

Parent Council

TUESDAY 01/03/2022

Forrester High School

Present; Lorraine Kneebone (Chair), Stephen Rafferty, Jackie Barn, Sandra Donaldson (Secretary), Gillian Murray, Samm Hamilton, Letitia Wilson, Emma Spence (Treasurer), Amanda Walter, Hilary Brown, Cllr Mark Brown

1. Welcome Meeting commenced at 7pm. Lorraine welcomed everyone back into the school for the first face to face meeting in 2 years. General consensus that it was good to be back in person, but we will need to decide what future meetings will look like – in person/hybrid?

2. Apologies/ action points. Mark Peart, Irene McGinnis, Gillian Napier, Marianne Sandison, Cllr Claire Bridgman, Angela Watson, Sarah Montgomery, Sharon Robertson, Donna Dennis, Julie Scott, Kate MacPhie

3. Head Teachers Update

Workshop/visit to BBC originally postponed from September went ahead. S1 pupils were to predict what would happen in the world by 2048. Watched the video of this. The school has been filled with optimism – masks off in classrooms. Have had assemblies which have been calm and purposeful and it's a shame that the pupils are missing out on rewards such as activities week.

The school had a 96 page document to review which caused a significant amount of work. Email was sent about masks in classrooms. Still grey areas and contradictions in guidance. If a 1m distance can be adhered to masks can be removed. For corridors/social areas, masks should be worn except for dining whilst sitting down but should be worn before/after. Still encouraged to go outside.

Rolling out a new relationship/behaviour framework/guidance. There are posters in classrooms:

- Ready
- Respectful
- Responsible

Some are out of training – 2 years disruption. S1s are struggling with social skills and getting into a new routine. Took them out of lessons with least disruption. LGBT+ month – temperature check showed more homophobic language than in the past. Lack of empathy, not being able to read peoples faces etc. 120 pupils completed survey. Unsure whether more prevalent in a particular class. Pointed out that there is

a lot of discussion about this, however there didn't seem to be anything for Poppy day, BLM etc.

This can be tricky – divisive politics covering big, difficult topics. BLM month had more done on it last year. Putting out parental involvement census again.

Staffing:

- Social Subjects – Alice Crawford from Galashiels. Working on changes for improving attainment and will be speaking to curriculum leads on Friday
- Transition teacher – Molly Fray started with Broomhouse in this new role. There are logistical considerations, has visited most schools. Shadowing this week – 1 day per week with cluster schools and a Friday at Forrester.

Forrester are one of the first schools to have a transition teacher in place. Pooling resources – PEF money etc. Checking numeracy and experience over the last 2 years to see where students are at. New Home Economics teacher and permanent wellbeing hub. PSO and PSA not appointed yet. There is a vacancy in Biology. Can take up to 4 weeks due to various delays. Could there be a pool of teachers to draw from? New teachers in Edinburgh used to be from June but now January. Also a vacancy in Art. PSA vacancy for Enhanced Support Base (ESB), and ones for school clerical support and school support assistant both in the school office.

Not everyone will be getting study leave, Martin is sending out a letter. Discussed in assembly. All years to return after the Easter holidays but if there is an exam that week the pupil can take the day off before it for study leave. Exam leave officially starts 29 April. All S5 and S6 are in the default position for study leave. S4 – 3 or more National exams, can get exam leave, otherwise 1 or 2 days off before the exam. Some with Nat4 or Nat5 without exams will get no study leave, 2 tier system.

Significant numbers of students will need to come into the school for additional units to get credits. Clarification being discussed with teachers for Nat4/Nat5 around benefits of in-year assessment and can go onto Nat5 later. The school is trying to offer more to get the students to stay on. For disruptive students, the teachers are trying to find out what their interests are. National Progression awards – practical skills have real value but only go to level 5. Need to go to college to get level 6.

Attitudes change in S5 and S6 – maturity and attainment improves. Employers are not necessarily looking for academic skills. The school teaches life skills as well as academic skills and give hope that people still care about them, helping them find their niche.

Discussion around whether assessments are better than final exams which can cause stress. There was an attainment meeting last Wednesday, data is gathered differently and could do with a system that gathers data better. Need to improve attainment, one way is to shorten exam leave. Small groups back 23 May instead of 3 June, which is an extra 1.5 weeks in which a lot of work can be done. This will help with recovery. Some will still have a day off before the exam.

College doesn't start until August/September so pupils can sign out and study at home. Looking to put a programme in place, John McP looking at what can be put on. Have to start the timetable on a Monday and bank holidays are no good. Assessment blocks probably would have moved to May. If there are no exams, keeping the time as a chance to catch up and gather additional evidence.

YPI postponed to 7 April 1pm-3.30pm. Previously online but will be back in school -need volunteers to judge (LW volunteered).

Curriculum review back underway. Meetings held in January and last night. Primary teachers involved:

- Curriculum rationale
- Curriculum content

Discussions around shifting choices earlier – 9 subjects in S3, 6 in S4. Would need to change the school day to accommodate 7 subjects. Open transition tours the next 2 Fridays, safely in line with rules. Positive start, extra support for more anxious students – 3 day visit going ahead. Wellbeing Hub is providing extra support for those who are struggling with their emotions. For pupils that don't fit in with wellbeing Hub, the school will find other ways to support them. Julia won't have a room before summer before moving to Enhanced Learning Provision (ELP).

There is a board in the social area about what's going on in Ukraine. They are being bombarded with information from lots of different sources and it will hopefully give them a different perspective. PC to have a look on the way out. The wellbeing Hub won't support general wellbeing – the guidance teachers will provide support for general wellbeing.

Missing some reactive stuff, limited time to deal with "Raising Teens with Confidence". No capacity to run within the school – online only. Jen can put 2 facilitators into the school – GM to go back about this.

Health and wellbeing census – put some resource where it's needed. Some controversial questions. School can say questions but can't put on website.

Badge machine has started being used, thank you to PC for this.

4. Enhanced Support Base/Equality update

Apologies from MacP and IMcG

5. PC workstream:

- Website – Will be starting to look for input for PC page. Demo given on screen. A photographer has been in the school. Visuals have been put on and it has a different look, and will also re-scale for the device you are using. Can link up with the Twitter feed, and has a hamburger menu. Thoughts about the parent

zone:

- Support
- Transition
- Parent Council

Two-way comms, switch on replies to posts? Can make announcements, set out Aims and objectives and will include agendas and minutes. Could it have a link to FHS Facebook page?

The main website will have information on subjects, careers and faculties. SR has limited access – the company want to do a launch on “ready to go”. Perhaps after Easter. Once launched, will have full access. News feed in App from website, other things not as good in App, translation on group call – issues with some languages.

Corstorphine Fair – going ahead on 4 June – Samm happy to take the lead on this with help from others. Suggestions – badge making, tombola, beat the goalie. LK to send email for volunteers

6. Accounts/Financial

Same balance £1,870.73. Looking for ideas on what to spend this on. Possibly a contribution to the S6 leavers do. Smaller number this year (43 or 48, nearer 60 including staff). Alternatively, could hire a photo booth. Also suggested breakfast for S6 before Easter holidays.

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

LK & GM – quality improvement teams, attended and didn’t realise it builds on 3 sessions. Not well communicated what are positives, what to keep/build on. What are negatives – solutions. LK will send document out. Looking at steering committee – further focus groups in the future. Feedback to LK once received.

Nat5 PE – teacher has left the school and portfolios being reviewed. Far off the mark from where they should be, need to start again. Don’t want them prevented from taking Higher PE because the portfolio isn’t good enough. SR will look into. Advanced Higher Business not being offered, not sure what is on offer in other

schools. Offering advanced Higher chemistry/biology and should be on the course choice sheet.

Action points

- GM to get in touch with Jen about in-school “Raising Teens with Confidence”
- LK to send note about Corstorphine Fair volunteers
- LK to send Quality Improvement document out
- SR to look into issues with PE portfolios

Proposed dates of PC meetings:

7 September 2021

26 October 2021

7 December 2021

18 January 2022

1 March 2022

~~26 April 2022~~ 10 May 2022

14 June 2022 (AGM)