



Produced by the Parent Council

Firrhill News

Bumper Edition 2019

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 Jake Wilson S1

How did you feel about starting at Firrhill?

Nervous and excited.

Did you go on the summer camp?

Yes, it was good fun and it helped to get to know other S1s.

Did you get lost going to lessons?

Only once – the Helping Hands were great, and I worked it out quite quickly.

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

Fun and more interesting than primary school.

Did you try any new hobbies or clubs? Yes – there are loads of clubs at Firrhill.

Did you go on the Paris trip? No.

How much homework do you get? A similar amount to P7.

Who gives the most homework? Maths or French.

Who is your favourite teacher? Not sure – I have a lot of good teachers.

What is the best thing about Firrhill? Learning new, different things.

What is the worst thing about High School? Being the youngest again.

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

Try not worry too much!

Advice for New S1 Parents by Victoria Clayton, S2 parent

What advice would you give to new S1 parents?

S1 is a good time to try new experiences that may not have been available at primary school. Encourage your child to try new sports and classes, from music and drama to hockey. Go along to the open evenings and the parenting classes offered by the school. It helps you to familiarise yourself with the building and get to know the school more. Help your child adjust by listening and talking about their new class and classmates, subjects and teachers. It's eye-opening for both your child and you!

Some School Events

September

Parent Council AGM is on Monday 9 September at 7.00 pm in the school library.

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

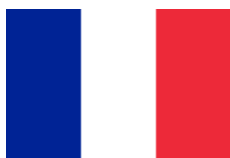
May

PTA Quiz Night (parents)
Interdepartmental Learning:
S1 Paris trip, DofE expeditions, business placements, school trips, sponsored walk

June

Job Fair (parent helpers needed)

Paris Trip



In May 2019 a group of 40 Firrhill S1 pupils and five staff members enjoyed a wonderful trip to Paris, visiting many famous tourist attractions, such as:



Follow on Twitter @MflFirrhill

the Eiffel Tower; Notre Dame; the Stade de France; Sacré-Cœur; Euro Disney and doing a boat trip down the Seine. This action-packed trip provided an opportunity for pupils to have fun whilst experiencing French language, food and culture.

Parent Council Welcome Note

I'd like to say hello to all Firrhill parents and carers on behalf of your school Parent Council (PC). 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. 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. **The PC Annual General Meeting will take place on Monday 9 September at 7.00 pm in the school library. All welcome!**

Cycle Friendly Secondary School Award

On Tuesday 18 February 2019 Firrhill achieved the Cycle Friendly Secondary School award. This was conferred by Cycling Scotland. An initial assessment took place in December 2017, and since then we have worked hard: revised our school Travel Plan, repaired the cycle sheds, installed a dropped kerb, planned the installation of more cycle signage and gained "Development Funding" for lockers for cyclists! A school Bike Club has started, and Mr Cameron, history teacher, will soon become a qualified Cycle Ride Leader and help pupils get out on their bikes!

In May Firrhill's pupils won the Adventure Syndicate's #MatchtheMiles physical activity challenge completing an amazing 15,329 miles in five days!



Fred Bell, Firrhill Parent Council Chair



As part of a city-wide "twenty's plenty" scheme, the roads around Firrhill are a 20mph zone. We hope that pupils will use the safer cycling routes to school that are in the Travel Plan and try cycling to school in the warmer weather.

Link to Travel Plan <http://firrhillhigh.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Travel-Plan-Firrhill-High-School-Sept-2018.pdf>

Berlin trip by K. MacIver and P. Bertram S3.

Follow on Twitter @MfIFirrhill

In May, a group S2 pupils visited Berlin for a fun and educational trip which was about both language and history. We began the trip with a walking tour of the city – though our feet weren't very thankful for it! We saw many sites along the way, including the world-famous Brandenburg Gate. When we visited Sachsenhausen we all found it emotional, but it was an important piece of history for us to learn from and remember.

We enjoyed visiting the Alexa shopping mall – there were lots of shops to buy gifts and souvenirs for family and friends at home. One of our favourite places visited was the Olympic Stadium and we also enjoyed going up the TV tower because it gave incredible views of the city.



It was an amazing experience, and we all made many great memories in Berlin, which would not have been possible without the help of all the wonderful staff who led and organised the trip.



Gold: Rights Respecting Award



Follow on Twitter @firrhillrrsa

On 13 March Unicef UK's RRSA assessors visited Firrhill to meet pupils, staff and parents to assess our progress towards achieving the Gold: Rights Respecting Award. Everyone worked hard to be ready for the assessment. The RRSA group, led by teacher Mrs Kerr, have introduced lots of events focused on the "Rights of the Child" over the past three years. Special events included: food bank collections, the book swap/give-away, Rag Bag recycling, anti-bullying and anti-littering campaigns, Holocaust Memorial Day assemblies, promotion of "International Women's Day", Amnesty International, LGBTQ+ rights and Purple Friday.

Well done to the RRSA Committee for all their hard work!



On 12 April Firrhill High School became a Gold Rights Respecting School which is the highest stage of the Rights Respecting Schools Award, granted to schools that have fully embedded children's rights throughout the school and its policies, practice and ethos.



Kayaking for team GB



Follow on Twitter @FirrhillPE

The best young European wild-water canoeists and kayakers were in Skopje, Macedonia over the summer to compete in the U18 and Junior U23 European Championships, 2-5 August. Athletes from 16 countries took part in races on the Treska River in the beautiful Matka Canyon, around 15 km from Skopje. Michael Denvir S6 was selected to represent Great Britain in the U18 K1 classic (3.5km race) and 200m sprint. Michael competes in wild-water racing, which is fast and dynamic, in a solo kayak (K1). The kayak is 4.5m long and made of carbon fibre, making it lightweight and strong to resist collisions with rocks. They are fast on the river but are unstable and hard to turn. Paddlers need to read the river conditions and take the best line, often through very rough water, whilst paddling at full speed. Michael competed in the opening classic race on Thursday morning, completing the 3.5 km course in just under 11 minutes – an excellent result as his time beat all of the other U23 GB kayakers. In the sprint event on Saturday morning, Michael completed the 200m sprint in just over 50 seconds – an excellent time!



Congratulations to Michael on this fantastic achievement!

Firrhill Hockey Club

The Firrhill Hockey Club is a successful parent-run club taught by professional coaches that enables pupils to learn hockey skills to a high standard, and provides the opportunity to participate in matches and tournaments. The school sports tour features hockey as one of its sports. It is sociable, team-based, and a sport that pupils can continue into university and beyond. Thanks to the Hockey Committee, and parents on the rota, for their hard work.

Subs are £40 this session (August-June) as this is a parent-run group and not one of the school sports clubs. If you would like to know more about the Hockey Club, please email: Firrhillhockey1718@gmail.com Your enquiry will be forwarded to the team for your year group.



Outdoor Learning

Recent outdoor learning at Firrhill includes the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Qualifying Expedition that took place in May: 75 pupils went on the two-day expedition and camped overnight. The Silver Duke of Edinburgh Qualifying Expedition to Deeside was in September (for 20 pupils). A Gold Duke of Edinburgh Training Expedition to Torridon took place at the end of September (for 15 pupils).

There was also an Advanced Higher Geography fieldwork trip to the Pentlands, and also a three-day stay at Kindrogan. "Around 40 pupils in S2 and S6 are now doing their John Muir Award. We work with the Green Team on a "Conservation Day". Pupils need to do 24 hours of "Discovering, Exploring, Conserving and Sharing" local wild places. We go to the local woods and hills, and feedback from pupils is excellent at the moment." said Mr Boyd, geography teacher.



Thanks to the PTA for providing £120 for "Digimap", which has been a useful tool in all these outdoor learning activities.

Second Green Flag Award

Link to Eco Schools <http://firrhillhigh.org/information/eco-schools>

On 21 January 2019, Firrhill achieved its second Eco School's Green Flag award. Sally Nicholson, our assessor from Keep Scotland Beautiful, visited on 9 January and said Firrhill presented "an outstanding application!" Our waste minimisation schemes to reuse glasses (through Vision Aid Overseas) and our twice-yearly book swap/give-away event was commended. The high response rate for participation in the Travel Plan survey, and our work towards becoming a Cycle Friendly Secondary School impressed her! We are now embarking on our new "Green Flag journey" with Mr McCord, Eco-coordinator, and the Eco Committee – parental help would be welcome!



The Eco Committee has done an Environmental Review – an assessment of our current situation – and from the results selected two topics: Global Citizenship and School Grounds, Litter being a compulsory topic.

We need to revise our Eco Code, and over the next two years, record our eco work online – which will help to simplify our next Green Flag application!



If any parent would like to help with eco work, please contact carolyn.hargest@btconnect.com



Christmas Concerts

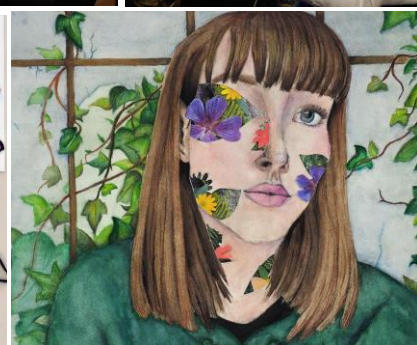


Twitter @FirrhilArts

The Christmas concerts took place on 11 & 12 December. In the concourse there were stalls with: cycle information, pots of hyacinth bulbs to raise money for eco work in the school; and fund-raising activities for the Lesotho Girlguiding trip. Both evenings began with festive music in the foyer, where pupils' artwork was on display. The evening featured performances by instrumental groups, the choir, bands and solo artists. During the interval, refreshments were kindly served by the Parent Teacher Association, which organised the annual raffle.



Well done to all who took part!



Southeast Asia Expedition

During June and July, 13 senior pupils took part in an exciting expedition to Southeast Asia, featuring three phases: trekking in Laos, history and culture in Cambodia, and volunteering and R&R (rest and recuperation) in Vietnam. The pupils shared leadership roles, supported by the staff team. There was always plenty to see and do. The project phase at Thai Hai stilt village in Thai Nguyen province (Vietnam) was very well planned and gave our pupils the opportunity to teach pupils English or teach topics using the English language. There were also plenty of physical tasks to undertake, such as helping to create a herb garden on disused land. By the end of the expedition, every pupil had grown in confidence and experience, and the feedback from them at the end of the expedition was extremely positive. The expedition was a huge success. Firrhill's next expedition is to Peru.

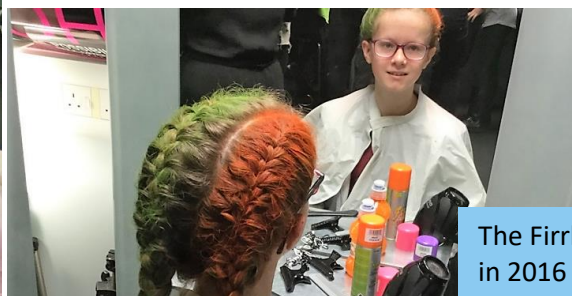


Firrhill Hair Salon

On Thursday 8 November, young actors from Longstone Primary School who were performing in *Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Brunton Theatre came to Firrhill's hair salon to have their hair done prior to the performance.



Firrhill hairdressers from S2 to S5 worked as a team to achieve very dramatic, theatrical and truly amazing looks for the performance. Well done to all pupils involved!



Thanks to Jacqueline Lamont Hairdressing Tutor, for helping the pupils to create such fantastic hairstyles!

The Firrhill hair salon was opened in 2016 by Charlie Miller.



Follow on Twitter @FirrhillArts

Scripture Union



At SU everyone is welcome – drop in any week to join us!



SU Scotland

SU, which stands for Scripture Union, is a group that meets from 12.20 to 1.00 pm every Thursday in Room EN1. We eat lunch together, learn about different aspects of God and Christianity, look at the part that the Bible plays in history and science, watch interesting video clips, and question what it all means for daily life in the world we live in today.

We also compete in fun games and challenges – sometimes with prizes! Snacks are always free!

Rag Bag recycling unit

The school is delighted to have a new Rag Bag unit located at the rear of the school, which will raise funds for eco work by recycling textiles, shoes, handbags and belts. Please place suitable items in the unit – no pillows or duvets, thank you!

Although there will be specific weeks allocated to certain classes to encourage pupils to bring recycling items to school, we would welcome donations at any time. So please start to place recycling in the Rag Bag unit! This will help to raise funds for valuable eco work in the school.



Yes

- wearable clothes
- handbags
- belts

No X

- pillows
- duvets



Please help the school by recycling your clothes, paired shoes, handbags and belts in the Rag Bag unit!

The Pipe Band Club

The Firrhill Pipe Band Club meets after school every Monday in the hall at Firrhill High School. Pupils from the cluster schools and Firrhill come together to learn chanter and bagpipes with our piping tutor Mike Pretsell. In previous years, the school has entered the Scottish Schools Pipe Band Competition, and our pupils play at various school and community events. We are always on the lookout for new members, so if you are interested in learning to play the chanter and pipes please contact Dawn Alsop (Chairperson) on 07719568951.



Well done to the pipers who are working hard and progressing!

The Anne Frank Garden

The Anne Frank Garden, with its central tree, looks great in the spring with irises, daffodils, narcissi, and crocuses all in flower. It is also the perfect place for relaxation and reflection in the summer.

Thanks to Mr Murray and the Nurture Group pupils for re-oiling the bench in the Anne Frank Garden.

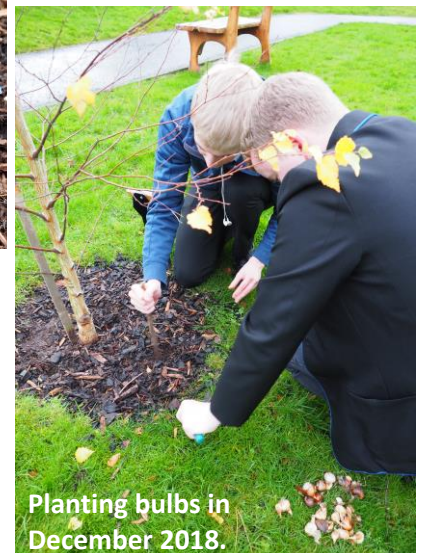


Anne Frank's Tree
planted on 12 June 2014

Irises flowering
in spring 2019.



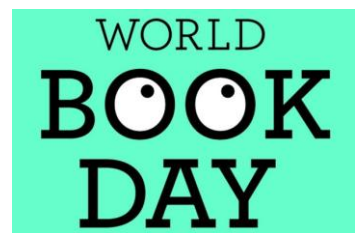
In the school grounds there are several areas which are looked after by pupils, with staff and parental involvement. These are: the Pond, Anne Frank and Celebration Gardens, and the meadow. Parent helpers are needed, so if you can help in this rewarding work, please email: carolyn.hargest@btconnect.com



Planting bulbs in
December 2018.

Book swap/give-away event

From 4 to 7 March, at lunchtime, a book swap/give-away event to celebrate World Book Day took place in the school library. This fun and educational event was organised by the Environment Group, a Parent Council working group and school librarian Mr Declan McCann. Parent volunteers encouraged pupils and staff to take away books to enjoy. Approximately 300 books were swapped / given-away and the school library added 50 high quality used books to its collection – which represents a great deal of money saved.



Volunteers are needed for the next book swap/give-away to coincide with Book Week Scotland, 19-25 November 2019.



The Job Fair



On 15 June 2018 Firrhill held its seventh Job Fair, organised by the Parent Council's Business and Enterprise Group. This year the Job Fair focused on the S4 year group, although older pupils were also welcome. In a friendly atmosphere, parent volunteers from a wide range of jobs helped pupils understand what different jobs entail. If you would like to take part in next year's Job Fair, please email: fhsjobfair@yahoo.co.uk



Follow on Twitter @FirrhillPE

S1 & S2 Bike Club

On Tuesday 6 November, the new S1 & S2 Bike Club had a fun launch event in the foyer, featuring a quiz with prizes, including a bike lock for the winner, and lights, bells and reflective trouser straps for all participants. The popular smoothie bike was in constant demand, as pupils pedalled their way to create fruit smoothies. Kerr Sproul (Sustrans) and Simon Fagan (Edinburgh RC) helped at the event, along with school cycle champion, Mr Denvir and Carolyn Hargest Environment Group leader. The fruit and juice were kindly donated by Tesco Colinton Mains.

For details about bike club events, see the weekly bulletin and the plasma TV!



The Tuesday after-school bike club will include: cycling skills, rides, bike mechanics and fun films, with hot chocolate and popcorn!

Under 16's Football

Firrhill High School's Under 16's football team put in a great performance against Preston Lodge in the League Cup semi-final, winning 6-2 on Saturday 27 April at Newbottle High School. The goals came from Kevin Essah, Jacob Gordon (2), Corin Brown and Glen Lorimer (2). They were well supported by fellow pupils, parents and staff.

On Friday 10 May, despite battling valiantly in the final, they lost 4-1 to Portobello High School at Spartans Academy in a very good-natured game.



Follow on Twitter @FirrhillPE

Congratulations to the team on their semi-final win and on playing well in the finals!

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. Recently, funds have been 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 four 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. If you think you can help, please get in touch – without this support, we will not be able to continue to fund all of the initiatives which our children have benefited from directly.



We hold regular PTA meetings. We need more helpers at school events. All parents/carers are welcome to attend meetings/help.

Thanks, Jon Buglass (PTA Chair)

Follow us on Facebook

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



Firrhill News needs more articles! If your child has a hobby, plays in a band or sports team, please send photographs and a short paragraph to the Parent Council, email: firrhillpc@gmail.com

Miss Statham answers some FAQs

Depute Head Teacher, Miss Statham, gives some advice about starting Firrhill.

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 Mr Hollis	Braidlaw Mr Brodie	Caerketton Mrs Dunn	Darrach 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 3 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 two reports: an early settling-in report is issued in the week of 11/9/19 that will flag up to you if there is anything getting in the way of your child's success. Then you will receive a second report issued in the week of 16/3/20 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 items to you, if they are handed in to staff.

