**Dalkeith High School Parent Council**

**Minutes of the Parent Council Meeting – 25 May 2022**

**Agenda:**

1. Previous Minutes Approval & Actions (CC)
2. Welcome message (CC)
3. Head Teacher update (AD)
   * School Achievement Data
   * Scottish Education Awards
   * School uniform
4. PC Chair updates (CC)
   * Update on HT Recruitment process
   * School Toilets
   * Digital Comms
5. Q&A (CC)
6. AOB
7. Next Meeting Date
8. Thanks & Close

**Attendees:**

Cara Chambers (PC Chair)

Allyson Dobson (HT)

Diane Ward (PC Secretary)

Diane Hedlund (PC/PTA Fund Raising)

Beatrice Burns

Valerie MacDonald

Iain Burnet

Carolin Falconer

Yocksan Bell

Andrew Bell

Julie Brunton

Lisa Hodkinson

Sara Scott

Karen Langham

Phil Bowen

1. Previous Minutes Approval & Actions (CC – DW not at previous meeting)

Previous minutes were not available to cover off approval or actions

1. Welcome (CC)
2. Last PC of year and recognised this is the last PC for Mrs Dobson as she retires.
3. Make sure last minutes from last meeting and this one will go one website

**ACTION FOR CC**– Minutes to be made available on School Website and any actions looked in to at next PC

1. **Headteacher update**

Mrs Dobson present the results from the recently publish findings.

A full version of the results is available upon request from the school.

**Insight National Benchmarks**

Results from SQA which Look to see how we do as a school.

* They look at comparable figures /data to compare around country – gives a picture of how pupils at DHS are doing with similar students around the country.
* Published Sept & Feb
* Complete picture of how school performing, and the qualifications pupils at DHS leave school with (exit qualifications).

Four measures

1. **Literacy & numeracy** – 2021

* Nat 4 = level 4 - sitting better than virtual comparable (VC)
* Nat 5= level 5 – sitting better than VC
* Highers = level 6 – similar picture (not shown)

Looks like a slight dip from 2020 and there could be related to COVID when there was no final formal exams.

1. **Leaver Destination** – pupils who go on to a positive destination (work, college, university)

* 96% went on (726) to a positive destination (highest against our comparable)

**ACTION (CC to pick up with Emma Ormerod** (**EO) new Head)-** **Action for future reports to see more data/analysis on this to understand where are young people going to as their positive destination?**

1. **Improving attainment for all** – Key comparable here is Virtual Comparable (comparing pupils on like for like basis)

* Highest – outperformed VC
* Middle 60 – sit above VC
* Lowest – Little above VC

AD stated this data is where you can really focus on to see where you need to improve.

Seven years ago, middle of the middle attainers were lagging. Changes in the curriculum with a range of pathways has created positive outcomes.

* Middle attainers – school moved away from just offering the more traditional courses. (Ensuring ‘Something for everyone’)
* Success for highest attainers, there is a real focus on the quality of grades - how can Bs turn into As etc.
* Lowest attainers – how to get them engaged with school. What can the school do – they look back for evidence from s3 to see what they can use to achieve some attainment.

Next step is to make the Graded Awards a larger part of these results going forward.

1. **Attainment V Deprivation -** Compared to virtual comparators – we outperformed on all except 1 which was ever so slightly lower.

**Next steps**

* + Look at achievements
  + Impact
  + What next
  + Parent Council – Be part of the discussions
  + Looking at what was wanted to be achieved and chance to review & contribute to the analysis of the impact.

Will work with new HT going forward on this

**Comments/ACTIONS**

* **(CC) PC going forward, How can we work better & more, with school**
* **(AD/EO) Bring different SLT member in to PC to cover different areas of their focus**

**School Improvement Plan**

Mrs Dobson gave a quick update and advised the staff are still running through the results on what was achieved against the plan. New Head Teacher is part of all new plans going forward.

* Results will go website in September (**Action for EO at future PC meeting to present on the plan v actual v actions)**
* **ACTION FOR CC**– **Feedback to Digital Team on Chrome books – look into how pupils can transfer their work from another device on to their school device.**
* Still challenges with teacher levels due to COVID so BGE were affected and had to revert o home learning. AD added thanks for understanding and continued support.

**Scottish Education Awards (AD)**

* Nomination of Scottish HT of the Year 2022.
* AD one of three finalists
* Awards ceremony takes place Wed 8th June in Glasgow
* Small number of staff & school Captains will attend

**\*\*\*Since PC meeting – we are delighted to record Mrs Dobson won Head Teacher of the Year 2022! \*\*\*\***

**School uniform (AD)**

 Mrs Dobson wanted to open up a discussion about uniform, “a difficult topic to deal with, as different views and s process to follow.”

History of uniform:

* When Mrs Dobson started the school, there was a very broad boundary. Worked hard to smarten up with shirt & ties with high majority following the new code.
* It has always been down to cooperation & actually can’t enforce.
* Then impact of Covid - One main factor to the non-enforcement of uniform -  the closure of changing facilities from COVID. Ease of changes of clothes each day in early pandemic.
* Enter now into current situation – we need to relook. Is it possibly time to change the uniform?

AD stated “Need to be careful & conscious on decisions with change of HT”

Also need to consider how life has changed the way we all dress for work now.

**ACTION at this PC - The New incoming HT would like views gathered at this PC meeting.**

* Recently some pupils have been communicating concerns on reusing changing rooms (don’t miss the issues, body image, more PE time)
* Other comments on how in being more comfortable clothing helps them be comfortable in class and focus better.

Due to these factors it was decided to use the ‘5 a day’ meetings SLT hold with pupils to pose a few questions in relation to uniform:

1. You will be aware that there has been less of a force on school uniform this session. Why do you think this Is the case? (Main response has been COVID)
2. Lots of schools in Scotland ask their young people to wear school uniform. Why do you think this is the case? (Responses include Pride & ID)
3. Reflect on what you have been wearing to school in the past week. What have you been wearing and why? (More comfortable. Learn better if comfy)
4. How would you expect you people in Dalkeith High School to be dressed when coming to school?
5. We will be talking about school uniform with all in our school community. What else would you like to tell me about this topic?

Notes - Only s1-3s involved & needs to be widened when seniors return.

* CC raised that there is an ongoing national consultation on school uniform and it would be good to link in to that to understand the wider picture. **ACTION CC** – **look into and update next PC / feed into EO**

Mrs Dobson asked this Parent council to gather views to gauge a small number of parent input to pass on to New HT (EO):

* Many of parents present input –
* All who spoke preferred a more modern, relaxed clothing style of uniform.

Comments included:

* Have more of a dress ‘code’ than a specifically stated uniform
* Already available school hoodies (12.95) as a good compromise
* Suggestions of a set colour of hoodie - school branded or option of buy your own in the colour.
* No uniform would be ok
* Modern approach in line with majority of workforces who have mostly moved to casual dress.
* Shirts and ties are not worn post COVID in many workplaces.
* Girls feel pressured to wear ties
* Some form of identity for school was preferred.
* Cost was raised - needs to be something that would allow for all incomes,
* Expense of uniform is an additional cost (especially if you have multiple to buy)
* Some pupils already voicing worries it will be the first thing the new HT might bring do.

**Q:** Is there many issues inappropriate clothing being worn?

**ANSWER (AD):** Teachers find they have had fewer confrontations at start of day not having to discuss with pupils who do not wear uniform, and are instead able to start on a positive note. There is no major issues with current non-uniform dress, any cases are dealt with discreetly by staff.

AD advised Pupil voice is important, as so many regulations to consider on ‘rights’.

The next step looks like a wider consultation in the form of a digital survey to all pupils, staff and parents, to gather feedback and input.

**Q:** Can we get an update out before the end of term?

**A:** Mrs Dodson very aware parents need to know what version of uniform will be in place before term ends and would be in touch very soon with more information.

The incoming head teacher will need to be fully involved and could possibly make her own plans/changes.

Some people felt any reinforcement of current uniform as a first step of new HT would need to wait, to aide relationship building.

**URGENT ACTION FOR AD TO ISSUE COMMUNICATION**

**Q:** Changing post PE:

**A (AD)**: Pupils can change if they want/need to.

AD noted a summary on this well discussed topic:

The general feeling from parents at the meeting is that uniform needs modernised but is an affordable alternative that takes into account the feedback and the views of the new headteacher.

Mrs Dodson reiterated the next stage was a full consultation with all pupils, parents and staff and would have to follow proper protocol to change. Current policy has not changed, and pupils can wear full uniform if they want to on non-PE days.

**Q:** How would a change impact Uniform Grant?

**ACTION FOR AD/EO – This needs to be investigated, if there was a uniform policy it should not be impacted**

Mrs Dodson finished off confirming she would feedback initial PC discussion to incoming HT: “a more modern, cost conscious/options to fit, but more comfortable uniform, and PC welcome full consultation.”  **ACTION AD TO SHARE VIEWS WITH EO**

**No objections voiced**

**ACTION: CARA TO MEET WITH EO ON THIS TOPIC**

1. **PC Chair Updates (CC)**

**Update on HT Recruitment process**

CC ran through the process

There were six candidates short listed and there was a series of interviews:

* Five parents with their pupils at different stages in the school
* 1hour interviews with parent panel
* Council panel
* Teacher panel
* Pupil panel

All came together post interviews to compare:

* All panels had the same top three, and top spot preferred candidate.
* The final stage saw three parents and two Council representatives (from education committee).
* All were unanimous on the preferred new HT (If this had not been unanimous, the parents would have had the final say)

Questions from PC on EO, new HT, on transition which Mrs Dobson gave some updates:

* Spending time in school to aide transition
* Watches respectfully
* Will bring her own ideas
* DHS SLT will be a good reminder of the strong community and how well the school currently runs
* Expect things to improve (there are areas to improve upon)
* Remember the school is stronger than one person but a whole community here at DHS

Comments from PC – School runs well with good and appreciated relationship with Mrs Dobson, and would not want changes for sake of change, but for improvement.

Mrs Dobson discussed the handover happening with new HT (Emma Ormerod):

* Improvement plan (mentioned above)
* A lot of listening
* Spending time together and in school making for a smooth transition

**School Toilets (CC)**

What has been happening with regards to toilet closures?

AD explained

* Toilets were becoming a magnet for gathering during class time
* Fire alarm triggered due to vaping in toilets
* Main toilets were open at break & lunch only
* Individual toilets were open at all times
* Toilets reopened to accommodate the exams so senior pupils could access them
* SLT present around the corridors by the main toilets to monitor

**Digital Comms (CC)**

**Question:** Question was raised about the visibility and methods used for communications from teachers to pupils ranging from Google Classroom, Twitter and Instagram. Is there a main and preferred method for communications as there appears to be no standard and communications are being missed at class level.

Parents don’t know where to look. Can we get a list of the methods used by which class/teacher and make sure it is appropriate (eg Instagram should it be used for communicating?)

A (AD)There has been a move from Show My Homework to Google Classroom

**ACTION (CC): Google Classroom has a ‘Guardian Summary’ and this needs to be trialled as there may be restrictions/rules – communication needed to parents and pupils on this feature**

**ACTION (AD/EO/SLT): Get a list of how each department will communicate (AD going to take to digital learning for input)**

Questions

**Q:** Structure of Day/timetable – will it remain as is next term?

**A (AD):** Split lunches is big positive to the campus

* as less pupils in lunch hall at the same time, less problems
* SLT can spend time going round pupils chatting
* Better ventilation with less pupils in the same space
* Easier for S1s to integrate as less intimidating

**Q:** Will extra curricular clubs restart? How will we get fun back into school?

**A (AD):** Our shows will be coming back, looking into how clubs can be accommodated over lunch as some teachers are still teaching the other phase whilst others are at lunch.

Q: School buses – is there any word or noise from the council on any changes?

**URGENT ACTION (CC) – CC to reach out to council to ask for an update, and ask for further consultation and options on any changes that might be getting considered**

**Q:** When will new timetables be issued?

**A (AD) :** Due to start new timetable on 6th June. New timetables will be issued ahead of that – around Thursday 2nd June. Arrangements will be made for senior pupils who are on exam leave.

**Q:** Are there any changes to teaching staff to note?

**A(AD)** : At present, New NQTs in Music & English (2), Maternity cover in Art and HE. Interviews are underway for Business studies.

Q: Question on Forest School

A(AD): Forest & Outdoor Leadership award at level 4 & and new level 5 (S3 & S4s). Mr McGlade covers this. Getting great feedback.

Other outdoor related subjects with awards include Duke of Edinburgh and Bee Keeping.

DHS is running summer schools at National 3 & National 4 not on exams leave, to keep them involved and learning.

AD also confirmed canoes had been bought which will further benefit the pupils in outdoor learning.

**AOB**

* Many thanks to the staff for running the study groups, master classes and Q&A sessions ahead of exams. Much appreciate the time and effort they put in.

**ACTION CC : to mail school a formal note of thanks**

* **Parent Council fundraising will resume (now post COVID restrictions), DH is looking at arranging an event to kick this off**

**ACTION DH: to communicate details of event when known)**

**Date of Next PC** – TBC (Action CC & EO)

**CLOSE**

**Thanks to Mrs Dobson**

CC gave a final ‘Thank You’ to Mrs Dobson for all her efforts and dedication, ahead of her retiring.

<End>

Minutes recorded by Diane Ward (PC secretary)