

# Parent Council Newsletter

Autumn 2009 Issue 1

## Welcome

Welcome to the first Pencaitland Parent Council newsletter. We want to welcome the new parents/carers and children to Pencaitland Primary School as well as those returning to the school. We hope you'll find our school a happy and exciting place to be.

I also wish to extend a welcome to the new members of the Parent Council, Ian, Ralph, Tim and Jane, and to our new community representative who was co-opted at our meeting on 31 August 2009. I hope you all find it to be an interesting and rewarding experience.

In this newsletter you'll find out about more about the Parent Council, its current members, and how you can get involved in making our school community even more vibrant. There's also important updates to share with you, in particular in relation to the recruitment and selection of a permanent Head Teacher for the school.

As one of our key roles is to represent your views, we need your feedback and suggestions. Your input really does count, so please contact the Parent Council email address

**[parent.council@pencaitlandps.org.uk](mailto:parent.council@pencaitlandps.org.uk)**

Have a great year!

**Carol Snow  
Chair**

**Parent Council membership for  
2009/2010**

Carol Snow – Chair  
Parent representatives:  
Ian Archer  
Ralph Averbuch  
Alison Glencorse  
Tim Neighbour  
Dorothy Ogilvy  
Jane Scott  
Graham Wilson

Head Teacher  
Dave Gain – Teacher representative  
Gill Hamilton – Community representative

## Aims for this year

Pencaitland Parent Council was set up to represent parents' views to the Education Authority and the school and to support school life.

Last year we spent time increasing awareness of the Parent Council and also developing a joint Communications Strategy with the school and the PTA which captures best practice in the school.

This year we will be involved in the recruitment of a new Head Teacher. This is a very important task we face and we ask for your support in choosing the right person for our children's and the school. I did a walkabout the school last week and during that visit I asked the pupils what made a good Head Teacher. They were all very enthusiastic and gave brilliant answers. Their views are important and I am pleased I was able to involve them in the process. More on the process later.

Other aims for this year include:

- Developing the use of focus groups to aid our children's learning – the first one is scheduled for 25 September and we will be speaking to a random selection of children about well-being and health. More are planned involving pupils and parents.
- Developing sub-groups of the Parent Council (that means you as members of the Parent Forum!) to develop and deliver certain projects.
- Continuing to increase awareness of the Parent Council.
- Continuing to encourage more parents to get involved with the life of the school.

- Establishing links with other community organisations.

To achieve these goals we need you. We know some of you already help out either on a one-off basis or regularly but we need others to contribute in any way you can.

### **Blog update – Parent pages**

Have you been to the blog lately? If not, I would encourage you to visit it. It's a great way to keep up to date with the pupils' activities but did you know that you can keep up to date with the Parent Council and the PTA too? The **Parent Council pages** will be regularly updated so please get into the habit of checking there before and after our meetings so you can see the agenda and minutes. You can also leave comments for us there.

<http://edubuzz.org/blogs/pencaitland>

We aim to be using the blog more and more as a way of communicating with you.

Watch the blog for this year's upcoming **Action Plan** which will be available following our next meeting on Monday 5 October.

You will also find last year's **Annual Report**, previous minutes of meetings, the **Communications Strategy** and other useful information.

### **Parent Consultations – 7 and 8 October**

We are aiming to have some members of the Parent Council available at the Parent Consultations in October if you want to ask any questions or raise any issues with us. We may also take the opportunity to ask your views on initiatives for the school and about the practical ways you can be involved in school life. We found it useful to talk to parents at last year's consultations when we wanted to get a better feel of parents' awareness and knowledge of the Parent Council. We are not doing our job if you don't know about us.

### **Head Teacher Recruitment**

### **How can you get involved with the Parent Council?**

- Get involved in something that interests you such as music, drama, sports, helping out in the library, reading to pupils in the school's book fair, sharing IT skills, helping out in the garden.
- Share your life and work experiences with the pupils to help develop the key areas of thinking skills, creativity in learning, and collaborative learning.
- Become an active Parent Forum member.
- Share your ideas and suggestions with us.
- Tell us what you would like to do!

### **Dates for your diary**

The Parent Council had its first meeting on Monday 31 August 2009. The draft minutes will be available on the blog week beginning 14<sup>th</sup> September.

The Parent Council plans to meet on the following dates during 2009/2010:

- Monday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2009
- Monday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2009
- Monday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2010
- Monday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2010
- Monday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2010
- AGM: Monday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2010

Agendas will be available on the blog about a week prior to the meeting.

As you may know, Head Teacher Freda Ross will have her last day at the school after 13 years on Friday, 11<sup>th</sup> September and the East Lothian Council is currently recruiting for a permanent Head Teacher for Pencaitland Primary School. We thank Freda for her long and faithful service to the pupils at the school, for her enthusiasm and her full engagement with, and support of, staff, pupils and parents. We wish Freda well in her new post as a Quality Improvement Officer with East Lothian Council.

As you should all be aware by now, Theresa Laing (Head Teacher at Humbie Primary School) will take up the Head Teacher post for a short period of time until a permanent Head Teacher is appointed. Her first day at the school will be on Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> September. We extend a warm welcome to her.

It is really important that parents' views are taken into account when deciding who our next Head Teacher will be. The Parent Council will be fully involved in this process. Here are some of the important dates in the recruitment and selection process that we hope will help answer any queries you may have. **The selection process itself is confidential, so please don't ask any Parent Council member about the candidates, as they won't be able to tell you.**

Date	What will happen	How the Parent Council will be involved
7 <sup>th</sup> September 2009	Closing date for applications (12 noon).	Candidates for longleet interview drawn up by the Quality Improvement Manager (Teaching & Learning) in consultation with the Chair of Parent Council. Questions for the longleet and shortleet will be agreed between the Quality improvement Manager and the Chair of Parent Council.
15 <sup>th</sup> September 2009  15 <sup>th</sup> September 2009	Longleet interviews.  Private meeting at school for Parent Council at 7pm.	Chair of Parent Council will be part of selection panel with Quality Improvement Manager and Quality Improvement Officer.  Parent Council members will consider applications and agree candidates who will go forward to the shortleet interview.
23 <sup>rd</sup> September 2009	Shortleet interviews (where selection of a candidate will take place). A decision on the preferred candidate will be taken on that day, and the candidate will be telephoned.	Two Parent Council members will be on the interview panel with two elected members and the Quality Improvement Manager.
As soon as possible thereafter	On receipt of all documentation, a formal offer of employment will be made.	Parent Council will inform the Parent Forum when the outcome can be released.