

S3 Parents Evening – Wed 13th January 2021

School Cloud: Parents' Evening System



Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope you have successfully managed to book appointments for our first online parents' evening. If you still have to book appointments, you can do so by accessing <https://braes.schoolcloud.co.uk/> before Friday 8th January.

I have a few suggestions from parents and staff who volunteered to be part of a trial which will hopefully make it a positive experience for you.

- Test your camera and microphone before starting your first appointment.
- Find a quiet space in the house without distraction to join the calls.
- If possible, try to avoid distractions such as young children and pets.
- While the appointment time of 5 minutes is the same as it would be for an in-school meeting, parents felt it was short – you will see a countdown of time on the screen, but it does cut off abruptly on 5 minutes. In order to keep appointment times for other parents and teachers, this cannot be changed.
- If you lose connection, just try to join the meeting again. However, please be aware that the time doesn't restart as that would impact on all of the other appointment times.
- If you are not able to access or re-join an appointment, we will be in touch over the following days.

The general feedback from the trial was that staff and parents both found it very easy to use, however, we did experience some connection issues, so please bear with us. The following information answers the most commonly asked questions by parents.

How do I attend my appointments via video call?

You can access your appointments by following the steps below:

Step 1 – Log in and click on the Parents' Evening (the one you want to join)

On the day of the video appointments, login to the website. Once logged in you will see a notice that you have upcoming video appointments and under this the details of the event, along with a *Join Video Appointments* button. This will become available 60 minutes before your first appointment.

Step 2 – The Video Call Screen

When you click *Join Video Appointments* the video call screen will be displayed. You may at this point be asked if you wish to allow access to your camera/microphone, in which case please click yes. On this screen you can see the following:

- At the top left the teacher name (and subject details) for the current and next appointment.
- At the top right a countdown to the start of the appointment.
- At the bottom the controls for the microphone and camera (once a teacher is available or you are in a call these also show a pick up and hang up button).
- In the middle, when your appointment is due to start, the *Start Appointment* button.

Step 3 – Making a Call

Click the *Start Appointment* button. You will see yourself in the bottom right corner of the screen (unless you have no camera, or have chosen to turn it off). If the teacher has not yet joined you will see a notice to that effect in the centre of the screen. When a teacher joins a call you will see them in the main part of the screen - or hear them, if they have no camera (or have turned it off) - and can start

your discussion with them. You will also see the remaining time for the appointment counting down in the blue bar at the top of the screen.

What happens if I lose access to the system?

If you lose access to the system for some reason during the call, log in again and click *Start Appointment* on the video call screen. As long as the teacher is still in the call this will let you continue with the appointment (this is the same for the teacher if they lose their access). When the countdown in the blue bar stops the appointment time is over and the call will automatically end.

How will I know which appointments I should attend?

You need to book your appointments in advance of the parents' evening taking place. When you log into the website you will see your list of appointments and a countdown timer to show how long each appointment lasts and when your next appointment is due to take place.

Will I automatically join the next teacher for my next appointment?

No, if you have a consecutive appointments scheduled then once the video call ends with the first teacher your screen will display a *Start Next Appointment* button. When you are ready to start the appointment, click on it. If you do not have a consecutive appointment, then you will see a new countdown timer telling you how long until the start of your next appointment.

Will I automatically be connected to the teachers I have an appointment with?

Both the parent and teacher must be logged into the site and indicate that they are ready to start the appointment before the video conferencing will connect.

What happens when I have finished all my appointments?

Once your final appointment for the evening is complete you will see a message advising you of this.

What happens if I join the appointment later than my scheduled start time?

If you (or the teacher) are late, or leave and re-join the call, it does **not** reset the timer. If you delay starting a call it does **not** extend the duration for that appointment. The appointment will always end at the scheduled time.

What will happen as I approach the end of my appointment?

For the last minute of your appointment, the timer will turn from blue to amber. This indicates that you now have limited time left and you should ask any final questions before the call ends at the scheduled end time.

Can I request a longer appointment time?

No, your appointments will be booked in advance of the parents' evening and will last up to 5 minutes. If, for any reason, you require more information then you should contact your child's Pupil Support teacher.

What happens if I miss an appointment?

If you miss an appointment there is no way to join the appointment.

Are there optimum conditions for the video conferencing to be a success?

The system can pick up on background noise so it is advisable to have a quiet space to take the video call where there is limited background noise. It would be useful to turn off other devices in the same room, e.g. the TV, a radio etc.

When booking my appointments, should I try to leave a 5 minute gap between appointments?

It is advisable to leave a 5 minute gap between your appointments. If you do this, you are less likely to start your appointment late which means that you will get your full allocated time with each teacher.

Do I have to be at home to join the parents' evening?

No, you can access the website using any device and therefore you can choose to access the parents' evening from any location where you have suitable wifi to connect to the system.

Can two parents log into the call from different devices?

The parents' evening system only allows one device to connect to the appointment with the teacher. However, the company are currently developing this feature and it may be available later in the school year.

Is this system used in other schools?

The parents' evening system has been used for over 40 million hours of video conferencing between teachers and parents across the whole of the UK. In addition, all secondary schools in Falkirk Council are using video conferencing software for parents' evenings this year.

Are the video calls secure?

Yes, all video calls are encrypted between teachers and parents.

What should I do if I do not have a smartphone or access to the internet at home?

If you do not have access to a smartphone or you do not have internet access then you should contact your child's Pupil Support teacher to discuss how we can ensure that you are able to virtually attend our parents' evening.