

BISHOPBRIGGS ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL



MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF THE PARENT COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 19th FEBRUARY 2019

Present: Gordon Mouldsdale (GM); David Williams (DW); Robert Johnston (RJ); Allison Lunan (AL); Jane McGrory (JM); Natalie Storey (NS); Marion McAlister (MM); Karen Thomas (KT); Sheena Murray (SM); Jonathan Campbell (JC); Ian Donaghey (ID)

Apologies: Alison Keith (AK); Louise Oudega (LO); Carol Robertson (CR); Provost Alan Brown (AB); Cllr Alan Moir (AM); Cllr Gordan Low (GL)

1 WELCOME

DW welcomed everyone to the meeting. In the absence of JL, Clerk to the Parent Council, KT took the minutes of the meeting.

2 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

The Minutes of 8th January 2019 were approved electronically before the meeting. Following a concern raised at the previous meeting, GM investigated the availability of pupil toilets and the absence of soap in the toilets. Having spoken to janitors, at least two out of the three sets of pupil toilets are always open. The other may be closed for cleaning. GM agreed there was a lack of soap, however, this has now been rectified. GM has been monitoring the situation and soap is now always available.

3 PARENTAL CONSULTATION – IAN DONAGHEY, DHT

At the PC Meeting on 6th November 2018, ID discussed the introduction of parent questionnaires to facilitate improved parental engagement. The questionnaires, which would be issued electronically, would focus on the school's Improvement Plan priorities.

We currently have a robust and rigorous self-evaluation programme which involves all staff and pupils. A target this year is to give parents a greater say and complement our existing evaluation programme. Questionnaires will be created on Microsoft Forms and will be issued to parents. Microsoft Forms collate all results. These results would then be discussed with staff and the Parent Council.

It is hoped that there will be five questionnaires, each relating to one of the five school Improvement Priorities. Rather than issue five questionnaires to every parent, it has been decided that each year group will receive one questionnaire on the Priority which is most relevant to them. This will be as follows:

1. Leadership and approach to improvement (S5 and S6)
2. Curriculum (S2)
3. Learning, teaching and assessment of learners' progress (S3)
4. Partnership, personalised support and parental engagement (S4)
5. Successes, achievements and outcomes for learners (S1)

ID issued sample questionnaires to the Parent Council and asked for feedback regarding clarity and relevance. These covered Improvement Priorities 4 and 5 and were created by a working group of teachers. RJ asked when the questionnaires would be issued. ID replied that this year it was hoped to issue the questionnaires in March as this ties in with the school evaluation timetable. This could vary in future years. RJ felt that issuing the questionnaires as late as possible in the school year would be best as parents and pupils would have completed more of the school year. ID agreed that no earlier than February and no later than the end of March would be ideal to fit the school evaluation process. DW stated that it may be useful to get feedback from S1 early in the school year whilst their experience of transition would still be fresh in their minds; waiting until later in the year may elicit different responses.

RJ noted that the Parent Council had discussed the possibility of getting feedback from parents regarding the work of the Parent Council, however, this was not undertaken. RJ felt that the Parent Council does not always engage as fully as possible with parents and that inclusion of the Parent Council in the questionnaires may be useful. One possibility was to include the Parent Council in the questionnaire on Improvement Priority 4.

DW asked for clarification on how parents would receive the questionnaires. ID replied that a link to the questionnaires would be issued via email to parents and possibly also through Show My Homework (SMHW). The school has used Microsoft Forms successfully in the past.

JC noted that the questionnaire referred to all year groups rather than the targeted year group. ID agreed this was the case, however, this is for this session only as the questionnaires would be issued to all parents as a trial but would be tailored to specific year groups in future years.

RJ asked about the use of SMHW and whether statistics were available to evaluate the use of SMHW. GM commented that we have one of the highest levels of use by staff, pupils and parents across all those using SMHW. Currently almost all staff use SMHW, over 90% of pupils do so and over 70% of parents regularly access SMHW. This demonstrates how well it has been received. We continue to evaluate its use and consider other facilities within SMHW which we could utilise. Within our Homework Policy it clearly states that homework should be set on SMHW although pupils and parents are still able to use study planners / learning journals if they prefer. Within SMHW grades and comments can be added to homework. This was trialled during the first block of Supported Study with S5 pupils to keep parents more informed of the child's progress. Next week, the same will happen with S4 at the start of the second block of Supported Study. Many staff already use this feature regularly and it is hoped more will begin to do so. Good practice using SMHW is shared with staff at in-service day meetings. DW noted that all feedback he has received regarding SMHW has been very positive. MM commented that she finds it extremely useful not only for homework but also for extra-curricular activities, such as Duke of Edinburgh Award arrangements. GM noted that SMHW has further great potential which has still to be utilised.

ID asked members of the Parent Council to review the questionnaires and to send any further comments or suggested amendments to him by the end of February. JC asked if parents should discuss the questionnaire with their child. GM agreed that this should be done as it is a useful tool to start dialogue between parents and their children.

Results of the questionnaires will be shared with the Parent Council giving the opportunity to address issues and suggest solutions. DW asked if questionnaires are anonymous. ID replied that the email address of the recipient is recorded and this enables contact with parents to be utilised if required.

DW thanked ID for his input to the meeting.

4 HEAD TEACHER'S REPORT

Exam Preparation

GM stated that this is the most important time in the school session as we move towards SQA examinations and deadlines for assessments. There is a lot of pressure on staff and pupils. Prelim results have now been collated and analysed and discussions are underway with departments to identify pupils who require intervention and support. This year, SQA examinations begin earlier than before on Thursday 25th April 2019.

A new format S4 Parents Information Evening was held recently. This looked at ways in which parents can support their children in the run up to SQA examinations. The evening included three workshops covering study skills; health and wellbeing such as dealing with stress, sleep and time management and access to resources on the SQA website, SMHW, Glow and the school website. Feedback from parents was extremely positive.

S4 – S6 Supported Study begins on Monday 25th February 2019. This is a six week block and leads up to the SQA exams. Hopefully, it also emphasises the importance of the next six weeks to pupils. Pupils have also undertaken workshops with Live 'n' Learn and Tree of Knowledge. To consolidate the work undertaken in these workshops pupils have received further lessons in PSE classes to build on the knowledge gained. Subject specific workshops will also take place in all National 5 subjects next week to reinforce skills required in each subject.

Arrangements for Easter Revision are well underway. GM is very grateful to staff who give up part of their holidays to support our young people. There is a need to balance what is on offer each week which is a complex task to organise. Almost every subject at National 5 and Higher will be available. Easter Revision will run for four days, Monday to Thursday each week and there will be two slots per subject. A slot covers two three-hour morning or afternoon classes. Any pupil sitting seven National 5 subjects or five Higher subjects will be able to attend classes in all their subjects. GM hopes to have the timetable issued to parents by the end of the week. Once these are returned a lot of work is undertaken to allocate classes to pupils and 'tweaks' made to the timetable. GM is sure that this year's Easter Revision will be just as successful as in previous years.

This year the Easter weekend is very late (19th – 22nd April) and the SQA examinations begin earlier than in previous years. These start with Higher and Advanced Higher PE on Thursday 25th April and Music and Administration exams on Friday 26th April. These exams involve relatively small numbers of pupils. Therefore, it has been decided that Exam Leave will not begin until Monday 29th April. Pupils sitting PE exams will be able to take off Wednesday 24th for revision if they wish but should return to school on Friday 26th and pupils sitting Music or Administration exams can take off Thursday 25th if they wish. The farewell to S6 will take place on Friday 26th April and classes for S5 will continue until the end of the day on Friday 26th April. Unfortunately, a small number of S6 pupils will miss the farewell, however it is felt that the gain of additional time in school is more beneficial to pupils. Information regarding this will be issued to parents and pupils in the near future.

Option Choice Process

The option choice process is almost complete. There is now an extra 'layer' to this process as pupils drop two subjects at the end of S3. This adds to the challenges faced by Guidance staff and Iain Ross who compiles the timetable.

Stock Market Challenge

We are delighted to announce that a group of our S5 and S6 pupils won the prestigious Stock Market Challenge earlier this month. Pupils had competed at school before going through to the final against stiff opposition.

Staffing Update

GM will meet with East Dunbartonshire Council in the near future to discuss our staffing requirements for session 2019 – 2020.

Interviews took place today for a teacher of English. An NQT from Trinity High School, Renfrew and our own NQT English, Mr Glen Fraser were appointed.

A number of posts will be advertised in due course. The process for advertising for staff is getting earlier each year to attract the most suitable candidates.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

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There was no other business.

DW closed the meeting by thanking everyone for their attendance.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING – TUESDAY 23 APRIL 2019 AT 7.00 PM