



Parent Council Meeting

Thursday, 13th January, 2022

7pm

Agenda

Attendance: A Dobson, C Knight, C Chambers, J Lapointe, P Gorman, M Nelson, C Falconer, R Pearson, S Macaloney, V MacDonald, S Scott, R Paxton(minutes)

Apologies: L Yardley

1. Minutes & Actions from last meeting

Approved by A Dobson and seconded by C Chambers.

Request for fundraising for canoes. Not actively started. CC discussed this with D Hedlund who confirmed that there is approximately £800 in the account. Would like to have more before agreeing on how it should be spent. Looking for ideas for virtual fundraising. AD advised that the school had earmarked some money which has allowed H Duncan to purchase the storage unit, the trailer and 4 canoes. Hoping to use some D of E monies to purchase another canoe which will give us 5 canoes in total at this time.

Consultation link was sent to all.

PC Chairs meeting was attended by CC.

Website has been updated re SLT structure.

Tracking & Reporting Calendar - SG is still working on this. Timing is important and will be updated soon.

2. Covid Update (Craig Knight – Depute Head Teacher)

CK - provided an update. Changes to be aware of: Risk assessment has been updated in accordance with guidelines. DHS had kept many of the previous mitigations in place and therefore has not had to change much. BGE and SPh groupings will continue to be kept separate. Assemblies are not physical, we arranged a virtual assembly this week which was very successful. Less disruption to classes. There will be no visitors into school unless essential, must be kept to absolute minimum at this time. Ventilation is being controlled by keeping windows open and much as we can. Classes have been provided with a CO2 monitor which helps to ensure staff are aware when a class needs to be ventilated. LFT's are still be carried out twice weekly, we no longer have to log data which is allowing us to distribute these more easily. Contact tracing/isolation has been reduced to 7 days and if negative lateral flow is done on day 6 and 7 staff and pupils can return. All cleaning, sanitising etc. is continuing. Staffing in school is relatively settled. Numbers of pupil absences is also low.

CC – Definite difference on what school must do compared with what general public are able to do. Midlothian appreciated frustration but must follow the guidelines.

AD – Decisions lie with Scottish Government. Cabinet Secretary attend meetings with Education professionals and explains that they are guided by medical science. The Government have made the commitment to keep the schools open and that therefore means we have to follow the current guidelines. Pupils seem happy to be back in school and are accepting of the current mitigations.

CC – children are under stricter restrictions compared with other sectors. Want to make sure that F Robertson is taking on-board parents' concerns.

CF – I work in school and it is different from any other society settings. Tighter in schools for a good reason.

AO'G – CC discussion last night summarised very well. Concern about parental engagement when parents have not been able to come into school for various events/discussions etc.

How can schools move forward? Need to be creative.

AD – Parents are essential. When it is appropriate for the guidelines to change we will obviously make changes. We can be creative, but at the moment, staff are covering classes and do a lot of work to ensure that teaching continues. Teachers work to an agreed contract which outlines how time will be used for the year (balance time agreement)

3. SQA Update (Craig Knight – Depute Head Teacher)

CK – Currently the SQA exams are due to take place with 3 possible scenarios.

Plan A – exams happening but with some modifications (as last year) ie

Assignments not required, AVU not required.

Plan B – if there is continued increase in cases, further modifications will be implemented but exams will still take place.

Plan C – if the pandemic continues to get worse the exam diet may be cancelled and results will be based on teachers assessments.

We are currently working towards Plan A but as a school we are planning for all of the possible scenarios. We have clear plans on how we will progress should anything change and modifications need to be made. SQA information will be shared via website.

AD – SQA have formed 2 groups to monitor the situation and are feeding into the decisions be made by Government. SQA are likely to publicise in March how any changes will affect revision/study etc.

4. Update from Midlothian Council / Parent Council Chairs Meeting (Cara Chambers – Chair of Parent Council)

CC – will send slides from Parent Council Chairs Meeting which can then be forwarded to parents in attendance at this meeting. Midlothian Council will be providing full programme of events/sessions to parents on Google classroom etc.

5. Head Teachers Update (Allyson Dobson)

Most subjects already covered. Chromebooks have now all been distributed. There are only about 20 still to be handed out. Wifi has been an issue this week, but HT's have been assured that this is being looked at and will be improved. We have our own Digital Team who are doing a great job. We also have a Teaching & Learning group.

Thank you to CK for all that he does ensuring that we are following guidelines and keeping us safe. Staff absences are low. Maternity staff is causing some knock on effect to classes as staff are working from home. 2 members of Maths Department have left and therefore staffing in this area is difficult. We have managed to recruitment an English and Maths teacher who will start with us shortly. Advert for another ENG and MAT teacher in the pipeline. We have appointed 2 Youth Workers, one is currently a LA in school. We have supply teachers with us too helping out.

AD – has made the decision to retire from the school in June this year. She has given early indication to Midlothian Council so that they have ample time to appoint new Head Teacher. Not an easy decision to make but feels that this is the right time to make this decision. Parent Council have an important part to play going forward and will be fully involved in the appointment. Letter will be sent to parents tomorrow. Have not yet decided how to tell pupils but this will happen soon.

CC – hard decision for you to make.

AD – it is important that appointment is made and that an “acting up HT” is not appointed who then perhaps has to hand over to someone else.

AO'C – thank you for sharing your news, you will be missed. Does the process means you will work with someone? AD – Unlikely, I hope that the successful candidate will be appointed quickly to enable me to provide essential handover, for them to meet with staff and attend meeting etc. before they start in August.

6. Questions sent in by parents and carers

No questions from parents attending.

AO'C had shared views in an email with CC and AD prior to meeting. End of term when many pupils didn't come in and parents kept children out of school to safeguard their family over the festive period. Worried that a similar scenario might happen again. Pupils weren't being taught. Appreciate staffing may be an issue. There is a willingness to help out if possible.

AD – very strange end of term, never experienced anything like it before. Very low percentage of pupil in attendance the last week. There will always be a tension between families who disagree about end of term experiences. Don't think we will have the same situation at Feb break or indeed the Easter Holiday. Unfortunately we can't make plans for the coming months - P7 transition, SUSTI, photographs, etc.

Different holidays in Midlothian than in other authorities. Long break but likely to be more aligned with others in the future.

MN – perfect storm – hopefully next year will be very different.

AD – Prom has been booked and fingers crossed it takes place.

7. AOB

AD – Email from A Henderson – suggestion to publish agenda in advance of the meeting would be helpful and for minutes to be posted on website.

Action – AD and CC to take this on board. Will publish agenda a week in advance and share with all parents. Minutes to go on website.

CC – contact by local resident about litter, in particular face masks. CC will ensure that this is put on Facebook.

Speak to other parents and encourage other to attend.

Next meetings:

5 April 2022

25 May 2022