



Bathgate Academy Parent Council

Minutes of Online Meeting

Thursday 21st May 2020

Attendees:

Grant Abbot (HT), Grace Burns (DHT), Sarah Moffatt (DHT), Derek Cornwall (Chair), Richmond Davies, Susan Griffin, Delyth MacDonald, Helen Neary, Hazel Young

Topics

1. Apologies

Received from Tracey Ironside, Morag Dickie

2. Minutes & Matters arising

No matters arising and minutes were approved.

3. Chair's Feedback

Derek stated that our Parent Council had replied to the consultation paper about proposed school holidays for the school year 2021/22. Whilst the majority of members were in favour of the proposal our submission sought evidence from West Lothian Council that the reason for not having a week in February was that it had an impact on pupil attainment. Whilst this is a valid reason in itself, there appears to be no consistency across Scottish Councils as Edinburgh and Mid Lothian Councils continue to have a week in February which rather dilutes the response provided by West Lothian Council.

Derek explained that the West Lothian Parent Forum meeting at Linlithgow Academy on 19th March 2020 was postponed due to government guidance on the coronavirus pandemic. As a result, the presentations by Donna Brunton from Fast Forward on Gambling and Young People Advice and Derek's presentation on the 2020 Backup Campaign have both been rescheduled for a future meeting.

Derek also advised that in early February our 2020 Backup Campaign poster had been circulated by West Lothian Council to all schools in West Lothian for use by other parent councils. In addition the National Parent Forum of Scotland had circulated our poster on their Twitter and Facebook accounts. A letter had also been received from John Swinney MSP, the Deputy First Minister and Education & Skills Secretary recognising the work and best practise being adopted by Bathgate Academy Parent Council.

A few other parent councils had also been in touch with Derek requesting further information on the campaign poster.

Derek also advised that some changes had been made to the School's Parent Council web pages in line with comments received from last parent council meeting and that Derek now has access to make changes specific to Parent Council web content.

4. House Captains Update

This agenda item was deferred.

5. Head Teacher update

- (a) **DHT update** – Grant advised that Sarah Moffatt has agreed to continue as interim deputy head teacher until the interview process can be concluded after the summer recess.
- (b) **VSE update** – Grant stated that the validated self assessment (VSE) had been completed over 19/20 February 2020 with a focus on Learning and Teaching. The outcome of which has enabled the category to be moved to “good” and the report was due to go to the Education Executive in April 2020 but this has been postponed due to coronavirus restrictions being implemented.
- (c) **Course Choice update** – Grant explained that the period by period timetable had reflected the online transition of teaching and the planning of three double periods per day were better suited for pupils to learn a new knowledge and content. The feedback received on the timetable structure was liked and allowed pupils to build up confidence and maintained a learning and teaching approach and wellbeing focus.
- (d) **Study Support update** – This agenda item was deferred

6. Discussion Topics

- (a) **Coronavirus Support Measures** - Grace highlighted that bespoke support had been put in place around each house and Vulnerable pupils. All pupils were self reporting on a regular basis over four of the wellbeing indicators on a two week basis via PSE lessons. Returns were checked by house leaders and any follow up action required undertaken and has included the use of external support teams. Exchange counselling to broaden horizons was also used and staff wellbeing activities were also being carried out, which Hazel further commented upon. Weekly returns were also being provided to the Scottish Government.
- (b) **Coronavirus School, Teacher and Parent concerns** – Sarah gave an update on the Learning and Teaching aspects within the school and explained that digital teaching was taking place over seven periods per day. Teachers were coping with the transition of talking on Teams rather than teaching on Teams. The school has now issued over 160 notebooks to pupils to allow digital learning. There was a focus to replicate what is done in the classroom and apply to a digital environment. Pupil's work is being posted online to Teams notebook.

Teachers were also learning from each other as online learning was being rolled out and pupil's course progression was still being monitored via the traffic light system of red, amber and green. Currently S4 and S2 pupils are being monitored with 82% of S4's and 75% of S2's submitting work or being online. Follow up action is being taken by the

school in phoning home where pupils are not engaging and **parents can assist** also by simply asking their child to show you their team's notebook submissions. Other year group tracking continues and will go through the same process in the weeks ahead. More information on accessing Microsoft Teams can be viewed in the link below: <http://www.bathgateacademy.westlothian.org.uk/article/51172/Accessing-Glow-and-Microsoft-Teams>

Derek stated that he had received some concerns from parents about the impact of digital learning and digital timetables upon pupils. In addition, parents were anxious about what recovery plans were in place for children to return to school. Grant made comment that guidance issued was based upon four criteria of Safe, Fair, Ethical and Realistic and it was too soon to provide any school developments given the return framework document from the Scottish Government was only released today. The local authority would also need to provide additional local guidance to schools so that they could develop and implement any recovery plan. Derek stated that he had received a number of measures from parents that could be considered by the local authority and would provide an appendix to the minutes for consideration in recovery plans and that going forward; both Grant and Derek would be meeting regularly about any school developments.

7. AOCB

- (a) A question was asked if Course Choice travel arrangements would still be in place when pupils returned. Grant could not answer at this time due the blended approach being adopted for when pupils do return to school.
- (b) Parent Council members thanked the school staff for all their efforts thus far in providing digital learning during these unprecedented times.
- (c) A question was asked about how school staff marked coursework in light of SQA requirements. Grant explained that staff provide evidence using SQA mark rationale and use professional dialogue in information gathering. All of which is subject to quality assurance and takes account of any specific pupil event. These are to be downloaded to the SQA connect system by 29th May 2020. There is no change to the exam results issue date of 4th August 2020.
- (d) Clarification was sought around the first minister's announcement that schools would reopen on 11th August, given West Lothian Council schools do not return till 18th August. Grant could not confirm this date and awaits notification from West Lothian Council to see if they intend to change the WL school return date of 18th August 2020.
- (e) Derek stated that two long standing Parent Council members have now left due to their children leaving the school. Derek thanked Jacqueline Harkins and Michelle Primrose in their absence for their parent council commitment and contributions over the years and wished both Jane and Rebecca all the best in their future chosen careers.
- (f) Derek thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

8. Date of Next Meeting – To be advised.

Appendix One

Listing of return to school items for consideration in recovery plans
under the SAFE, FAIR, ETHICAL & REALISTIC criteria's:

- Limiting Class sizes
- Split Groups
- Redesigned Classrooms
- Rotational group basis
- Staggered Breaks
- Double periods reducing school traffic
- Deep Clean between sets groups
- Phased return
- Staggered Teaching Hours
- 7 day week Teaching window
- Use different venues
- Resume earlier in August
- Exam process for 2021 clarification
- Impact on digital learning and timetables considerations
- Summer school during school recess
- Washing facilities
- Staggered school meals
- Communication to Parents on recovery plans