

Dalkeith High School Parent Council
Tuesday 12 April 2016

Present: Allyson Dobson (AD), Caroline Pearson (CP), Steve Kelly (SK), Morag Ryan, Marianne Flockhart, Bill McQueen, Carolyne Ross, Julie Darling, Iain Cumming, Anne Murray, Anne Williams, Deborah Slater (DS)

Apologies: Jane Richardson, Julie Macdonald, Stephanie Heasman,

Welcome: Chair welcomed everybody

Approval of previous minutes

Matters arising: dealt with under specific agenda items

Notification of AOCB:

- concern about cover teachers taking classes when not qualified in the subject
- Midlothian school buildings and their safety in the wake of Edinburgh schools building crisis (AD is including this in her Head Teacher report)

PTA: a brief report was given by DS about the ceilidh and official opening of the stained glass window. The event was fun but not as well attended as hoped. The fundraising total was just over £400. It was agreed that the events at school which draw in the most parents are the ones directly involving their own children. With this in mind it was decided that the PTA would revisit "Dalkeith High's Got Talent". This event was last run in 2012. Linda Hamilton (former Chair) has agreed to help mastermind the event. This time there will be a small charge for voting as well as the cost of the ticket. SK to look at school calendar for potential dates next session, he will bring this to next meeting. Other fundraising events will also be taking place for the South African trip.

AD wished to express her thanks for the additional stained glass gift presented to her at the ceilidh, created by Kate Henderson.

Head Teacher update:

Exam leave: AD explained the arrangements for exam leave and for summer school, for those pupil not taking exams (Nat 3, Nat 4 and those taking less than four Nat 5s). Copies of the summer school programme were distributed showing the variety of opportunities being provided for pupils. There will be an open door policy for those pupils on exam leave and a series of masterclasses will take place.

The Easter holiday revision sessions proved popular again this year. Parents at the meeting asked AD to thank staff very much for their time as staff provide these sessions on a voluntary basis and this is hugely appreciated.

Staff changes: AD talked through all of the new appointments in modern languages, business education, home economics, chemistry, art and design. Some of the new teachers are NQTs so can't take up their posts until the new session once their NQT year is complete. There are still appointments to be made in maths, physics and CDT. Anne Morton will be retiring from the Maths department.

Sara McDermott's role in guidance has been made permanent. Emma Harvey will cover

Eilidh Frame's maternity leave in guidance (Melville).

Hamish Duncan will have an additional role taking on the remit of employability and Developing the Young Workforce. Insight revealed a slight reduction in the positive destination achievement between 2014 and 2015 and although this might not be statistically significant, the school aspires to continue its high record of positive destinations.

The next S1 intake will be 167 (compared to 111 this year), 19 have applied from outside of catchment. There will be six S1 classes with 9 practical sets.

Midlothian school buildings: A statement has been put on the school website reassuring parents that building inspections are done on an ongoing basis in Midlothian with an extra one having been carried out after the Liberton High School accident. It was suggested that this statement also be put in the school bulletin to reassure pupils.

Jarnac Exchange: This is currently underway with 26 pupils plus teachers from Jarnac currently staying with DHS families until 18 April.

'How good is our school?' has adopted a framework for self-evaluation and structured it around six questions. DHS will focus on personalised support, SK will lead on this as Head of Pupil Support.

School dress code: There was another lively discussion about school dress code with the majority in favour of continuing with it but with queries about how it could be "enforced". It was agreed that the school already has a mandate for the school dress code as the whole school, parents and staff voted to have it in 2013. Taking it forward:

- Emphasis will be on praise for wearing uniform and less on sanctions for non-wearers, e.g. double house points for those wearing uniform
- Along with new senior phase starting in August there will be a fresh impetus
- For S6 blazers could become compulsory and might form part of their contract to be in school along with attendance, etc. This has yet to be decided. (**amended 24/05**)
- It is important that we have the right supplier with a good quality blazer
- Hopefully the blazer will start to become a badge of honour which other pupils aspire to
- S4 – S6 will wear the senior tie
- S1 – S3 will remain the same with the option of a polo shirt but school hoodies will no longer be an option as these have proved problematic
- Promote the dress code at P7 induction evening in June
- Provide a checklist of reasons for having a dress code on the school website

Named person scheme: AD explained the background to this legislation which is part of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The 'named person' will come into force on 31 August 2016. SK then explained that Guidance staff would be the named person and that the legislation would just formalise what is already being done in the school but with more accountability.

One parent asked if the school information systems were secure enough for the sharing of confidential information and SK assured the Parent Council that the systems were robust.

Role of prefects / Pupil Voice in school: Hamish Duncan will be invited to the next

meeting to talk about this.

AOCB: Concern about cover teachers taking classes when not qualified in the subject:

SK explained that there used to be a large choice of supply teachers for providing cover during absence but that the pool has reduced drastically because of the way that supply teachers are now paid. It is not always possible to find the correct subject specialist to cover absence. There was a question about whether parents could be informed about this when the absence is prolonged, AD responded that she would be very cautious about this approach as it could impact on confidentiality around the absent teacher.

The meeting was closed.

Next Parent Council meeting date:

17 May 2016