

# Parent Council

## TUESDAY 14/06/2022

### Forrester High School

**Present;** Lorraine Kneebone (Chair), Jackie Barn (Deputy Chair), Stephen Rafferty, Emma Spence (Treasurer), Sandra Donaldson (Secretary), Sann Hamilton, Letitia Wilson, Hilary Brown, Julie Scott, Kate MacPhie, Susan Stevens, James Hardacre, Kate Givan, Sarah Segovia, Francisca Akujobi, Mark Peart (virtually), April Forsyth (virtually)

**1. Welcome** Meeting commenced at 7pm. Welcome to new attendees, brief rundown of what years the children of PC members are in.

**2. Apologies/ action points.** Angela Watson, Gillian Murray, Donna Dennis, Marianne Sandison, Gillian Napier, Sharon Robertson, Sarah Montgomery,

- JB, LK and KMacP to discuss coffee meeting for parents – in the process of being organised
- JB and AW to look at PC page on new website – still to be one
- Letter to be sent to Cllr Brown, thanking for attendance - sent
- LK/JB to contact Cllr Euan Davidson – LK has contacted
- LK/JB/SD to discuss how to get hybrid meeting for AGM – organised and link sent to those who wanted to join virtually

### 3. Chairpersons report

See embedded document

For context –

- JB has therapy dog Archie, working with 5-6 children in Enhanced Support Base, positive feedback
- JS co-ordinating with John MacPhie regarding interview skills. Son had interview and not what expected, interview wasn't adapted for school leavers. Would be good to prepare students for different types of interview, panels, Zoom, digital. Possibly organise some sort of buddy session before interviews.
- PC page on website, 2-way comms
- Coffee session – S2 and S3 parents didn't have the same opportunity to come into the school – possibly organise something for September 2022
- Thinking about running sessions in the wider community – dance club, football etc, reaching out to the wider community, not just those in school. Might be

useful for getting information to children or invites to parents, engaging with the wider community rather than just parents forum.

- Thanks to Stephen, Kate and Irene. Special thanks to Irene who will be sorely missed by PC, flowers delivered to Kaimes school.
- Thanks to Kate, Leadership Team and staff

#### Election

Chair – Lorraine Kneebone, nominated by JB, seconded JS

Deputy chair – Jackie Barn, nominated JS, seconded ES

Treasurer – Emma Spence, JS nominated, seconded SD

Secretary – Sandra Donaldson, JS nominated, seconded SH

Confirmed existing members still want to be part of PC, along with new members (see attendance)

#### **4. Head Teacher Update**

Document provided by SR covering current staffing, new timetable, P7-S1 transition, improvement planning and curriculum review (see attached)

Staffing has been challenging this year – hardest term in recent years, particularly January to April. There were staff absences due to covid and considered school closure, fortunately didn't need to. There has been an increase to staffing compliment due to increase in pupil numbers – was 620 and has gone up to 850. This is going up rapidly and looking at long-term implications.

Shortage of teachers in Maths, CDT, Computing and Business Studies (can't get cover teachers). This is National, due to there not being enough new teachers (Brexit/Overseas teachers has had an impact) and not enough teachers being trained. Still about 5 spaces to fill.

2 new bases this year, Enhanced Support Base and Wellbeing Hub. Julie Sutherland (Librarian) has received a Professional Learning Award. Worth having a look at the school website about the library and extra-curricular activities.

Early/remote learning – Ipads to everyone first week back after Christmas, rolled out by martin Ennis. The school is in a good place digitally, but don't have ultimate control – pushing Council for other Apps.

SQA exams – 2 years of disruption but are really proud of students and staff. Had to plan for 2 scenarios – one with exam and one without exam (demonstrated attainment). Some students may not benefit from exams. Many students were well prepared – flash cards/mind maps. S6 were outstanding – both those who left and those moving up. Emails about precautions for leavers – no precautions at Forrester

– had coffee, shared stories, had a sing-song and outside for photos. The prom was on the Friday night and they were all very well behaved.

Have re-started trips and excursions, Duke of Edinburgh. S3 had a trip to Heriot-Watt. There was also the BBC authors workshop which was one of the first excursions, went very well (vide played at last PC meeting). Felt good to be out and about again. S6 Class Act group and theatre workshops – best group engagement – manners and conduct were exemplary. S2 football got to final league cup match and were pipped at the post by George Watsons. Good bunch of boys. Used to have several football teams, trying to get back to that – they are great ambassadors.

Other things going on – basketball, table tennis, swimming, judo and fitness for girls. The awards ceremony was in school, taken by Lisa Coffey and S2 pupils were the audience. Good to see achievements being recognised in the school.

Youth Philanthropy Initiative (YPI) – this was one of the best years, good engagement with local charities and slick presentations. This is good for the S3 curriculum, developing skills, leadership, analysis and transitional skills to S4. Good initiative as it supports them with things that matter to them, and provides £3,000 for the charity winner. Good link with the PC and it was done in the middle of a tough term, so the student did amazing – can sometimes underestimate what they are capable of.

P7 transition is happening right now – 3 day visit in person and the last time this happened was in 2019. This is a big programme, trying new things. Promoting positive transition for those who are more apprehensive. Individual classes from Primary School, Maths attainment session. S6 are helping with transition visits, and continuing to support S1s, being buddies.

There are around 159 new S1s, to be capped at 180, but there is a smaller cohort this year. No appeals and a small number of spaces left. Timetable has been written for 160, and will need to be re-written if taking in more.

RaisingTeens with Confidence – Gillian has done a fantastic job pushing for face to face sessions – 12 parents signed up. Kate and Lisa Coffee are now trained to deliver the sessions. Helps understand how teenage brains are developing. There are a further 12-14 people visiting the school to do the training. Visitors say how calm the school is and very complimentary during inspections. There has not been an inspection for a long time, but one is due this year. Still behind where the school wants to be, but plans in place for recovery.

The school is grateful to the pC – appreciates feedback and they have done more than they realise during lockdown. Teachers appreciate the feedback, it's a good partnership.

boys from another school got access to the PE department and backup was called for, resulting in many police attending. Seemed bigger event than it actually was, and email was sent to parents to

## **5. Equality and Enhanced Support Base update**

### **Equality**

#### **ESB**

#### **5. PC workstream:**

- Website – not much progress, still waiting on a couple of curriculum pages. The company building the website changed hands. JB and AW to look at PC page, but access is required. No go-live date yet and has been difficult maintaining current website while trying to build a new one. Now needs a sprint to get the new one up and running.
- Raising Teens with Confidence – uptake of 10, 4 spaces left, possibly PC member attendance? Runs for 6 weeks on Thursdays.
- Corstorphine Fair – several emails sent re stall but no reply

## **6. Accounts/Financial**

Started the year with £960, received £910 in funding November (up £70 on last year), spent £437 in April for the Easter study snacks and closing balance is £1,433. Decided not to do photo both for S6 leavers. Possibly put some ideas forward for YPI funding. KMacP to send email to PC

## **7. Teacher Recognition**

Nominations made, however agreed all staff should be thanked for everything they do on top of their normal jobs, study groups, emotional support etc.

## **8. Any Other Business**

Classroom temperature – some classes particularly cold. Teacher discretion whether to allow students to keep jackets on, but some being told to remove jackets and really cold in classrooms. SD to confirm which classroom it was. There should be thermometers in classrooms.

Toilet breaks – discussion around whether students requests are genuine, or whether trying to get out of class. Again, down to teacher discretion. Trying to stop students meeting in the toilets during class times. Possibly need to issue refresh on guidance to students.

Water fountains sometimes out of action – not always the same one. This is not something the school can control – building maintenance. Also issue with hygiene in some toilets and PE department. There is one day shift cleaner and Mitie on site, will not go into changing rooms while classes on. PE teachers to monitor.

School Uniform – on school website under dress code, encouraging parents to support the dress code. Lisa Coffey explained the school uniform really well to S1 parents. Trying to target S1 moving forward to stop bad habits forming. Old uniforms can be donated via Sarah Ross.

Another volunteer for PC as Irene McGuinness has left – will canvass staff.

Rumours that S6 Prom is being done away with. The last one wasn't well attended and don't know what the future of it will be. The school picks up some of the tab but not everyone goes. May need to be done differently in the future. Something less expensive and with more engagement. The prom can also be expensive for staff to attend. Maybe have an event in the school such as a Ceilidh. May have a prom committee – skills development. Some schools are doing this already. Those which are still having proms, some are organised by parents and can be seen as elitist. Also fears such as social media, differences in school policies etc. LK to take to NW Locality meeting

#### **Action points**

- JB and AW to look at PC page on new website
- KMacP to send email to PC for funding
- SD to email SR re classroom temperature
- SR to arrange for refresh on toilet break guidance to pupils
- SR to canvass interest for replacement for IMacG
- PE teachers to monitor cleanliness of changing rooms
- LK to take prom issues to NW Locality meeting

#### **Proposed dates of PC meetings:**

**6 September 2022**

**8 November 2022**

**10 January 2023**

**7 March 2023**

**25 April 2023**

**13 June 2023 (AGM)**