

Queensferry Community High School
 Minutes of Parent Council Meeting - 8 December 2021
 7pm via MS Teams



Minutes

Present :

Parents/Carers : Sarah Clarkson - Chair (SC), Alan Balanowski – Vice Chair (AB), Anne Marie Boyd (AMB), Steven Budge (SB), Katrina Closier (KC), Pamela Cranston (PC), Mark Elder (ME), Eileen Grant (EG), Tim Hall (TH), Jacky Knickelbein (JK), David Sansom (DS), Claire Whyte (CW), Louise Wilson (LW)

Teaching Staff/Other: Craig Downie (CD), Kevin Thomas (KT), David Flint (DF)

Minute Taker/Clerk: Sarah Bennett (SBe)

Apologies: Martin Bennett, Graeme McKinley

1.	Welcome	
	SC welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
2.	Apologies	
	Apologies were given and are noted above.	
3.	Minutes of last meeting	
	The minutes from 26 October 2021 were approved and will be shared on the QHS Website. SC noted that SBe made an excellent job of the minutes. DF requested that SC share minutes with Community Council. Action 1 – SC to action. There are no outstanding actions from the Minutes.	SC
4.	Chair's Update	
	<p>A small group of members from the Parent Council have been involved in discussions with CD regarding the proposed changes to the curriculum ahead of wider Parent Forum involvement. Those that have attended felt positive about the proposals.</p> <p>SC and AB have drafted a Parent Council Newsletter which will be shared on the QHS Website. This includes reminding parents/carers who have queries relating to specific pupils or teachers, to contact the school directly. The Newsletter will also include a prompt for parents to thank staff and give positive feedback to teachers. TH has trouble accessing the S5 Parent Council e-mail address. Action 2 – SC and SBe to investigate. It should be noted that there are also various Facebook Groups set up for different years which can be used as a method of communication.</p>	SC/SBe

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	<p>A couple of parent PC members have been in contact regarding how best to use Parent Council funds and the Parent Council welcome any further ideas. CD and KT have also been considering this. Action 3 – How best to use Parent Council funds is an item which should be added to a future Parent Council meeting.</p> <p>Parents have been invited to participate in a Covid Integrated Impact Assessment Group which will be run by the City of Edinburgh Council. The Group will look at the positive and negative impacts of the Pandemic and will look at possible solutions for particular groups or communities who have been negatively impacted. Action 4 - Parent Council members to contact SC for more information if they are interested in participating. Action 5 – Details of Group to be added to Newsletter to give every parent/carer the opportunity to participate.</p> <p>CW and ME volunteered to join a Group which will look at updating the Parent Council Constitution. Action 6 – AB to meet with CW and ME and come back with a proposed new version of the Constitution at the March Parent Council meeting.</p> <p>There is an issue with the increased volume of traffic on Station Road since the High Street has become a one-way system and AB has been in contact with the Community Council and local counsellors ensuring that the voice of parents is being heard. AB and PC will be attending the Steering Group, along with local residents, and will want reassurance on what traffic calming measures will be put in place and what they are going to do to protect young people. DF confirmed that a conversation has been going on for years regarding this issue and expressed his disappointment at the lack of action. The Community Council is also involved in discussions.</p>	<p>SC</p> <p>All SC/AB</p> <p>AB/CW/ME</p>
5.	Treasurer's Update	
	ME confirmed that the current balance in the Parent Council is £5531.18.	
6.	PC Reps Update	
	<p>Cluster Group – Nothing to report.</p> <p>PSA – CW has spoken with Liz Martin (LM). LM is keen to recruit new members to the PSA and CW suggested that it would be a good idea for LM to come up with wording and for Year Reps to get in contact with parents and carers in their year group.</p> <p>SC suggested that KT contact LM to discuss PSA messaging that could be pushed out to the wider Parent Forum via the School App. Action 7 - KT to contact LM to discuss comms opportunities.</p>	
7.	Community Council Update	



	<p>DF and GM attended a Community Alcohol Partnership Group with stakeholders and the Police with the aim of tackling underage drinking in South Queensferry. The Police are wishing to cooperate with the local schools and provide as much useful information and consultation as possible. They regularly visit licensed premises and make it clear that they will lose their licences if they are providing alcohol to underage drinkers.</p> <p>The Cluster Meeting had to be cancelled due to illness but DF reported that the Community Council was very impressed with the two senior pupils who were in attendance at the last meeting.</p>	
<p>8.</p>	<p>Head Teacher's Report</p>	
	<p><u>Staffing</u></p> <p>CD was delighted to report that KT has been successful in his application for Depute Head Teacher until the Summer of 2023 when Kenny Manson returns from his secondment to the local authority. KT has done an incredible job and the consistency is the absolute right thing for the young people and community. KT forms part of a very strong management team at the School.</p> <p>The School has been looking to recruit 2 full time posts in the Maths Department. An existing teacher in the Department has taken one of the roles and has gone from a 0.6 to full time contract. CD interviewed for the second post but did not believe that there was a candidate who was suitable for the role who would improve the quality of the experience for young people. Having had discussions with the Local Authority, on the 6 January 2022, the School will advertise for a Principal Teacher of Raising Attainment in Numeracy. This is a new position with no line management responsibility. At present, teachers within the Science Team are helping out with the junior maths classes and S4-6 are being prioritised.</p> <p>The 2 teachers in the Music Department are shortly due to start maternity leave. Laura Cameron will take on the role of Acting Curriculum Leader of the Expressive Arts. The School has advertised for a temporary teacher of music however has received no applications due to the lack of music teachers in the teaching population. This could affect the curriculum offering in 2021-22. The School will work with the Local Authority to secure probationers for the Music Department. Pupils in S4-6 will be prioritised.</p> <p>CD has advertised and will be interviewing for the backfill for KT for the role of Pupil Support Leader. CD will write to parents once an applicant has been selected.</p> <p>There are a number of additional roles to be filled – a full time Geography and Outdoor Learning teacher which is an additional staffing appointment to the</p>	



School, a full time permanent Modern Studies with History Teacher and a Transition Teacher who will help with Covid recovery and young people transitioning from P7 to S1

The Local Authority has approved funding for another Deputy Head Teacher for QHS and this post will be advertised after the Christmas Break.

Curriculum

Staff, Parental and Pupil Feedback Groups have been set up to discuss the proposed new curriculum. Staff have largely been supportive of the new curriculum proposals although some have expressed concern about losing 5 minutes of teaching time with the proposed introduction of new period times. Feedback from the Parental and Pupil Feedback Groups have been unanimously in support of the curriculum changes. A Survey has been sent out to all parents and carers to ensure that everyone has the chance to give feedback. CD and KT have been in discussions with the colleges regarding the school college partnership. CW will write to all parents and carers next week.

Local business owners and the Community Council are keen to link with the School to offer opportunities for young people to learn skills and experience in the local community. **Action 8** – KT to meet with SC and AB to discuss in more detail.

Positive Behaviour

The School is looking to launch the Positive Behaviour Strategy in January/February 2022. CD reported a significant change in the culture and ethos in the School and said that there has been a drop in the number of Duty Head Calls being made.

Empowered Learning

Teachers will receive their iPads in January 2022 with young people receiving theirs in August 2022. Staff will have the opportunity to receive training and upskill. CD received a query regarding insurance for the iPads and confirmed that young people will need to agree to a service agreement. Contingencies will be put in place to deal with any accidental damage to iPads. CD is keen to invest in covers for the iPads to add extra protection.

Assessment Windows

CD reiterated that he believes the 3 Window Assessment Window is the best way to support young people this year. As well as formal assessments, young people may be given end of unit tests to consolidate learning and as preparation for assessments. As S4 Rep, AB has received feedback from parents who have



concerns about the Assessment Windows including concern that some tests are being set out with the Window. CD confirmed that teachers should be communicating with young people and there should be consistent messaging given which should put minds to rest. Previously, messaging would have been given in the Assembly Hall however this is not possible at the moment due to Covid restrictions. AB advised that it would be helpful to provide a comms to parents explaining the position, i.e. that there can be a disconnect between when a subject unit ends and when testing windows occur. AB further advised that it would be helpful to add a brief rationale to each comms that notifies a test occurring outside of a testing window.

Action 9 – For impacted year groups, CD to ensure that where dates were changed for assessment, staff clearly communicated this to young people and that this would also be communicated home to parents via text/app. In addition, CD or the link DHTs will also speak with S4-S6 to discuss the pressures of exams and the supports available to them.

Covid-19 Mitigations

The Health and Safety Team has got rid of the one way system. The one way system was causing more contact points for pupils so it was deemed to be safer to scrap it.

At present, young people at QHS have the option of going out or staying in at breaks and lunch. In the majority of Edinburgh schools, pupils can eat in the school restaurant but are required to spend the rest of their time outside. CD is looking for feedback from the Parent Council as to whether young people at QHS, when the weather is appropriate and warmer, and when not eating in the canteen, should be required to stay outdoors during break and lunch. CD believes that it is good practice to encourage young people to get fresh air but understands that a contingency needs to be in place when it is wet and cold. **Action 10** – Parent Council members to consider and item to be included on Agenda at a future meeting.

Uniform

A common approach is being applied to school uniform. It has been acknowledged that 3 classrooms at the School are particularly cold and a common approach stance is being taken to jackets and the need for school uniform being visible.

Communication

The School App has now been launched and has been downloaded 735 times. Updates are currently being sent both by text and on the App. All communication



	<p>should also be on the School Website. CD acknowledged that the School is having IT issues with the Website which are currently being worked on.</p> <p><u>Reporting</u></p> <p>KT is reviewing the reports and is looking to gather feedback from the PC, specifically in relation to the Senior Phase reporting. Action 11 – SC to send KT the contact email addresses for the S4, S5 and S6 PC Reps.</p> <p><u>Parents Evenings</u></p> <p>SC asked whether CD had a gauge on the attendance levels for virtual as opposed to physical appointments. CD confirmed that the uptake had been excellent and around 70% of parents had taken part which is comparable with a physical parents evening. A few participants spoke about how they would have preferred longer than the allotted 5 minutes to speak with teachers. CD confirmed that he was happy to listen to parent feedback and make changes where appropriate and possible.</p> <p><u>Investments</u></p> <p>CD is looking to invest in some wall art/graphics to enhance the learning environment at the School.</p> <p><u>Additional Support for Learning Review</u></p> <p>CD advised that additional support learning processes had been reviewed at the School and that positive feedback had been received from the external partners who take part in the process.</p> <p><u>Rounding Up</u></p> <p>CD spoke about the importance of feedback groups. The Equality Group is writing a strategy for the School. The School is keen to receive parental feedback on the Positive Behaviour Strategy Group. Addition 12 – SC to ask parent members if they would like to be involved in supporting The Equality Group and the Positive Behaviour Strategy Group.</p>	
9.	School Strategic Items	
	Covered in HT's Report.	
10.	AOCB (Any other competent business)	

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	SC closed the meeting and wished everyone a merry Christmas. She asked for members to contact her with any items for forthcoming meetings.	
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ACTION LIST

1.	SC	SC to share Parent Council minutes with the Community Council.
2.	SC/SBe	SC and SBe to investigate issues with S5 Parent Council email address.
3.	SC	Add item relating to the use of Parent Council funds to future Agenda.
4.	All	Parent Council members to contact SC if they are interested in participating in the Covid Integrated Impact Assessment Group.
5.	SC/AB	Add details of Covid Group to Parent Council newsletter.
6.	AB/CW/ME	AB to meet with CW and ME and come back with a proposed new version of the Constitution at the March Parent Council meeting.
7.	KT	Contact LM regarding Comms opportunities for the PSA
8.	SC/AB/KT	SC, AB and KT to meet to discuss opportunities for young people with employers in the local community.
9.	CD	Assessment Window changes communicated to young people and parents. Meeting with S4-S6 re assessment pressures
10.	All	Parent Council members to consider pupils being required to stay outside during break and lunch. Item to be included on Agenda at a future meeting.
11.	SC	Send email details to KT for Senior Phase PC Reps
12.	SC	Gather names interested in Equality Strategy Group and Positive Behaviour Strategy Group