details for transferring previously allocated funds (Laura MacGowan)

6. Fundraising Update

The meeting received an update on current and planned fundraising activity.

6.1 Current Position

Funds stand at £2,200 following recent equipment purchases. Some funds have been earmarked for specific departmental needs but are awaiting transfer/purchasing arrangements.

6.2 Future Fundraising Plans

Plans future fundraising included applying for Tesco Community Funding and similar schemes at other supermarkets, and approaching local organisations for sponsorship or grant funding (Reed Band, LAMP, Round Table, Ladies Choir, LCDT)

Action: Fundraising Committee to meet after Easter meeting to prioritise items for direct sponsorship and other fundraising ideas (Fundraising Committee)

7. Headteacher's Update

The Headteacher provided an update covering policy, operational and

7.1 School Communications – Loss of School App

The existing School app is likely to be lost following the liquidation of the provider company. As a result the school will need to identify alternative communication solutions for messaging parents, sharing reports, letters, and updates.

Action: Investigate alternative school communication platforms and update the Parent Council on options and implementation timescales (G Abbott)

7.2 School Trips

There are ongoing issues and staff concerns around organisation of school trips (including workload, risk management, and equity of access). It was agreed that this topic requires a fuller discussion with parents.

Action: Bring the topic of school trips (issues, staff concerns, possible solutions) to a future Parent Council meeting for detailed discussion (G Abbott, other teacher representatives)

7.3 2027–28 School Holidays

It was noted that West Lothian Council have circulated proposed school holiday dates for 2027–28 to Parent Councils. These have been sent onto PC members and comments should be fed back to Helen as Chair of Parent Council by the end of the week . It was noted that WLC are keen to emphasise the importance of gathering parental feedback before the Council's consultation deadline.

Action: Collect and forward any feedback from Parent Council members and interested parents regarding the proposed 2027–28 school holiday dates to the Council by the end of the week (Helen Jenkins)

7.4 Change of Name from SQA to Qualifications Scotland

The meeting briefly noted the forthcoming Qualification Scotland exams and the associated preparation for the upcoming exam diet within the school.

8. Any Other Business (AOB)

Members were reminded that items for future agendas can be submitted in advance via the Parent Council email.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The date and time of the next Parent Council meeting will be confirmed and circulated to parents/carers in due course.

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm.