

Lesmahagow High School Parent Council Meeting

Monday 18 January 2021, 7pm

Attendees: Wendy Russell (Chair), Colin Bates, Gillian Brown, Jennifer Cairney, Marie Cox, Moira Fell, Lynne Forbes, Donna Kelly, Sandra Gardiner, Alastair Gray, Councillor Mark Horsham, Karen Hynd, Barbara Lee, Hazel Leggate, Elspeth Martin, Angela Norris (minutes), Vicki O'Rourke, Louise Spiers, Michelle Wailes

Apologies: Lorna Laird, Heather Sinclair, Lynne Thow

1. Welcome

WR welcomed everyone to the Parent Council meeting.

2. Current Head Teacher Position and Recruitment for Acting Depute Head Teacher

WR advised that Barbara Lee had been appointed as acting Head Teacher to cover for Richard McGowan's absence. Further to an internal recruitment process, Linda Wright had been appointed as acting Depute Head Teacher to cover Barbara Lee's position. The post of Acting Principal Teacher (Logan house) had been advertised and interviews would be taking place on Tuesday 26 January 2021. This would involve backfilling of the successful class teacher's post which would bring the school back to the position of being fully staffed.

3. Approval of minutes

Approval by V O'R and seconded by KH.

4. Treasurer Update

KH advised that the current balance was £436.61. £75 had been received from a local Trust. The virtual Christmas fayre had generated a good amount for the funds and WR thanked VO'R for her involvement and MF for her support in updating Facebook.

5. Fundraising Plans

WR had contacted the Loaningdale Trust, however, as they had already provided a grant to the school, the Parent Council would not be eligible to apply this year. It was noted that only one grant can be applied for each year whether it be the school or the Parent Council. WR asked for a volunteer to pursue applying for a Community Council Grant. SG and VO'R volunteered to progress this.

The micro grant criteria required specific information regarding the items that would be purchased. The maximum grant awarded was £500. BL/AG to discuss further with staff and provide information on what items the school might require to WR who will share this information with SG and VO'R to allow them to progress with the grant applications.

If successful in receiving grant funding, this would allow the Parent Council to ask for bids from Departments for what they might require.

6. COVID-19 Arrangements/Home Learning Update/Masks

LF gave an update on work she had carried out to familiarise herself with Google meet. She had produced a video which she shared with her colleagues to allow them to feel more comfortable about using Google meet. She highlighted that there was a very good support network available for all the teachers to assist each other if anyone was experiencing any difficulties. She enjoys the interaction that Google meet allows her to have and feels the young people benefit from being able to see and communicate with

their teacher. Google meet also allows a teacher to record explaining a task and demonstrating the task which can then be uploaded to Google classroom for any pupil to view.

Positive feedback was received on Google meet from numerous parents who liked the interaction of the teacher with the young people and the opportunity it allowed for young people to communicate any issues they may have.

MW asked if there was a process in place to monitor the engagement of young people and also the uptake of Google Meet across the departments. BL advised that engagement was being monitored carefully by class teachers, Faculty Heads, Pupil Support and SMT, and each faculty was providing information on the uptake of Google Meet and this would continue to be monitored. BL will provide WR with a copy of the figures of usage which were submitted to South Lanarkshire Council and WR would circulate.

It was noted that not every child could access the subjects at the timetabled time and it was highlighted that Google meet allowed the teacher to record a video and upload for any young person to access at a later date.

Discussion took place on NAT 5/Higher/Advanced Higher assessments. LF advised that SQA have provided assessments for National 5 and would provide assessments for Higher/Advanced Higher. SQA had provided clear guidance on assessments and teachers can decide when the young people are ready to sit assessments. This would hopefully take place when the young people are back in school. This would be reviewed as and when appropriate.

AG confirmed that no assessments would take place in January as there would be a focus on learning and teaching and SQA would hopefully revise the timeline for deadlines to allow these to be pushed back. SQA have not provided any further guidance since early January. As the lockdown advice changes this may alter the way learning is currently taking place.

BL advised that the school had provided chrome books and Wi-Fi devices to support pupils to remove any barriers to learning. BL confirmed that teachers were encouraging pupils to follow their timetables and log on and engage with teachers at the timetabled time. This would allow teachers to be able to answer any queries during that time.

LF confirmed that teachers could assign tasks to individual pupils or groups in Google classroom and only the pupil would be able to view the assigned task.

BL confirmed that teachers are available during the scheduled class times and this was the best time to contact a teacher with any issues. If that was not possible then the teacher would endeavour to answer the message as soon as possible. As it was the first week of online learning there were a high number of messages received, however, a lot of messages were relating to connectivity and hopefully the volume of messages will be lower moving forward and this will enable the teacher to respond quicker to any issues raised.

Masks - BL confirmed that Senior Management were at the front door in the morning issuing face masks to pupils who arrived without a mask. 80 – 100 face masks were being issued every day which highlighted concerns regarding the environmental issue. The school have now purchased packs of 5 cloth masks which can be given to pupils which would allow a fresh mask for each day of the week and they can then be washed and re-used.

BL asked for parent volunteers to pilot the use of Guardian email facility within Google classroom which would allow parents to download a copy of what work your child has completed during the week and what work is expected from them. Could be downloaded on a weekly or daily basis. This was welcomed by all the parents present.

Action: BL to provide usage figures of Google classroom/meet to WR to circulate

7. Wi-Fi Improvement

BL confirmed that work had been completed on Friday 15 January and that there was now high quality wi-fi access in every area across every floor of the school. This will make a massive improvement to pupils using their own devices as they move about the school. WR asked parents to encourage their children to use the wi-fi and feedback any issues they experience positive or negative to BL direct.

8. Litter Progress

BL advised that regular litter picks had taken place up to the Christmas holidays and the last check of the surrounding area was on 22 December. Pupils have been encouraged to use the bins provided in the school and in the local community. Cllr MH provided an update and noted that the school were going to contact the shop located at the corner of the school and the Snak Shak to encourage them to take some responsibility and provide bins to help with the litter problem. WR noted that this had not yet happened, and BL agreed to progress this.

Action: BL to contact the local shops and encourage them to provide bins

9. Energy Drinks Ban Progress

WR advised that RM was keen to impose an energy drinks ban within the school. BL advised that the Pupil Council had given their support to developing a Policy that the pupils would be required to follow. If lockdown continues then BL will arrange for the Pupil Council to meet through Google meet to progress this.

Outstanding Action: BL to progress with the Energy drink ban when the pupils physically return to school

10. SPT Transport Idling

BL confirmed that she would contact SPT regarding buses idling outside school for long periods of time. WR encouraged parents to highlight to BL if they witness this happening at the school.

Action: BL to contact SPT regarding buses idling if it became an issue again

11. Head Teacher Update

BL provided an update on staffing:-

- Mr Marc Campbell, Faculty Head of Technologies, has joined us from Duncanrig Secondary School.
- Mr Derek Brown, Teacher of Business and Computing, has moved to Calderside Academy.
- Mrs Morag Storry, PT Support for Learning (0.4FTE, in school on Mondays and Tuesdays) has returned from a career break
- Mrs Jane Young, Youth, Family and Community Learning Support Worker, has retired.

- Ms Heather Gardner, Teacher of Drama, leaves us this week to take up a teaching post in Dubai.
- Ms Stephanie Kelly, Teacher of Drama, will join us from Knightswood Secondary in Glasgow.
- Mrs Linda Wright has been appointed Acting Depute Head Teacher.
- Ms Isha Iqbal has been appointed Acting PT Developing the Young Workforce (0.5FTE).
- An Acting Principal Teacher of Pupil Support will be appointed next week.

BL highlighted that everyone would miss Derek, Jane and Heather and thanked them for the contribution they have made to our pupils, school and community and wished them well in the future.

BL would circulate a draft planning and preparation document developed in collaboration with Clydesdale Secondary Schools outlining the school's approach to delivering education in disrupted times. This document would continue to be updated in line with local and national guidance, and feedback from pupils, parents and colleagues. BL would welcome any feedback on the document, which summarises the school's current position

Action: BL to circulate the draft planning and preparation document

12. AOC

BL confirmed that S2 would keep to the planned schedule for choosing S3 subjects with the only change being a delay of 2 weeks to the S3 choosing their S4 subjects as this was scheduled to take place on the 7 January. BL felt that the first week of online learning required to focus on the continuity on learning. S3 course choices should begin later this week with S5 and S6 following closely and S2 the beginning of February as originally planned.

Cllr MH highlighted that the teachers are doing a fantastic job of teaching pupils while potentially home schooling their own children at the same time. He also noted that parents were doing a fantastic job during the current pandemic. He asked what procedures were in place to support young people's anxieties?

BL confirmed that pupil support teachers were contacting pupils through google classroom to monitor and provide support to any young person who may have anxiety regarding exams and online learning and support would continue to be provided throughout this lockdown period.

Next PC meeting

Tuesday 16 February 2021