

## Dalkeith High School Parent Council

Tuesday 17 January 2017

**Present:** Allyson Dobson (AD), Liz McGlashan (LM), Caroline Pearson (CP), Morag Ryan, Marianne Flockhart, Anne Murray, Julie Darling, Nicola Johnson, Deborah Slater, Pauline Dickson, Diane Hedlund, Stephanie Heasman, Phil Bowen

**Apologies:** Cath Stewart

**Welcome:** Chair welcomed everybody

**Approval of previous minutes**

**Notification of AOCB:**

- Midlothian Council Danderhall Consultation
- Plea for Secretary
- Kings Park request

**Questions about SQA Exams and Prelims**

LM attended the meeting to give parents the opportunity to seek clarification about procedures and/or raise issues about the current prelims.

*Music Technology* - there was an issue with the speakers during the prelim exam.

**Action:** This will be looked into and, if marks have been adversely affected, pupils will be given the opportunity to re run the exam.

*Prelim Results* – these will be issued in a full report by letter to parents after the February break (see website for dates). These reports will enable parents and pupils to understand the full implications of the results and any ‘next steps’ required such as additional support. Other course work and unit assessments will also be considered. Guidance will then discuss with pupils and parents any decision to withdraw them from the exam or if a change of level is required. Special Arrangements (such as extra time/ scribes) will also be discussed with invigilators and SFL. All this needs to be in place by end March to comply with SQA deadlines.

*Heating* – LM has worked with BAM to ensure the heating in the hall is at a good level.

*Top Up Prelims* – There will be a Unit 3 ‘top up’ prelim prior to Easter to ensure pupils continue to work and have enough evidence in case of need for ‘exceptional circumstances’ (ie if they miss the SQA exam)

Please get in touch with LM if you have any questions or need more information.

AD and CP extended their thanks to LM for the smooth running of the prelim timetable and associated processes.

**PTA Fundraising:**

Christmas Quiz raised £26 with 9 final entries

Christmas Jumper: raised £109. Pupils agreed monies to be split Social Bite 80% and Parent Council 20%

There was a wide-ranging discussion exploring which events raised most money for the school (Strictly was sold out). Suggestions for future events include: a Lip Sync Battle between staff and pupils and an Easter Quiz. Other suggestions: securing charitable status and a 100 Club.

There was also discussion about how best to communicate with parents so they knew about and could support events: text alert /Facebook /tweets/school app and website.

**Action:** Three S1 parents (Nicola, Diane and Pauline) have agreed to set up and manage a PTA Facebook page with associated good governance and rules so there are restrictions on who can post items. Main purpose would be to promote events more widely.

**Vision for DHS:** AD fed back that the school was in good shape and had a clear motto and values. Following consultation with pupils, staff and parents we now have a vision statement and twitter hashtag. These were circulated at the meeting and comments were requested. Everyone was thanked for their contributions to the process.

### **School Dress Code:**

It was agreed that School dress code was much improved with the majority of pupils wearing the correct uniform. There are still opportunities to explore other changes for S1-S3 (Broad General Education phase) and S4-S6 (Senior Phase)

Debate focussed on: black shoes only and no trainers; Shirts (white not black) and ties to be worn by all pupils (polo shirts to discontinue?); school hoodies – yes or no; Blazers as an option for all senior pupils; Skinny jeans/Jeggings; PE kit.

Guidance will also be given on when pupils need to wear school uniform such as SQA exams; going to activities outwith school and after PE.

Texts have been sent to parents if pupils are not wearing the correct uniform and some children have been sent home to change. There was a feeling that the school also needs to be pragmatic about some items.

It was noted that pupils are praised when they are smart.

A second-hand shop could be an option for the PTA to run to sell blazers etc

### **Action:**

Blazers – school will consult with senior phase

Cookery Lessons – school will consider what is appropriate for these classes

School uniform will be an agenda item for next meeting for fuller discussion and agreement so there is clear guidance which can be issued to parents and pupils prior to next session

### **HT Update:**

**Staffing:** DHS has a full complement of staff. The only issue is cover in maths due to part-time member of staff leaving. All SQA classes will be taught by a maths teacher. S1 – 3 will be minimally affected and there is a potential temporary solution for cover.

AD is well ahead with plans for next session's staffing. She explained her vision for the Senior Management team and has secured agreement to recruit a new part time Depute post (.66 fte) which will be advertised after Easter.

**Action:** AD will notify School Council of long/ short leet and interview dates as there will need to be parent representation on the panel

**Finance:** The school is in a comfortable financial position this year and has been able to invest in iPads for maths and humanities; a new IT room for expressive arts and a hair-dressing salon for enhanced curriculum. There will be a 0.5% budget reduction next year. This equates to approximately £15k and will be absorbed, but there will be no distribution of extra funding to departments this year.

## **Curriculum**

Choices for the senior phase are coming up. There is minimal change to the columns and a will to continue to run as many Advanced Highers as possible.

There will be changes to BGE phase and Scottish Government will issue 'Benchmarks' which will contain more streamlined information about all subject areas

The school is now focussing on 3<sup>rd</sup> year as it is a key transition year to National Qualifications. An S2 DRAFT option sheet was circulated at the meeting. Vocational and 'enhanced' options have been integrated into more columns for greater flexibility and choice. This will be circulated more widely for comment.

S6 Health and Well-being options have broadened for PE to encourage activity outwith school

**IT** – There are Midlothian wide issues with WiFi / bandwidth and asset management which will impact on the school for the next 12 – 18 months. This is frustrating but is being looked into within the Council.

## **AOCB**

**Danderhall School Campus** – CP read out a letter inviting participation in a consultation exercise and event on 26<sup>th</sup> Jan about Danderhall playing fields. Contact Dereck Welsh at the Council for more information

**Secretary for School Council** – We are looking for someone to take up this role. If no one would like to take this on, then it was suggested we will need to take turns and rotate.

**Clash of Open nights** – it was unfortunate but there was a situation where the DHS P7 Open Evening and Kings Park Parents Evening clashed. A question was asked whether it was possible to coordinate dates of meetings between schools so that this could be avoided in future.

**Action:** LM asked by AD to issue DHS dates to primaries in advance to try and avoid this happening again

The meeting was closed.

## **Parent Council meeting dates 2017:**

28 Feb 2017

18 April 2017

23 May 2017