



## CASE STUDY



Messenger  
Parents' Evenings

**BUILT ON TRUST**



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***"Parents' Evenings is something I would really promote because of the impact it has had on getting parents in and how much more professional it has made the evenings."***

Stephen Grimshaw,  
St Margaret's High School

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## THE KEY ISSUE

Parents' evenings are one of the most important engagement tools schools have at their disposal. While it's a statutory requirement for schools to provide at least one opportunity per year for parents to discuss pupil progress with a teacher, studies show that parental engagement in student learning is one of the most important factors in their overall achievement.

The problem is, in their traditional format parents' evenings take time away from increasingly busy schedules, require high levels of coordination and rely heavily on students to deliver the right bit of paper to the right person at the right time.

As a school with 250 pupils and around 30 staff, organising parents' evenings was always a logistical challenge says **Justine Archenhold, the School Assistant at Lauder Primary School in the Scottish Borders.**

*"To organise a parents' evening and check every child had an appointment without family groups clashing used to be 4-5 staff sitting in a room for several hours to check everything and then write out letters. We then had to wait for reply slips to come in, check them... and then change everything around again."*

The delivery mechanism for these letters and reply slips was of course the children themselves. The paper-based system relied heavily on students to go around each of their teachers to book times and then

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***"It saves so many man hours and a lot of paper. It should be a tool used in every school office because it saves a lot of time and stress"***

Justine Archenhold,  
Lauder Primary School

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to co-ordinate with their parents. Naturally, this leads to some issues as **Stephen Grimshaw, Deputy Head at St Margaret's High School in North Lanarkshire,** explains:

*"The old system we used completely empowered children to make appointments and they could skip certain teachers. Staff were also in control of how many bookings they took and the kids could sometimes struggle to find the right staff."*



# THE BENEFITS OF PARENTS' EVENING BOOKING SYSTEM

To address these issues, both St Margaret's and Lauder Primary trialled Parents' Evening Booking System (PEBS), a simple piece of software that pulls data directly from the school database and allows parents to pick the times that suit them directly from their phones or computers.

*"We've had a lot of positive feedback from parents as it's quick and easy, and they get to see the teachers they want to see"*

Helen Mallalieu,  
Mackie Academy

For Stephen at St Margaret's, the impact was immediately noticeable:

*"We were quite an early adopter of PEBS in Scotland, trialling it with our fourth years. We usually had 52% of parents coming to stage year 4 parents coming to parent night, but our first time with PEBS was 76%."*



*"The system gives more power and control to parents."*

*"It definitely makes things more streamlined and is better than paper."* Adds Helen Mallalieu from Aberdeenshire's Mackie Academy. *"Now it takes me ten minutes to upload everything and we send Groupcall messages to parents to tell them when it is live."*

The timesaving aspect of PEBS, along with a noticeable increase in parental engagement, are the two most common, and most useful, benefits schools are seeing.

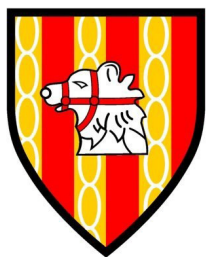
*"PEBS saves up to a full day's worth*

*of administration, and has made a huge difference"* says Justine.

*"If schools want to improve in engagement, this is a great way to do it because it makes you look at your whole process"*

Stephen Grimshaw,  
St Margaret's High School

Art Department	Biology Department	Business Studies D...	CDT:Des & Com Depa...
Previous	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Next	
Miss K Burrows Art	Mr R Williams Art	Mr T Smith Art	Mrs S M Williams Art
Previous	1	Next	
06.00 PM	Available (Click to reserve)		
06.05 PM	Available (Click to reserve)		
06.10 PM	Available (Click to reserve)		
06.15 PM	Fred Anderson 10D		
06.20 PM	Available (Click to reserve)		
06.25 PM	Available (Click to reserve)		
06.30 PM	Available (Click to reserve)		
06.35 PM	Samantha Acton 10A		
06.40 PM	Available (Click to reserve)		
06.45 PM	Samantha Acton 10A		



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Stephen Grimshaw,  
St Margaret's High School

## THE BENEFITS FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Local authorities are noticing a difference too. **Liz McPhie, Technical Project Administrator for North**

**Lanarkshire Council**, trains school leaders in the area on using technology effectively.

*"When delivering training at various schools across the authority, I have received a positive response, especially when organising sibling appointments and dealing with split families. Some primary schools have stated that it now takes a couple of hours to organise a parent's evening as opposed to one week, saving valuable time on resources."*

*"In a nutshell, it is a good piece of software that is easy to use, and that is crucial."*

And what about the parents?

*"Parents have given good feedback through the function in PEBS where they can leave comments." Says Helen.*

*"They say it is good and efficient as they can pick which teachers they want to see. The evenings are much smoother and more efficient as parents have their appointments and times when they come in."*

And what is the real impact of PEBS for all key school stakeholders? Stephen sums up:

*"PEBS has had a real impact on getting parents to parents' evenings and has made them much more professional. It has raised the status of parents evening for parents, students and staff. Staff know who is coming and are more organised which means the quality of dialogue has a big impact."*

PEBS has been really, really worthwhile."

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Liz McPhie,  
North Lanarkshire Council



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**Parents' Evening  
Booking System**