



Firrhill News

Produced by the Parent Council

Bumper Edition 2018

Welcome to Firrhill High School

Firrhill News is produced by the Parent Council. This Bumper Edition consists mostly of excerpts from previous issues and is for new pupils and their families, to highlight some of the events, activities and clubs at Firrhill High School.

Read Firrhill News at <http://firrhillhigh.org/parent-association/firrhill-news>

Starting at Firrhill by Charles Williams S1

How did you feel about starting Firrhill? I liked it because everyone was friendly.

Did you go on the summer camp? No.

Did you get lost going to lessons? I got lost once or twice.

What is it like having a lot of different teachers and new subjects?

It would have been helpful to have a map*, but all of the teachers were really nice.

Did you try any new hobbies or clubs? No.

Did you go on the Paris trip? No.

How much homework do you get? I wouldn't say we get very much homework.

Who gives the most homework? Art.

Who is your favourite teacher? Ms McPhee, the drama teacher.

What is the best thing about Firrhill? All the nice people.

What is the worst thing about High School? There really isn't much that is bad about it!

What advice would you give to a new S1 coming up after the summer?

Look around and try and remember where all your subjects are.

**New S1 pupils will now be given a map to help them to find their way around!*

Advice for New S1 Parents by Jess Goeller, S1 parent

What advice would you give to new S1 parents? The class timetable looks complicated, but don't worry. It's amazing how quickly the kids master it.

Did you go to the S1 parents social evening? Yes. It was great to meet other parents.

Do you use the school website? Yes. The website is very helpful, informative, and easy to navigate.

S1 Paris Trip

In May a group of 40 Firrhill S1 pupils and five staff members enjoyed a wonderful trip to Paris, visiting many famous tourist attractions, including: the Eiffel Tower; Notre Dame; the Stade de France; Sacré-Cœur; a boat trip down the Seine and Euro Disney. This popular action-packed trip provides an opportunity for pupils to have fun whilst experiencing French language, food and culture.



Some School Events

September

Parent Council & PTA AGM

October

S1 Parents Social Evening

November

Christmas Market

Book Swap/Giveaway Event
(please donate books)

December

Christmas Concert

March

Vision Aid Overseas, please
donate glasses & sunglasses

April

Band Night

May

PTA Quiz night (parents)
Activity Week, including:
S1 Paris trip, DofE expeditions,
Business Placements, School
trips, Sponsored walk

June

Job Fair (parent helpers
needed).

Parent Council Welcome Note

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, Business and Enterprise – which deals with careers and related matters, and the Environment. We also have an active Parent Teacher Association (PTA) which acts as our main fundraising group.

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

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 – all parents and carers are welcome. 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.



Fred Bell, Firrhill Parent Council Chair

The Christmas Market

On 9 November Firrhill held its fourth Christmas Market, organised by the Parent Teacher Association. It provided an excellent opportunity for some early Christmas shopping, with stalls to browse including: craft items, raffles, festive fayre and plants. Some stalls were run by pupils, others supported local charities: The Cat Protection Society, Scottish Autistic Radio, "In Stitches with Asperger's" and the RSPB Edinburgh Local Group. Plus, entertainment was provided by the school's Soul Band.



The market raised over £1,000 for school activities, including: the Venezuela trip, Holocaust Memorial Day and the Environment Group. The Rights Respecting Schools Award pupils raised funds for Unicef.

S1 Parents' Social Night

On Thursday 26 October the Parent Council invited S1 parents to a special social night to meet some senior staff members and chat to other parents. There was the opportunity to learn more about the school whilst enjoying drinks and nibbles in a relaxed atmosphere. A question and answer session led by Catriona Luff, parent.

Head Teacher Graham Hamilton and Depute Head Teachers Roberta Porter and Julie Statham attended the event.



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, the S6 newspaper "A View to a Hill", 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.



We hold our joint PTA/Parent Council AGM in September and details will be circulated nearer the time. All parents and carers are welcome to attend.



Follow us on Facebook

Thanks
Jon Buglass (PTA Chair)

Tennis

Firrhill is taking part in the "School of Tennis" programme, which aims to promote and develop tennis in schools. In February as part of the programme, a class of S1 pupils accompanied by Mr Márquez, PE teacher, enjoyed their first tennis lesson at the Thistle Lawn Tennis Club. 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



Holocaust Memorial Day

 Follow on Twitter @FirrhillHMD



On 25 January Firrhill pupils and Mrs Watson visited the Scottish Parliament to hear speaker Rudi Oppenheimer, Holocaust survivor. It was a fantastic evening – several pupils spoke at the event and lamps made by Firrhill pupils were on display.

THE POWER OF WORDS
HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY 2018

Gold Sports Award

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In April Michelle Livingston from **sportscotland** presented Firrhill with its second Gold School Sport Award. Keanna MacInnes, S5 Commonwealth Games athlete, opened the new fitness room. The school's sports ambassadors and pupils present, included the S3 netball team who won the Scottish Silver Plate in March; three S4 pupils belonging to the Boroughmuir Rugby team, which won the U16 Scottish Cup in March, and Finlay Ross, S1, the Scottish U13 1500m indoor record holder for running.

It is amazing to attain a second **sportscotland** Gold School Sport Award. Thanks to Miss Carmichael, CL Health and Wellbeing, Miss Norman, Active Schools Coordinator, pupils, staff and parents for their roles in the process.

Commonwealth Games



Keanna MacInnes, S5, recently competed in the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games. She took part in the 100m and 200m women's butterfly and the 4x100m medley relay (women's). The 100m heats took place on 4 April and Keanna came 4th in her heat, achieving a new Personal Best of 59.63 seconds and a new Scottish Junior record. She qualified for the semi-finals where she came 11th. The 200m butterfly heats took place on 9 April, and Keanna was placed 10th – a very good result! In the 4x100m medley relay Scotland won a brilliant 5th place and a new Scottish record – outstanding!



Band Night

Follow on Twitter @FirrhillMusic



On Monday 23 April the Senior Band, Junior Band and Big Band performed to an appreciative audience at their annual Band Night concert.

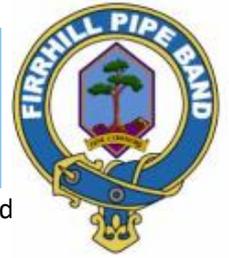


Thanks to all who performed – including some pupils from the feeder primary schools – and to the Instrumental Music Instructors, who organised this successful music event.



Firrhill Pipe Band Club

The Firrhill Pipe Band Club runs on Mondays, after school, with piping instructor Mike Pretsell. Tuition is available for all levels, from beginners through to pipers, and takes place in the drama classroom (on the first floor). Lessons cost £6 for a 30 min. group session, and the pipers have a warm-up session prior to their class. To find out more, contact dawn.alsop@blueyonder.co.uk.



In March Firrhill Pipe Band took part in the Scottish Schools Pipe Band Championships at Inveralmond Community High School, Livingston. Pipers and drummers from Firrhill and Craigroyston High Schools and Craiglockhart Primary School combined their talents and did a fantastic job, performing in the debut band section, playing *The Brown Haired Maiden* and *The High Road to Gairloch*. Thanks to instructors Mike Pretsell, Pat Rudolf von Rohr and Brian Alexander, and to Dawn Alsop, Chair of Firrhill Pipe Band Club.



Vision Aid Overseas

Before the Easter break, the school held its sixth annual Vision Aid Overseas glasses and sunglasses collection. Firrhill collected a total of 360 pairs, which were taken to Specsavers Morningside to be sent on to Africa and matched to recipients with corresponding needs. Oxfangs Library, Newcastle City Golf Club and Colinton Parish Church also help us to collect for VAO. An additional VAO glasses collection box has just been placed in the foyer of Swanston Brasserie, home of Swanston Golf Club.



Vision Aid Overseas



The John Muir Award

In March a group of S2 pupils led by Mr Boyd, geography teacher, took part in outdoor learning, working towards their John Muir Award, Discovery Level.



**JOHN
MUIR
AWARD**

wild places:
DISCOVER
EXPLORE
CONSERVE
SHARE

The John Muir Trust is a conservation charity dedicated to protecting and enhancing wild places in the UK. Pupils enjoyed being outdoors.

PTA Quiz Night

On 4 May the Parent Teacher Association held their annual quiz night at Colinton Bowling Club, Redford Road, with a traditional chilli and baked potato supper by MacKenzies, and plenty of testing questions by our experienced quiz master, Graham Walker. Teams included "Why are we here?", who ultimately received the wooden spoon, and "May the farce be with you", who became this year's winners! Questions included naming photographs of the first ladies of America, listing 10 of the most popular named pirates, and music questions about the New Romantics movement. Also, additional fundraising was for cancer sufferer Kira #KiraTheMachine.



Thanks to the hard work of the PTA, who organised the quiz, and to all who attended and made the evening a huge success.



Easter Sports Camp



Follow on twitter @FirrhillPE

The Firrhill Easter sports camp ran in April for P1-S1 pupils, offering a wide variety of sports, led by qualified instructors. This year 95 pupils attended the Easter sports camp which had a Commonwealth Games theme, featuring Commonwealth sports, teams with host city names, plus the opportunity to watch the Commonwealth Games live at lunchtime.



Thanks to Miss Norman, Active Schools Coordinator, for organising Firrhill's successful Easter sports camp!

Match the Miles

From 22 to 29 April Firrhill pupils and staff took part in The Adventure Syndicate's "Match the miles challenge". The Adventure Syndicate team cycled approximately 900 miles, from Bristol, through France, to Casteil on the Spanish border. Ten Scottish Schools tried to "match the miles". Dingwall Academy won with an astounding 2,287.7 miles. Firrhill achieved a respectable 5th place with 968 miles. Firrhill's "pupil role model", Louis Moore S3, contributed an amazing 70 miles on the first day of the challenge when cycling at the velodrome.

Well done to everyone who took part in the cycle challenge!



Cycle Friendly Secondary School

It is great that the Adventure Syndicate are rewarding all the participating schools with a free showing of the film *Divided* which will be introduced by Lee Craigie and Rickie Cotter.

Here is a link to an article about the film *Divided*

<https://www.cyclinguk.org/article/divided-film-about-lee-craigie-and-rickie-cotters-emotional-tour-divide>

Job Fair

On Friday 16 June 2017 the Parent Council's Business and Enterprise Group ran its sixth Job Fair. In a friendly atmosphere, with a wide range of jobs represented, there was the opportunity for informal discussion, stalls to browse and leaflets to take away.



For information, contact fhsjobfair@yahoo.co.uk

S4 and S5 pupils were able to speak to parents to find out about what different jobs entail.

Rights Respecting Schools Silver: Rights Aware Award @FirrhillRRSA

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.



The Christmas Concert

Firrhill's Christmas concert was on 12 December 2017. There was festive music and art work in the concourse, plus two stalls organised by the Environment

Group one selling hyacinths to raise funds for eco activities and a cycle information stall with free leaflets about safer cycling. The Parent Teacher Association sold raffle tickets.



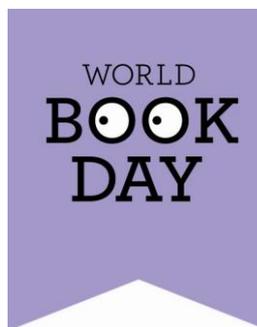
 Follow on Twitter @FirrhillMusic



Book Swap/Giveaway Event



From 26 February to 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, 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.

It is great to share and reuse books – thanks to all who donated books!



Miss Statham answers some FAQs

What does 1A1, 1B1, 1C2, 1D1, etc. mean?

This is your child's house class. They attend registration and most of their other classes such as Maths, French and English in these groups.

The letters stand for each house:

A = Allermuir B = Braidlaw C = Caerketton D = Darrach

On their timetable they are in an X class for some subjects – what does that mean?

Their X class is a smaller class of no more than 20 and they attend most practical classes in these groups such as Art, Home Economics and Science

What is a PSL and who is my child's PSL?

PSL stands for Pupil Support Leader, formerly known as a Guidance teacher.

Allermuir	Braidlaw	Caerketton	Darrach
Mr Hollis	Mr Brodie	Mrs Dunn	Mrs Kerr



They will teach your child life and study skills and advise them when things are challenging and they need help to sort things out. They will meet all pupils individually on three occasions during the year to review their learning and involvement in activities in and out of school.

How many Parent/Teacher Meetings are there?

At Firrhill we want you to continue to feel part of your child's learning. In October we will invite you to make an appointment to come into school and meet your child's Pupil Support Leader. This will be a chance for a discussion on how your child is doing and how they are coping with secondary school. It's a really important way to get things off to a good start. On **4 December** there will be a chance to meet with their subject teachers, from 5.00 to 7.30 pm. You can book these appointments online nearer the date.

Reports: How many reports do we receive a year?

You will receive three reports: an early settling-in report in September that will flag up to you if there is anything getting in the way of your child's success. Then you will receive two more reports, in November and March, showing you what your child has achieved, and including the next steps. These reports are issued to pupils to take home.

Who do I tell if my child is going to be absent?

If it is known in advance, send a letter to your child's register teacher or email the admin team with the reason and your child's name and house class, at Admin@firrhill.edin.sch.uk but it must be at least a day in advance, if using email. Or, on the day, please phone the pupil absence line on 0131 441 4501.

One final word of advice!

Apart from not to worry, I think it would be to **label, label and label!** Put a tag or initials on coats, bags and pencil cases: with a label we can return it to you, if it is handed in to staff.