

Parent Council

ZOOM PANDEMIC MEETING

TUESDAY 2 March 2021

Forrester High School

Present; Lorraine Kneebone (Chair), Stephen Rafferty, Carol Swan, Jackie Barn, Irene McGinnis, Amanda Walter, Emma Spence, Sandra Donaldson (Secretary), Gillian Murray, Julie Scott, Mark Peart, Marianne Sandison, Cllr Mark Brown, , Hilary Brown, Gillian Napier, Douglas Tully, Donna Dennis, Samm Hamilton

1. Welcome/Apologies. Meeting commenced at 7pm. Lorraine welcomed everyone. Apologies – Kate MacPhie, Angela Watson

2. Action points from last meeting:

- ES to send LK forms for changing bank account signatories from CS to LK - outstanding
- ES to send cheque for school bids for funds - outstanding
- All other actions completed as per agenda

3. Head Teachers Update

SR said he had cautious optimism. The school was quiet with just the Seniors and it will take a while to get back with only 5-8% of school population attending. They are delighted with the number of flow kits picked up. There are difficulties due to the number of students, and how to manage this.

P.E students have not been in as there are still restrictions on activities. Home Economics can only have 6 at a time and will be harder as numbers increase.

The First Minister has set expectations and rules to get as many children back in school and no percentage given, but this needs to be done safely. No plans for S1-S3 years – they are due to be back part-time from 15 March and full time after Easter. Low rates at the moment and 2M distance not required. All children will need to wear face masks throughout the day although the First Minister's speech was ambiguous, and some took it only Senior phase would need to wear them.

There will need to be a change to the school day as the 2-week rotation won't work. Senior phase needs to be prioritised for face to face teaching. There are already Seniors in for practical lessons. There is a further meeting this evening. It's looking like a 1/3 model for 2m distancing and still need to maintain online learning offer. This divides the workforce and classes. Can't bring in whole classes. Trying to ensure no-one is disadvantaged and that this has minimum impact on students.

Testing is being done for staff and Seniors only – different people interpreting the announcement, and some took it that there would be testing for all. SR said it would be easier if the students were back full time as they need to put mitigations in place because of the slight increase. It's this that is causing problems. Spoke to curriculum leaders 2 weeks ago and the phased approach is more difficult.

There is also the requirement to provide spaces for key workers' children who are not back in school full time. Teachers currently working from home will need to go into school as more provision is required.

For S6, there is only 3 weeks before Easter and around 6 weeks after Easter and there is a meeting tomorrow with curriculum leads. The final submission date is 25 June and the final assessment date will be around 7 June as the work still needs marked. There will be an extra 2 in-service days to allow for marking.

The SQA will mark June-July. Staff are only being given 2 days to mark. The normal leaving date would be 31 May. If the 2 in-service days are before 7 June it will be more difficult.

S6s have provisionally booked a Prom – Covid insurance would be a good idea. Anticipate gatherings limited to 50 until Christmas unless numbers come down further. It has been challenging times for them as they have been working hard over the years in the school and all S4, S5 and S6 having assessments. Don't know how S1-S3 will work – if whole class in would need to be split across 3 classrooms for example.

From 15 March:

- All will be back to school in some format
- Priority will be given to S4-S6 for face to face learning
- 2 metre distancing will apply
- All will wear face coverings at all time
- Classes will be well ventilated
- S4-S6 will be tested twice per week

Meetings from other school agree that the partial return is more difficult for head teachers to plan.

There has been good feedback from the survey. Teachers trying to keep things going and have focus groups. There has been evidence of teachers providing support for senior phase such as emailing at weekend.

S4-S6 reports will be sent out this week with a covering letter. The school has been working with the IT company re the technology to make it work. The results will be

more tentative as teachers cannot predict grades at this point, however they will summarise strengths and what areas need more work moving forward.

Staffing:

- Probationer for Maths being retained
- Probationer for Home Economics being retained
- Newly qualified teacher for English starting in August.

5. PC workstream

Connect – Social Media session.

The session was centred around effective 2-way communications with the parent community – listening to other parents and ensuring the parent councils are supporting the school and the community. Approx 50 schools attended and methods discussed were:

- Facebook
- WhatsApp groups
- School Apps
- Emails
- Surveys and focus groups on Survey Monkey

Discussed what is the purpose of the Parent Council, what do you want to get out of it/back from it. Do all parents know about the Parent Council – this information is already on the school website. Slides to be emailed out to Parent Council.

Regular communications should be sent out and almost everyone has Facebook and Twitter. We need to make it easy for parents to communicate with us. Some schools send a recorded message from the Parent Council welcoming new parents. We will soon hopefully have the new web page. We sometime underestimate how active we are.

Powerpoint on new website. Have identified companies and have 3 separate quotes. The existing website is outdated and hard to update. It's not as responsive as it used to be. An example of what we might want website to look like is Hutchison Grammar.

- March – Audit and agree structure
- April Company builds site
- May – evaluate and train
- June – launch

There will be a parent zone with family learning and the Parent Council will sit within this zone. The new website will be compliant with accessibility requirements and will

be audited to make sure it is up to par. Not many parents approach the Parent Council and may be unsure what we do or how to contact us.

All agreed that the parents don't feel the need to contact us because the school is open and approachable, and many issues are dealt with by the Guidance teachers. As family learning increases there may be more interest in face to face sessions. Will concentrate on website for now.

Course choices have been harder this year as it is more difficult with students not being in class and having the face to face contact with teachers. More dilemmas and confusion with being at home and uncertainty about grades for picking next year's courses. These could have waited until after Easter if there was a clear path about when the students would be going back to school, however did not want to leave doing this because of the uncertainty. Needed to work back from timetable and couldn't leave it too late. Course choices are being looked at now.

Question asked about changing course choices following receipt of grades etc and Sr confirmed that students can change courses up to September, depending on grades, re-sits and how they are performing.

S4-S6 core subjects will be coming in with belt & braces approach – website, emails, texts.

Query about Astro – access for school however activities are restricted. If we move to level 3 the restrictions will be more relaxed and will be able to do more activities. Concern raised about private use – pictures on Twitter confirming this. SR to take up with janitor.

Raising Teens with confidence workshop -

A few people have signed up from the school. The organisers acknowledged that the daytime commitment was not suitable for everyone and that they would be looking at evening courses after the pilot/ LK/GM to see if a copy of the slides would be allowed to be put on the school website.

5. Accounts/Financial

Emma reported that the balance of the account was still £2,986.49. Cheque still to be sent to the school for the 2 agreed funding applications:

- Breakfasts – request for £1500 + VAT – discussed and agreed funding but not a long-term solution. Carol thinks there may be grounds to apply for additional funding. Poverty is a big underlying cause
- Badge maker £225.76 for equalities group – approved

Forms still to be completed to transfer signatories.

6. Any Other Business

LK said National parent forum is tomorrow for chairs of Parent Council and will try to attend.

Mark Brown asked about the school's active travel policy. SR confirmed most students walk or cycle and there is provision for 30-40 bike spaces on site, mostly used by S1 and S2. Have also promoted active travel by providing cycling lessons. MB explained there is an opportunity to apply for a grant to buy bikes for people to borrow them. SR explained the school roll was 800 in August and could be 900 next year. Mitie own the school and unsure whether they would be prepared to increase the provision of bike sheds etc. MB in discussions with Sustrans.

No other business and meeting closed early at 20:45.

Action points

- LK to email slides from Connect Social Media session
- ES to send LK forms for changing bank account signatories from CS to LK
- ES to send cheque to school for previous bids
- SR to discuss private use of Astro with janitor
- LK/GM to see if Raising Teens With Confidence slides could be put on school website

Dates of PC meetings:

8 September 2020

27 October 2020

1 December 2020

19 January 2021

2 March 2021

27 April 2021

15 June 2021 (AGM)