MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF KELSO HIGH SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 10TH DECEMBER 2025 IN PERSON

Attendance - Leri Payne (Vice Chair), Jill Lothian (Head Teacher), Jo Pennington, Jeanette Aitchison, Caroline Tice, Pam Guthrie, Dean Weatherston, Kirsty Banks, Steven Bell, Nicola Robertson, Sonya Nairn and Henry Aitchison (S6 Head Team).

Apologies - Harriet Campbell, Julie McIntosh, Simon Mountford and Anna Rodwell.

Vice Chair Leri welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Minutes from the previous meeting on 6th November and Chair's Report from the AGM approved by Jeanette and Kirsty.

Chairperson's Report

The main topic at the moment is the recent HMI inspection and the update following the week-long visit. Harriet and Leri both attended separate interviews to give their own opinions. There was good attendance from both PC members and other parents so thank you to everyone that took the time to be involved in the process. The formal report will be shared when available. Moving forward to focus on parental involvement and how we can facilitate this further in the future.

The most recent SBC Chair's was cancelled again.

SBC have provided a Vision Document and are looking for feedback, this will be shared via social media.

PVG Disclosures – there has been a recent purge on PVG's as any person involved with pupils on a regular basis must have an up to date PVG in place which is attached to the school.

Head Teacher's Report

<u>Whole School Updates</u>

Staffing Updates

- Teacher of Music – Mr Borthwick (long term absence following a bicycle accident). Unable to secure specialist Supply Teacher
- Teacher of Computing – Dr Warner (absent following medical operation). Unable to secure specialist Supply Teacher
- Teacher of English – following 2 rounds of adverts no applicants, applied to E-sgoil for specialist supply.
- Teacher of HE (maternity leave) – unable to recruit
- Youth Worker – readvertised

Staff joining

- Teacher of PE (temporary) joining us from Jan 26

- Pastoral Support Assistant (Kale House) joining us from Jan 26
- Pupil Support Assistant joining us from Jan 26

Adverts

- Pupil Support Assistant – 1 post
- Teacher of English BGE (S1-S3)

HMIe Inspection

Draft - the inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work

HMIE Update – Ongoing Draft Discussions

As part of our commitment to keeping families informed, we would like to share an update on the themes currently being discussed with HMIE following their recent visit. Please note that the points below are **still in draft form** and **cannot be shared as final outcomes**. However, we want to ensure you are aware of the areas we are reflecting on as we await the formal report.

Strengths Identified in Draft Discussions

Positive School Ethos

Our young people continue to be respectful, polite and eager to learn. They support one another well and hold strong aspirations for their future, contributing to a warm and positive school culture.

Strong Digital Skills

Both pupils and staff make effective use of digital tools to support and enhance learning. This is helping to remove barriers and improve access to learning across the school.

Commitment to Improvement

Staff are highly committed to making positive changes. A strong culture of collaboration has been built, where teachers feel confident to lead, support each other and continue developing their practice.

Valued Partnerships

Our partners play an important role in enriching young people's learning. They provide valuable opportunities for achievement and offer strong support during the transition from primary to secondary school.

Areas for Continued Development

In discussion with HMIE and Scottish Borders Council, we are continuing to reflect on the following areas as part of our improvement journey:

Strengthening Leadership for Improvement

We are working towards ensuring a more consistent and collaborative approach to improvement across the school, with increased involvement from parents, young people and partners.

Enhancing Learning and Teaching

We will continue to develop learning and teaching by increasing pace and challenge, and by using assessment information more effectively to meet the needs of all learners. Ongoing professional dialogue will support shared expectations of young people's work.

Developing Inclusion and Equality

Further work is planned to strengthen whole-school approaches to inclusion and equality, ensuring every young person feels supported and engaged in school life.

Raising Attainment Across S1–S6

We are developing a clear strategy to further improve young people's progress, attainment and achievement across the Senior Phase and BGE. This will ensure our curriculum continues to meet the needs of all learners and responds effectively to emerging attainment patterns.

We will share more detailed information once HMIE has finalised the inspection report. Thank you for your continued support as we work together to improve the learning experience for all young people at KHS.

Senior Formal Assessments

In January, from the 7th to the 23rd, our Senior Formal Assessments will take place in the Assembly Hall. During this period, young people are expected to attend their normal classes unless they are sitting an assessment. We will continue to use external invigilators, as this provides important experience and helps prepare pupils for the final SQA exams.

This year, we have moved away from offering 'prelim leave' to ensure that young people receive the most effective support during this assessment window. Educational research consistently shows that learners benefit from remaining in school, where they have structured routines, access to teachers and guided study opportunities. These factors help our learner to build stronger study habits, manage their time more effectively and reduce the stress often associated with independent revision.

By keeping classes running throughout the assessment period, teachers can reinforce key learning, provide targeted support and help pupils prepare in a more focused and manageable way. The thirteen-day assessment schedule also allows us to spread assessments evenly, ensuring a balanced approach that minimises disruption to learning.

Study Support for Senior

🧠 **e-Sgoil Site: Exam & Wellbeing Support**

Help them manage:

- Stress
- Overwhelm
- Exam pressure

Includes: Chill Space, videos, mindset tools.

Link – Mental Health and Wellbeing | e-Sgoil Home Page | e-Sgoil
Study Support | e-Sgoil

📚 **Achieve/Succeed Site: Structured Learning & Wellbeing**

Support them to:

- Plan revision/Revise
- Track progress
- Build confidence/Support mental health

SQA-aligned for National 5 & Higher.

Link – SUCCEED – ACHIEVE ACHIEVE – ACHIEVE more at National 5 and Higher

✨ **How You Can Help**

- Encourage balanced routines
- Talk openly about stress
- Keep expectations realistic
- Celebrate effort, not just results

Update on Timetable Planning for Session 2026–27

As part of our early planning for the 2026–27 timetable, we will shortly be inviting our current S4 and S5 learners to take part in a 'mock subject choice' exercise. This process will allow young people

to indicate, with complete freedom, the subjects and levels they would *ideally* like to study next session.
It is important to emphasise that this is not their final course choice. Instead, the information gathered will help us design the most effective column structure for our official Choice of Course form. By understanding learners' initial preferences, we can work to minimise subject clashes and create a timetable that offers the best possible range of pathways for all learners.
This process will take place from now until 9th January for S4 and S5 with more time being provided for our S3s.
We appreciate your support as we begin this planning stage and will share further information with you and your child as the formal course-choice process approaches. Please let us know what extra information would be helpful.

Head Team

- Represented KHS at recent S6 Head Team conferences
- Hub 4 Action update
- Keeping Flexi-School clean and tidy – hand-held hoover ordered
- Purchase seating for front foyer

Highlights from this month:

Events

- 11th November Armistice Ceremony
- 11th/18th November DYW - Army support Sports Leaders
- 18th November DYW - Agriculture Visit for S3 Rural Skills
- 24th November Modern Languages Celebration Week
- 27th November Senior Surgery Parent Engagement Evening
- 4th December Scottish Parliament Trip

What's Coming up

- 11th December Christmas Concert / Christmas Fair
- 12th December Skating Trip to Ice Rink
- 15th December S1-S3 Christmas Social
- 16th December S1/S6 Buddy Trip to Cinema
- 17th December Christmas Lunch / Christmas Jumper
- 18th December S4-S6 Christmas Social

Treasurers' Report

Lottery Account

The balance of the PC Lottery account as of 10.12.25 is £1,900.96.

There are currently 301 active lines. This equates to £150.50 going into the prize fund and £150.50 into the account for funding requests.

The Lottery was drawn on Friday 28th November unfortunately there were no winners. The prize fund of October and the prize fund of £418 will roll over to the next draw at the end of December.

TOTAL AVAILABLE TO SPEND £1482.96

Main Account

The balance of the PC Main account as of 10.12.25 is £1,657.85.

The annual payment from SBC for the Clerk fees (£650) has been received into the bank account. It was agreed that this should be paid to the Clerk for the 2025/26 session.

TOTAL AVAILABLE TO SPEND £1007.85

The 2024/25 accounts are currently being audited.

Please note due to a change in the type of bank account we have for the Lottery and Main account, this means that we now pay service charges for the various transactions e.g. internet payments, cheque payments as well as a monthly maintenance fee (£4.25 per account). This is also the case for many school accounts; I believe SBC are looking into this further.

Discussion / Questions

Prelims for Senior pupils start on Wednesday 7th January. There will be no prelim 'study leave' for pupils. The expectation is that pupils will be in normal classes unless they have an exam. This is a decision made by SBC for all Secondary Schools and the rationale for this is to reduce the loss of learning time available. This has not been a popular move and some parental complaints received.

Discussion around amount of homework given in BGE (S1-S3) to prepare yp for the demands of Senior school.

Hugely successful Study Skills sessions provided by Dr Robertson, could these be run again? Record the sessions so they can be accessed at an alternative time?
Promote study and help sessions being run in departments – social media / weekly update.

YP may respond better if a peer (ex-pupil / recent leaver) were to talk to them about the importance of exams, qualifications for their future. To present to class groups rather than a whole year group, more impactful.

KHS needs a whole school strategy on Study Skills

Ensuring consistency across the school and research driven.

Head Team Update

- Seating in the foyer working well, this is a temporary measure. Looking into alternative solutions – Tables with chairs attached that can be stored when not used? We are limited with the availability of social spaces. Approximate costs - £1200 for table with 8 seats, £800 for table with 4 seats. More cost effective with larger table. To check size of available space and size of tables. Jill confirmed she is sure the TM Trust would be able to assist financially.
- Promotion of clubs available during lunch to clear the canteen space and foyer – lots of clubs available and young people are attending, need to make more of these.
- S6 would like a hoover for them to keep the flexi space clean - sourced a small handheld device from Argos (£30) that they could keep in the flexi space to always keep the area clean. It was agreed that the PC would cover the cost.
- Head Team Conference – app available (hub4action) showing all the clubs you can join within your area. They also attended a debate at SBC HQ regarding vaping and mobile phones.
- Single use bottles in the Canteen – sustainable option, would reduce the cost of school lunch. Investigate the possibility of getting a Scottish Water fountain? They could use this as for publicity.

Jill advised there are 4 key areas to review:

- Leadership of Change
- Teaching & Learning
- Wellbeing
- Attainment

Focus for the next meeting? Studying? Curriculum pathways?

It was suggested to invite other year groups not just S6 / Head Team, alternating each meeting. Getting feedback on what works allow them to influence decision making process.

Lots of groups in school that could attend – digital avengers, house captains, S1's re Transition?

Discussion around the Christmas Fair / Concert – raffle prize donations would be greatly appreciated.

Date of Next Meeting

The planned date for the next meeting (in person) is during week commencing Monday 26th January 2026, day/date to be confirmed.

Leri thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.