



Elrick Primary School Parent Council

A warm welcome from us!

We'll keep this brief because we know you already have a lot to do before you join our school community. But, since we're a friendly bunch, we'd really like to introduce ourselves and tell you some key information about the Parent Council, how you can help us, and what's in it for you.

Why does the school have a Parent Council?

Our group is called Elrick Primary School Parent Council (or usually just "the parent council") and has been running for over 20 years. We're a lively group of volunteers.

The parent council helps to create an environment where all parents (and carers) know that their views matter, and where they feel confident and comfortable putting them forward. We work on behalf of all parents and carers to discuss educational matters that are of importance to all. For example, we've been involved in reviewing the behaviour policy with staff; discussed how the school can best communicate with parents; and we also liaise with Aberdeenshire Council to discuss building fabric maintenance. More recently, we gave all parents an opportunity to express their concerns and thoughts about returning to school at the beginning of the new term. We also met with the Head Teacher and the Director of Education for Aberdeenshire Council to learn more about Covid-19 plans. We are ensuring

that the voices of parents are heard; and that parents receive feedback on plans being made for the safe return of children to school.

We fundraise to provide those 'little extras' that make school memorable, such as the buddy benches and outside play equipment you may have seen when you visited the playground; chrome books; mobile cooking trolleys for classrooms; and other play equipment. Sometimes we hold free events to say thank you for supporting us.

It's also important to us that we help bring the communities of school and home closer together because it makes sense for parents to be involved in the life of Elrick Primary School. For example, at the beginning of lockdown we wanted to be able to keep in touch with families, so we distributed over 450 sunflower growing kits to all children. We're looking forward to seeing who has the tallest sunflower!

Lastly, we're here for the simple reason that we want to get together socially, meet new people and have fun!

The Parent Council is run by a committee who are all volunteers, annually voted into position by the Parent Forum. All parents and carers of children at a school are automatically members of the Parent Forum for Elrick. Each class, from nursery to P7, has at least one representative who acts as a focal point between parents and the parent council. It's great if class reps can attend the parent council meetings but we understand that life gets in the way and that's not always possible.

Our volunteers come from a whole range of backgrounds. We've got mums and dads who work; others who are stay at home parents; people from a range of nationalities; some people who have great ideas and love to share them; others who are quieter and think deeply before saying something really quite profound. We come in all different shapes and sizes. If you would like to come along but are concerned about fitting in – don't be! There will be someone like you and we love to welcome new people. We do better when we've got people with different opinions – because we can work together to produce something great. We promise not to sign you up to a whole bunch of work on the first day. It should be an enjoyable, useful time for you – not scary.

Parent Council meetings are usually held every month either on a Friday lunchtime or a Tuesday evening. This is to try to find a time that suits most people. The Head Teacher attends and provides an update on what's been happening in the school during the previous month, and what's coming up. It's a great way to learn more about our school.

We might sound like an abstract group of people, but we're parents, carers, friends and allies – just like you. Not so long ago, we were new too.

Recent events held and how much we raised

2019 Annual Fayre (2020 cancelled due to Covid)	£ 7,000
Personalised Christmas cards and gifts	£ 1,800
Dons Day Out to Pittodrie match	£ 350
Various grants	£ 2,250

We've also held the following events: glow in the dark disco; Christmas Fayre; M&S and Tesco bag packs.

What the Parent Council funded with the money

We always try to respond when asked to help the school, ensuring funds are allocated to areas that benefit the whole of the school. After the work is done, it's so rewarding to see the children enjoy new resources and equipment provided.

What did we buy?	Who for?	What were the benefits?
Outdoor classrooms	All the children	Outdoor learning is good for mental health and wellbeing
Outdoor play equipment	All the children	Keep the children healthy, promoting social interaction, developing self-confidence
Buddy benches	All the children	Helps to build friendships and provides a safe space if a child is looking for a friend to play
Chrome books	All the children	Technology is used in classrooms to help children in a variety of ways e.g. conduct independent online research; update their own Seesaw account to show parents a piece of work they're especially proud of
Various learning software	All the children, teachers	Software helps teachers research and develop lesson plans; and children to complete online learning. This has been particularly invaluable during this period of home learning
Small parts toys	Early years children	Helps to develop fine motor skills
Mobile cooking trolleys	All the children	Helps support "farm to fork" project and helps children take an interest in where their food comes from
LEGO science kits, Hot Wires kits, wind turbine	Senior school children	Encourage a love of science and engineering
Racking for PE cupboard	All the children	Helps store equipment safely and makes it more accessible
Outdoor musical instruments	All the children	Experimenting with music can lead to positive mental health and improve numeracy understanding

How we keep you up to date with our activities

Facebook page	www.facebook.com/elrickprimaryschoolparentcouncil/ We post notices about all upcoming meetings on our Facebook page as well as reminders about events and requests for volunteers. This is the best way to keep in touch with the parent council
School bags	We put event letters and information in school bags
Parent Council Meeting Minutes	Full meeting minutes and details of actions and agreements are posted on the school website after every meeting
Online Communication tool	"Dates for Your Diary" email. The school sends out a weekly email with useful dates for your diary. We add our events and news to that email too
Emails	Occasionally we ask the school office to send emails on our behalf

What are we raising money for next?

We asked the teachers and pupils what they would like to see in the school and now we have a long list! Some of the bigger items include: an outdoor stage; equipment for the "Rainbow Room"; and an all-weather sports field. But we also fundraise for the day to day items such as: craft supplies; gardening equipment; puppets; dressing up costumes; storage equipment; and toys to encourage coding.

It's not all about raising money, though. Sometimes we ask parents and the wider community to support us by donating specific items that are no longer used by families. For example, this year we held a toy appeal for board games, playhouses etc. It's a good way for families to be able to support the school whilst also having a bit of a spring clean. And sometimes, we ask if you're able to help by donating an hour of your time.

Speaking of spring cleaning, several times a year we host "Bag2School" events where you can donate clothing and paired shoes. The school benefits from a cash rebate.

2021 is the 40th anniversary of Elrick Primary School so we'll be working on some fun events to celebrate that milestone.

When are the next meetings?

Our 2020-21 meeting schedule isn't published yet – partly because we're waiting to hear what's happening regarding the Covid-19 situation. However, we've successfully held a Skype parent council meeting and it was a great success. In fact, many more people were able to attend because they were able to join from home, whilst still keeping an eye on the children. All meetings are publicised via the school, "dates for your diary" email and our Facebook page.

How can you get involved?

The Parental Involvement (Scotland) Act states that, when your child joins the nursery or school, you are automatically a member of the parent forum. This means that you're entitled to attend parent council meetings; get involved in consultations; and have a voice when it comes to the continuous improvement of the school. Anyone within the parent forum can join the parent council. The parent council meets monthly to liaise with the school and discuss fundraising efforts. It's a great way to meet new people and hear what's happening in the school. The more people become involved, the more we can achieve and the easier it will be.

At the beginning of the new school year, we'll be looking for class rep volunteers again. We'd love for you to join us if you've got an hour or so free every month.

Even if you have younger children at home, or only a small amount of time, could you come to a meeting, help set up an event, serve food or design a poster? Perhaps you have a professional skill you could help us out with? You don't have to come into the school; many of our volunteering tasks can be done from home.

Our summer fayre requires a small army of volunteers. We need people to move tables and reconfigure the school; people to help tidy; volunteers to man the stands; people to help spread the word about the event....and that's just the tip of the iceberg.

We'd love to hear from you. Please email us at elrickparentforum@hotmail.com if you'd like more information.

Contact details

We'd love to hear from you so please don't hesitate to get in touch with any one of us or you can email the parent council at elrickparentforum@hotmail.com or message us on Face Book. We welcome all questions, there is no such thing as a stupid question.



Claire Taylor
Chair
clairesarahhome@yahoo.co.uk
Areas of interest: senior years, planning, building maintenance



Fiona FitzGerald
Vice Chair
fionalgrant@gmail.com
Areas of interest: grants, building community, social media



Lauren Wade
Treasurer
Laurenwade306@gmail.com
Areas of interest: finance, early years



Monique Blair
Secretary
Monique.blair@btinternet.com
Areas of interest: compliance, social media, community links



Christina Daniel
Vice Secretary
Areas of interest: fundraising, building community, parents supporting school life

How you can support us right now

Did you know that you can start fundraising before you join? Use these companies when you shop, and the parent council gets paid without costing you more.

	<p>When you select Elrick Primary School Parent Council as your chosen charity, we receive 0.5% of your total spend at no cost to you. You can now also set the app to default to your smile account.</p> <p>https://smile.amazon.co.uk/ch/SC028053</p>
	<p>Did you know that whenever you buy anything online – from your weekly shop to your annual holiday – you could be raising free donations for Elrick Primary Parent Council with easyfundraising?</p> <p>There are over 4,000 shops and sites on board ready to donate – including eBay, Argos, John Lewis, ASOS, Booking.com and M&S – and it won't cost you a penny extra to help us raise funds.</p> <p>All you need to do is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Go to https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/elrickprimary/?utm_campaign=raise-more and join for free. 2. Every time you shop online, go to easyfundraising first to find the site you want and start shopping. 3. After you've checked out, the retailer will donate to Elrick Primary Parent Council at no extra cost to you whatsoever! <p>There are no catches or hidden charges and Elrick Primary Parent Council will be grateful for your donations.</p> <p>Thank you for your support.</p>
	<p>For labelling of personal items. 24% of your total spend will be donated to our funds. Please ensure you use school code 21869 at the checkout.</p> <p>https://www.mynametags.com/</p>
	<p>Bag2School is the UK's leading textile recycler and fundraiser working with schools and since its inception in 2001 it has now paid out over £36 million.</p> <p>As well as raising vitally needed funds for the parent council, it also helps the environment by helping to divert unwanted textiles away from landfill. A recent DEFRA report has shown that textile collection schemes are helping to reduce the volume of textiles discarded as municipal solid</p>

waste. However, it is a fact that as a nation we still send 350,000 tonnes of textiles to landfill every year.

By getting involved in our **Bag2School** collection, you have an opportunity to sort through your cupboards and wardrobes and donate unwanted textiles in the bag provided – this can include adults’ and children’s clothes, shoes (tied together please), hats, belts, handbags and soft toys, (please refer to <http://uk.bag2school.com/> for full details). In addition to raising much needed funds it will also raise awareness amongst the children of the benefits of recycling and reuse.

We usually collect for Bag2School at least once per term. We’ll be in touch with details for the next collection. Usually, sealed bags are dropped off at the school gate before 9am on the designated collection date.

Some other useful websites

Our Facebook page:

www.facebook.com/elrickprimaryschoolparentcouncil

The parent council pages on the Elrick Primary School website:

<https://elrick.aberdeenshire.sch.uk/parents/parent-council/>

Parentzone Scotland

<https://education.gov.scot/parentzone>

The National Parent Forum of Scotland

<https://www.npfs.org.uk/>

...and finally

We know these are extraordinary times and we would usually get to meet you at the new parent induction evenings. However, we do look forward to meeting you once the Covid-19 risk has reduced and we’re able to meet face to face. In the meantime, we’re always on email or Facebook if there’s ever anything you need or if you’d just like to introduce yourself.

We wish you and your child a long and happy time at Elrick Primary School.