



Firrhill News

April 2018

Produced by the Parent Council

Follow on Twitter
@FirrhillRRSA

Rights Respecting Schools Silver: Rights Aware Award

We are the first school in the UK to have achieved Silver under the new UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools criteria. The Silver: Rights Aware Award is granted by UNICEF UK to schools who show good progress towards embedding children's rights in the school's policy, practice and ethos. We have shown at Firrhill that we are continuing to make progress and learning about rights in natural ways across the curriculum, through training, assemblies and focused events. Our young people are developing as rights respecting citizens, as well as modelling rights respecting attitudes.

Special thanks to Mrs Kerr, Pupil Support Leader, for her lead role in helping Firrhill gain the Silver: Rights Aware Award.



"Gaining the Silver: Rights Aware Award is a celebration of the hard work and effort put in across the Firrhill Community: staff pupils and parents/carers. Well done! Next stop Gold!" says Mr Hamilton, head teacher.



Parent Council Welcome Note

by Fred Bell, Firrhill Parent Council Chair

I'd like to say hello to all Firrhill parents and carers on behalf of your school Parent Council. Our role is to act as your voice in helping the school deliver the best for all pupils. We run a number of sub-groups focusing on Health and Wellbeing, Environmental Issues and Business and Enterprise, which deals with careers advice type matters. We also have an active Parent Teacher Association (PTA) which acts as our main fund-raising group.

We aim to help the school community in a range of ways – our recent activities include: running the school book swap; organising events on modern apprenticeships; supporting children with their exams and internet safety, as well as discussing school performance with Mr Hamilton, our head teacher.

Looking forward, we're actively planning the annual Job Fair to be held on 15 June, helping with the Cycle Friendly Secondary Schools Award, as well as developing the school gardens in the hope that spring finally does arrive!

If you're interested in getting involved in any way or if there are any issues you'd like to raise, please come along to one of our meetings – the next one is on Monday 23 April at 7.00 pm in the school library; all parents and carers are welcome to come along. You can just listen to the discussion. Alternatively, email me at firrhillpc@gmail.com. You can also find out more about what we do in the Parent Community section of the school website.



Thanks!
Fred Bell, Parent Council Chair



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Visit to the Apex Hotel by Ruby Hogg and Jessica Knox S3

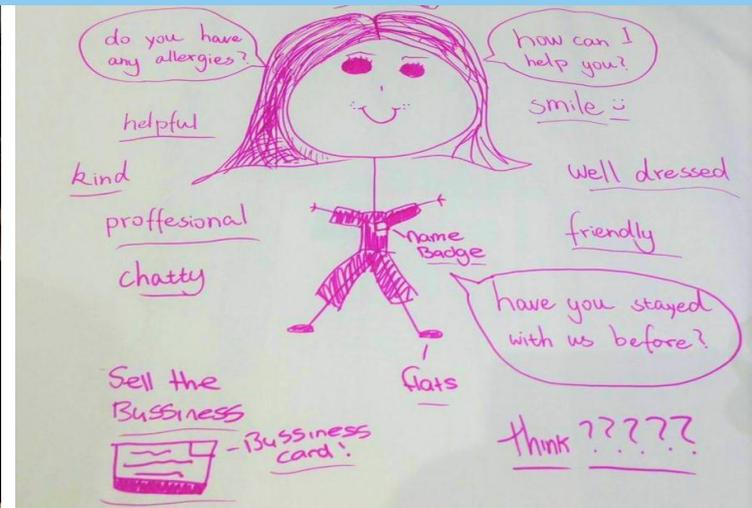
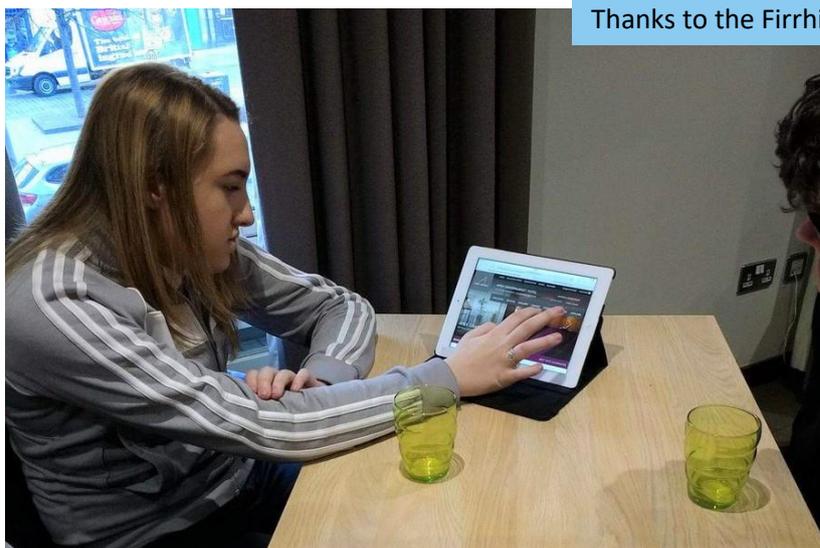


Follow on Twitter @MfIFirrhill

On Thursday 8 February 2018, a group of 20 Firrhill pupils visited the Apex Hotel in the Grassmarket, Edinburgh.



Thanks to the Firrhill Modern Languages staff who arranged this interesting trip.



We had a tour of the hotel, followed by an interesting talk by the Recruitment Manager and her assistant. Then we took part in a range of team activities promoting thinking, problem-solving and communication. We learned about the different roles when working in a hotel and about how languages are crucially important in the wider hotel industry. Pupils discovered that there are multiple jobs behind the scenes, as well as front of house, and these are vitally important in ensuring the organisation flourishes. These include areas such as IT, social media and accounting to name but a few.



It was clear that being able to speak a foreign language demonstrates your ability to communicate and can increase your chances of getting a job. This is especially important in the hotel industry, given the number of foreign visitors to Edinburgh, but most employers nowadays are looking for young people who can communicate easily and with confidence. We had a very enjoyable morning at the hotel – especially being treated to lunch, before heading back to school for the afternoon!



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The Youth and Philanthropy Initiative

Follow on Twitter @ypi_scotland @LothiansVets

The Firrhill finals of the Youth and Philanthropy Initiative (YPI) Scotland were held on 8 March. Eight teams participated in a keenly contested event, where they presented their chosen cause, watched by pupils, staff and representatives of the charities involved.



YPI Scotland is a schools-based initiative that Firrhill has participated in since 2008-09 – it was one of the first schools to be involved. YPI is skills-based, allowing young people the opportunity to choose and learn about a cause they care about so that they can pitch on its behalf, aiming to win a £3,000 grant to help the good cause continue its vital work. Pupils are encouraged to get involved with their chosen cause, where possible. The YPI programme originated in Canada and was adopted for Scottish schools by Sir Ian Wood. The Wood Foundation charitable trust continues to support this valuable programme.

Congratulations to the winning team of Magnus Tait, Ruaridh Sutherland and Milosz Matys-Widurski (pictured) who represented the Lothian Veterans Centre, winning £3,000 for this important group who support service veterans.

Runners-up were Carys Dunn, Mary Hargest and Eve Short, speaking for the Young at Heart charity supporting older people in Balerno; Third place went to Samantha Terry, Jessica Jackson and Charlotte Kenyon, speaking for Edinburgh Rape Crisis.



Well done to all eight teams, who put up convincing cases for their chosen causes.



PTA Quiz Night

Firrhill PTA Fundraising



QUIZ NIGHT

When?

Friday May 4th 2018 at 7:30pm

Where?

Colinton Bowling Club (Redford Road)

How much?

Tickets £12 each

including baked potato supper

prepared by MacKenzies

How do I get a ticket?

Email ruth.gebbie@yahoo.co.uk

Parent Teacher Association

The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is an energetic group of parents and teachers who fundraise to support and enhance the pupil experience at Firrhill. Over the years the PTA has raised thousands of pounds through: school quiz nights, raffles, donations and the Christmas market. Last year, £3,200 was allocated to Eco projects, school teams' sports kits, Holiday Head-start, lunchtime and after-school clubs, extracurricular science, S6 newspaper and art initiatives. The PTA meets in the evening around five times a year, so if you are enthusiastic and bursting with fundraising ideas, or would just like to lend a hand, please come along – meetings are open to all – or contact us on ptafirrhill@gmail.com

We are also urgently looking to fill the role of treasurer. If you think you can help, please get in touch – without this support we will not be able to continue to support all of the initiatives which most of our children have benefited from directly.



Follow us on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/Firrhill-PTA-120907988576391/>

Thanks

Jon Buglass (PTA Chair)



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Tennis

On Wednesday 21 February class S1C2, accompanied by Mr Márquez, PE teacher, enjoyed their first tennis lesson at the Thistle Lawn Tennis Club, as part of the School of Tennis programme. The tennis club provides pupils with rackets and the tennis court is a clay court which is “slow” and therefore especially suited to beginners. Tennis coach Tom Gilmour showed the class some basic ball skills. It was great to hear that some pupils were already showing real potential.

TennisFoundation  Follow on twitter @FirrhillPE



From September until December last year the school ran an after-school tennis club on Thursdays at the Thistle Lawn Tennis Club – this will restart on Thursdays after the Easter holidays. Alternatively, individual or group coaching sessions can be booked with coach Tom Gilmour (@£25 per hour) tom.gilmour@btopenworld.com.



Pupils also attend the Thistle Tennis Club on Mondays 1.30-2.30 pm and on Friday mornings as part of the sports curriculum.



For more information about the Thistle Tennis Club, visit their website: <https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/ThistleTennisClub>



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Bird Nest Boxes

From around February onwards birds will be seeking nesting sites. They also shelter and roost in boxes outside the nesting season. On 5 February Mr and Mrs Hargest resited and repaired some of the school nest boxes and added new boxes.



The two new boxes were bought with money raised by the Environment Group at the Christmas Market. The boxes were made by the RSPB Edinburgh Local Group and are easy to clean out due to their hinged lids. Whilst it is not essential to clean nest boxes after the nesting season, it does reduce the number of parasites, which can be a problem – even leading to the death of chicks. Bear this in mind and wear gloves when removing old nests. Also, if possible, pour boiling water in the box and dry it out before resealing.



Some cobbles were added to the cobble river in the Celebration Garden, and two bags of litter collected from the grounds.



The open-fronted nest box (above) is for robins and spotted flycatchers, and nest boxes with round holes are suitable for blue tits and great tits.





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Parent Teacher Association Funding

The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) works to fundraise for the school in order to benefit as many pupils as possible. The main PTA activities are: the quiz night, the Christmas market, the Christmas concert raffle, the pop-up thrift shop (selling badged uniformed items) and the provision of refreshments at school events. The PTA would appreciate new helpers and new fundraising ideas.

New members are needed! Please come to the next PTA meeting, held on 14 May at 7.00 - 9.00 pm in the school library.

Here are a few examples of the way money raised by the PTA has been spent.

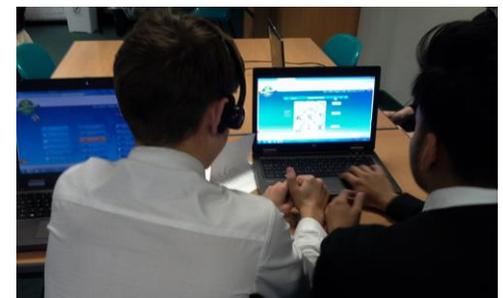
The Newspaper Committee



The PTA has continuously and generously supported the S6 Firrhill newspaper committee, who write "A View to a Hill". "As print costs have risen, we have relied more and more on support from the PTA, supplemented by young people actively sourcing adverts. This allows us to produce "A View to a Hill", targeted at pupils from S1-6, and to allow pupils in school to express themselves creatively, as well as giving them a voice in the community", said Mr Hollis, Pupil Support Leader.

Linguascope

The Modern Languages Faculty has received funding from the PTA to subscribe to a fantastic language-learning website – www.linguascope.com. Linguascope contains a wide range of interactive activities and resources in several languages, including French, German and English, for all levels and abilities. The site promotes Active Learning through interactive tasks where pupils develop their language skills and consolidate what they are learning in class. It is a valuable differentiation tool as pupils can work at their own pace and has good scope for personalisation and choice. Pupils can choose games/activities they enjoy. The attractive and colourful graphics make it enjoyable to use, and pupil feedback so far has been very positive!



As well as being able to use Linguascope as part of their e-learning in class, pupils and parents can access the site from home. It is an excellent way for parents and carers to support their child in their learning, and they may also enjoy brushing up on some of their own language skills!

Linguascope login details and passwords are available from Modern Languages teachers. Happy language learning!

Picnic Table

The Environment Group, received PTA funding for a new picnic table.

"It's great for the pupils to enjoy sitting outside", says Mrs Hargest, Environment Group leader.



There are now four picnic tables (two were funded by the Parent Council and another was funded by the PTA last year). This is enough seating to form an outdoor classroom – roll on the summer!



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Murray Buchan – Olympic Skier

Follow on Twitter @murraybuchan

Former Firrhill pupil Murray Buchan started skiing aged seven, and after leaving school became a professional skier. Murray competed at the Korean Olympics as part of Team GB. He took part in the half pipe on 20 February and although he did not qualify for the finals, he skied really well. He was pleased with his runs but understandably, felt “pretty gutted” not to qualify.



Career highlights:

- 1st - British Ski Halfpipe, Tignes, France, 2013
- 17th - Winter Olympic Games, Sochi, Russia, 2014
- 1st - British Ski Halfpipe, Tignes, France, 2015
- 10th - US Rev Tour, Halfpipe, Copper Mountain, 2015
- 14th – Winter Olympic Games, PyeongChang, South Korea, 2018



Congratulations to Murray on his tremendous achievements – we wish him good luck in the future!

BBC Sport said, “an amazing run by Murray Buchan in the ski half pipe, but he just misses out on the final!”



BritishSki&Snowboard @TeamBSS

Agonisingly close for @murraybuchan who missed the final by less than three points.

Final placings for #TeamGB:

1	4	@murraybuchan
1	5	@peter_speight
2	6	#XanderGlavatskyYeadon

Murray said, “really happy with how I skied today. Pretty gutted with coming so close to making the finals but just not doing enough. Thanks to everyone for all the support. It’s been an amazing day.”



GBParkandPipe @GBParkandPipe · Feb 19

Tough morning for our boys. @murraybuchan put down 2 solid runs, just missing qualification, coming 14th. @peter_speight turned it on for 2nd run and came in 15th. #AlexanderGlavatskyYeadon sent it large throughout, and finished 26th. Team GB #WeAreTheGreat



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World Book Day Interview

As part of our world Book Day Celebrations, Declan McCann, school librarian, shared some of his favourite reads.

What was your favourite book as a child?

It's not particularly well known, but Janni Howker's *The Nature of the beast* was a book I loved. I must have read it when I was about 11 years old. I liked how it acknowledged the full range of emotions you can feel at that age and was very much anchored in the real world.

Are there any books you would recommend to pupils?

I often recommend *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio; it's the kind of book that can really change a person's outlook. Others include: *The Curious incident of the Dog in the Night-time* by Mark Haddon, *Code name Verity* by Elizabeth Wein, *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen, *The Call of the Wild* by Jack London and *A Monster calls* by Patrick Ness.

How do you choose the books you read?

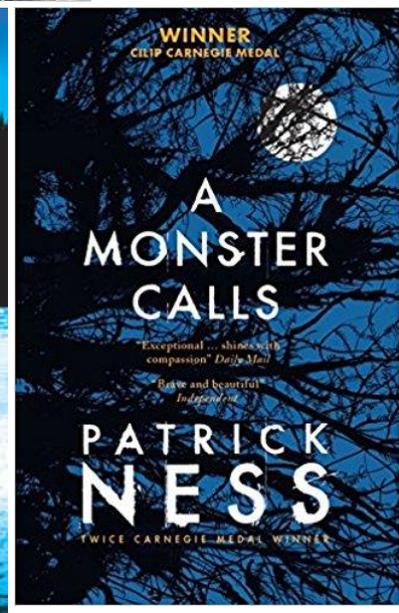
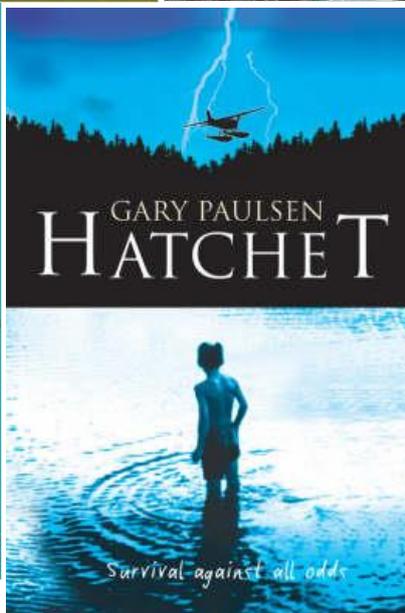
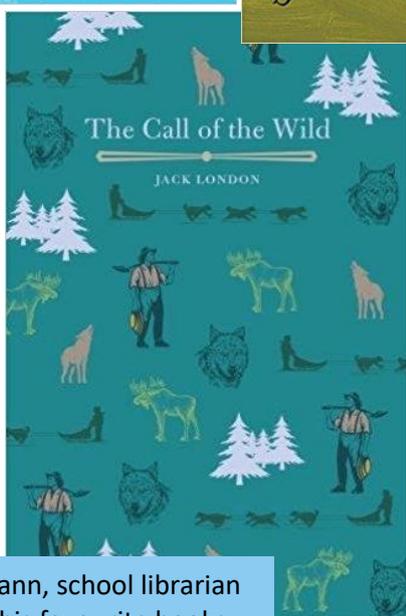
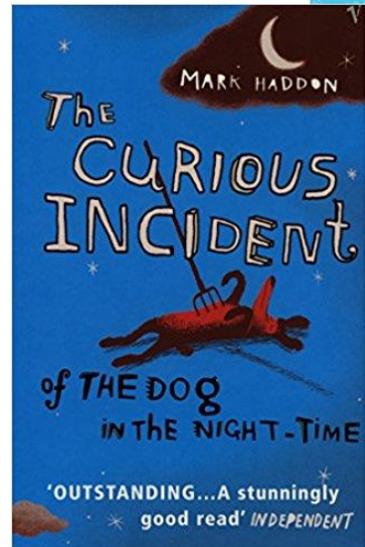
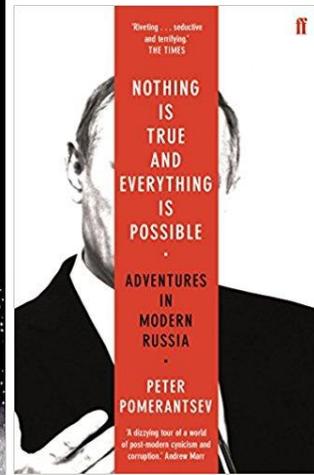
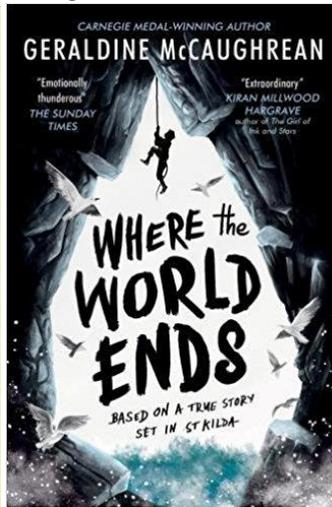
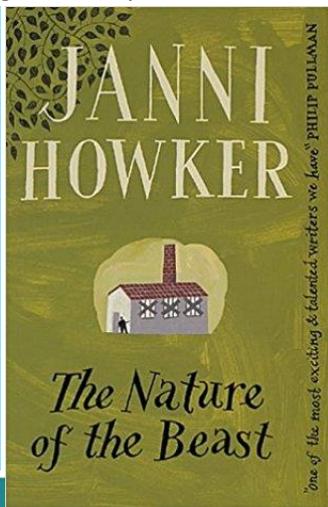
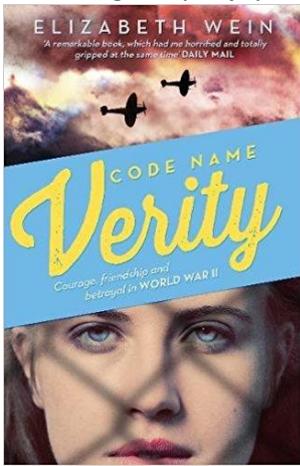
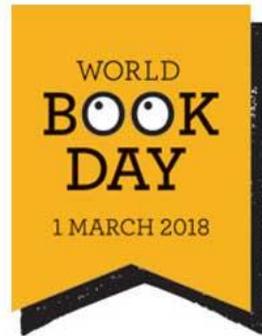
I tend to read a mixture of recommendations from friends and colleagues, and books that compliment my current interests. I also read a lot of junior and young adult fiction for work. I like to choose a wide range of reading material that helps to broaden my world view.

What's the best non-fiction book you've read recently?

For non-fiction I would chose *Nothing is true and everything is possible* by Peter Pomerantsev. The Last really great fiction book I read was *Where the world ends* by Geraldine Mcaughrean.

What is the last book you read but didn't finish?

T.M. Devine's *The Scottish nation*. It's not that I didn't enjoy the book, T.M. Devine is a great writer, I thought my enjoyment of this book would be greater if spread over a few sittings.



Many thanks to Declan McCann, school librarian for telling us about some of his favourite books.



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Book Swap/Giveaway Event

From 26 February – 6 March, the school held its sixth book swap/giveaway event during lunchtime, in the school library, to celebrate World Book Day. The event was organised by the Environment Group, which is one of the Parent Council's working groups. The book swap promotes reading for enjoyment, and reuse of books is waste minimisation. Pupils, staff and parent

volunteers enjoyed browsing and choosing books, and the school was able to add a large number of excellent books to its collection.

WORLD
BOOK
DAY



It is great to share and reuse books. Thanks to all who donated books.



WORLD
BOOK
DAY

