



Bathgate Academy Parent Council

Minutes of Online Meeting

Wed 16th September 2020

Attendees:

Grant Abbot (HT), Derek Cornwall (Chair), Alison Currie, Richmond Davies, Clare Dignail, Susan Griffin, Margaret Hendry, Tracey Ironside, Delyth MacDonald, Leigh Maybury, Alison McDermott, Carol McNicol, Patricia Ure, Colin Ure, Noel Pogson, Karen Smillie, Hazel Young

Topics

1. Apologies

Received from Helen Neary, Ronnie Morgan

2. Minutes & Matters arising

No matters arising and minutes were approved.

3. Chair's Update

Derek advised for noting that he had received this year's Parent Council Insurance and Public Liability documents from West Lothian Council's (WLC) 3-star membership of Connect.

Derek also informed all that he responded on behalf of the Parent Council to the proposed draft changes to the school term 2020/21 in light of school starting earlier this year which went to WLC Education Executive on 8th September 2020. In summary no parent council voted for the proposed changes of reducing the school year by a week at the end of June 2021, therefore the executive agreed the majority solution of spreading the 4 days over the October, Xmas and Feb mid-term breaks as shown below:

October break starts 9/10/20 and pupils resume 21/10/20

Xmas break starts 18/12/20 and pupils resume 6/1/21

February break starts 12/2/21 and pupils resume 18/2/21

The executive also approved the school session dates for year 2021/22 and were informed about this year's overall West Lothian S5 and S6 SCQF exam results. Derek will add Bathgate Academy's 2020 exam results to our next agenda item in November.

Derek advised that he had listened to the Live Q&A with John Swinney, MSP, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, run by the National Parent Forum of Scotland last Thursday and this was now available to view on the you tube link below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YZd4cFPYKOA&t=1s>

Mr Swinney stated that he was awaiting the independent review being carried out by Prof Mark Priestley which will look at events following the cancellation of the examination diet and the alternative certification model in place by SQA. In addition, the SQA have carried out a rapid consultation exercise on options for national qualifications in 2021. Both reports are due to be published in the next 2 to 4 weeks.

4. House Captain's Update

This agenda item was deferred.

5. Head Teacher update

- a. **Covis-19 update** – Grant gave a detailed account to parent council members of the current arrangements in place across the school and how pupils have adapted since returning in August. There are still some restrictions to indoor PE and practical cookery due to government guidance and these are being monitored on an ongoing basis. A question about ventilation within the school was asked with winter coming and Grant advised that whilst there was no air conditioning within the school, the heating was on but some windows and doors would have to remain open to comply with air circulation guidelines but also to balance this against the minimum statutory temperatures in classrooms.

A further question was asked about whether there would be any relent in pupils not being allowed out of school grounds and Grant stated that this restriction would remain in place predominantly due to track and protect measures whilst pupils were at school and also from a school's reputation perspective to keep our pupils safe to avoid complaints from the public, local residents and shop keepers whilst social distancing and trace measures remain in force.

- b. **DHT update** – Grant confirmed that following competitive interviews, that Sarah Moffat had been appointed permanently as DHT Learning and Teaching. Sarah was carrying out the role on an interim basis from last school session and welcomed her appointment. Derek also stated that he had sent an email on behalf of the Parent Council congratulating Sarah on her success and looked forward to working with Sarah in her new capacity.
- c. **Prelim dates review** – Grant explained the importance of Prelims as being invaluable and that Prelims this year have been brought forward to December 2020 in light of rising numbers of covid cases, possible future local lockdowns and help with providing evidence-based pupil attainment. Prelim questions can be commercially set or school set based upon previous mixed SQA exam question styles but are localised within each school to take account of curriculum taught from August to

November. There were a number of positives for bringing forward prelim dates such as improved wellbeing of the pupils as exam revision would not be over xmas break, more time for any remedial action required before the exam diet in May and allows pupils more information on their academic attainment progress. Grant also highlighted that prelim results is only part of the evidence required and others include pupil wellbeing, homework submissions, teams' submissions, classwork and are all taken into consideration should exams be cancelled in May.

- d. **S1 Sway Publication Welcome Evening** – Grant informed that as parents are currently not allowed within the school building, the parents welcome evening for S1's had to go out on a sway publication recently via the school app. The same will be done for the forthcoming P7 Open Evening in October.
- e. **Parent Online Evening** – Grant stated that he was looking at adapting the current Parent Evening booking system to accommodate a 5-minute digital meeting with teachers and parents going forward and that a couple of Parent Councils were piloting this concept within West Lothian. There are still a few IT issues to resolve and agreements reached with parties before this can be rolled out but hoped to have this in place for the up and coming planned parents' evening in November.

Grant also confirmed that the existing tracking reports for pupil attainment would still be issued to Parents as normal throughout the school session.

- f. **Study Support update** – Grant highlighted that traditional study support classes after school was complicated with track and record measures and requirement for pupils to stay within their S1-S3 and S4-S6 bubbles and would not benefit all pupils as some had buses to catch or had out of school activities. Therefore, different bespoke models are being explored using TEAMS, targeting support, teachers Q&A sessions, recordings and that a survey is going out to teachers next week and pupils within the next 2/3 weeks.

6. Discussion Topics– Parent Backup Poster edit – Derek asked parent members to view the poster on the current parent council web page and submit any suggestions via email for changing this so that the poster can be generic, school neutral and be used in subsequent years. Derek to present edited changes to November parent council for approval.

7. AOCB

- (a) Grant to investigate further a concern that some classes were repeating curriculum learned during lockdown in an attempt for pupils to catch up.
- (b) The amount of homework being given to pupils was also raised as a concern in an attempt to catch up learning loss. Grant explained that homework policy had to be engaging, relevant, and is normal to see increase in homework at senior school and would be dependent on the number of academic subjects being undertaken by each

pupil. PSE sessions would explain to pupils about time management, allocation of work, routines and use of weekends for learning.

(c) Grant to look into reports that MS Office packages given to pupils need to have their licenses renewed via a download to remain in use.

(d) Derek thanked everyone for attending and closed the online meeting.

8. Date of Next meeting

Wednesday 4th November 2020, at 6pm (Online)