



Bathgate Academy Parent Council

Minutes of Online Meeting

Wed 27th January 2021

Attendees:

Grant Abbot (HT), Derek Cornwall (Chair), Richmond Davies, Jacqueline Denholm, Morag Dickie, Susan Griffin, Tracey Ironside, Lisa Lumsden, Delyth MacDonald, Leigh Maybury, Alison McDermott, Carol McNicol, Helen Neary, Lorna Nicol, Karen Smillie, Avril Stewart, Hazel Young

Topics

1. Apologies

Received from Tracey Bredski, Clare Dignall, Mark McCallum, Eleanor Sterrick

2. Minutes & Matters arising

No matters arising and minutes were approved.

3. Chair's Update

Derek advised that he has contacted West Lothian Council to determine why there has been no online Parent Forum meetings which normally are held twice a year for parent forum members to attend to seek views and share best practice amongst all Primary and Secondary schools within West Lothian. This is an ideal platform in the past to promote support initiatives and raise awareness about educational issues within West Lothian to parents. Other local authorities have had numerous parent forum meetings as determined by the National Parent Forum of Scotland in these uncertain times so Derek will seek to establish when West Lothian Council will set up a parent forum online meeting.

Post Meeting Update: Derek has now received communication from the Council's Education Officer to have discussions to ways in which Derek as West Lothian's NPFS representative can support schools, parents/carers within West Lothian.

Derek informed members about the Scottish Government's Clear Your Head Campaign which highlights practical things you can do to look after your Mental Health and Wellbeing whilst continuing to stay at home. This campaign is also endorsed by the National Parent Forum of Scotland (NPFS), Support in Minds, Samaritans, and Health in Minds.

Further information is provided in the link below:

<https://clearyourhead.scot/>

4. Head Teacher update

- a. **Remote Learning update** – Grant advised members that remote learning would always be a distant 2nd to pupils being in school. Remote learning has had significant barriers and challenges for families to overcome but the school has learned from the first lockdown back in March 2020. The school has also provided an additional 80+ notebooks and provided access to free data to families that have hardware and wi-fi issues.

Timetables have been set at 3 lesson blocks during the day, which proved very popular and allows for Live Learning with Pupil and Teacher interaction. Feedback from parents indicate that 79% of the amount of work being issued was appropriate. Pupils now understand Teams and parents are getting there. To increase parent's knowledge of Teams, Sarah Moffatt the DHT provided digital information sessions last week to give parents/carers a clearer understanding of Teams functionality and an overview of the lesson blocks and answered questions around learners engaging with and uploading work on Teams.

Grant answered some questions around navigating around Teams and use of the help channel and pupil's ability to ask questions to their teacher via the chat or one note (private) facility and feedback from pupils' is via glow forms.

- b. **In School update** – Grant highlighted that the school is currently being used for key worker and vulnerable pupils and a requirement to keep numbers low attending school in line with government guidance. Bubbles are in place for those at school and if there is an increase in pupils then there needs to be more staff in school to provide support and assistance to pupils. This would then have a detriment effect on live remote learning and there needs to be a balance between in school and remote teaching.
- c. **Engagement Tracking** – Grant updated members on the use of Insight reports via the Teams system that captures pupil sign on but also to monitor pupil engagement using teacher judgement for all year groups which is currently in progress within the school. Where no activity is recorded by pupils, then the school will contact those families to determine any underlying issues. Currently pupil engagement with Teams are:
- | | |
|--|-----|
| 1 st Year | 90% |
| 2 nd Year | 89% |
| 3 rd Year | 85% |
| 4 th Year | 93% |
| 5 th & 6 th Year | 85% |
- d. **Progress Reports update** – Grant explained that whilst paper copies of pupil reports were issued in November and with holistic assessments being carried out during December, the issue of a January paper copy was not possible, so a progress report online portal was developed between Bathgate Academy and Inveralmond High

School where all reports are now in one place. This development is separate to West Lothian Council's parent's portal and will make it easier to monitor a pupil's progress four or five times a year in their chosen courses as the content adds each pupils progress throughout the school year and does not overwrite, so trends can be determined.

Grant made the decision to issues these the same day as the senior phase parents evening and whilst this caused some inconvenience to working parents not seeing these before having dialogue with the teacher's that night, it did allow some parents to view these in advance and clearly the timing was tight and better to release some than none at all.

S3 pupil online reports will be available on Friday for parents to view via the didbook login page link provided by the school. The didbook app would be optimised as currently difficult to read on a phone, but is fine on a pc/laptop device.

- e. **Support Online and Wellbeing Surveys update** – Grant highlighted that House Teams engagement in Wellbeing was a high priority and that pupil surveys were being used to determine any pupil interaction and this could be via Counselling, or use of the active schools or fitness co-ordinators. There was a concern that more lockdown scenarios could increase wellbeing issues and Grant stated that pupil support requirements were in place for those that required that service. Grant stated that we all have to look after each other including staff and Derek made comment that the Parent Council web page would be changed to include the eight wellbeing indicators this year so that parents/carers could do a MOT type check to see if there was a need for wellbeing concern for their child. This would also compliment the school's wellbeing high priority ethos going forward over the remaining school year.
- f. **School Calendar/SQA update** – Grant advised that when pupils come back into school, would be a time to build on work/assessments and that it is the SQA that advises the school around timetables. The SQA are looking for robust evidence (High Predictive, Quality Assurance and that the grade awarded is appropriate). The second holistic exam date may need to be reviewed in light of the SQA decision to delay the timeframe where final teacher assessment dates have to be submitted by two weeks to mid-June. Whilst this will allow more time for pupils to gain improvement, it will impact staffing and next year's timetables.
- g. **Course Choices** – Grant stressed that the need for pupils to make course choices for next year had to start now as this impacted upon staffing and links to the school's budget setting. The expectation is that pupils will not be in the building so course choices need to be made online. Grant advised that the schools online parent/pupil booking system with House Heads will be made available for that discussion to take place between House Heads/Parents/Pupils.

5. AOCB

- (a) Discussion took place around the recent parents evening and the IT issues and 5-minute timeframe allowed and the balance of the teacher's working time agreement. Timeslots could be increased from 5 minutes but this would lessen the available booking slots with teachers and a balance had to be made between parental take up, duration and number of appointment slots. Majority feedback from Parent evening surveys made comment that the online parent evening could be a format to take forward for future events and that restricting the timeframe allowed the conversation to remain focussed and to the point. Those parents who had connectivity issues can and have received feedback phone calls from teachers if they so requested via the school office.
- (b) There was also a concern that whilst online lessons were great, the pace of some lessons did not take account for glitches or interruptions and that 20-minute assignments were being asked within a 15-minute timeframe adding anxiety to pupils to complete their coursework. Grant stated that he would take this concern back to his weekly staff meetings.
- (c) Grant iterated that his staff are working hard to ensure that pupil engagement and online lessons are maintained to meet current curriculum and to keep parent/carers advised of pupil progress during these uncertain times. Derek agreed that the school's communication with parents and engagement with pupils was recognised and very much appreciated, and the work staff undertake in achieving this was above and beyond what other schools are providing, so much so that the school was put forward by Derek to the National Parent Forum of Scotland as an exemplifier of good practise and a credit to all staff concerned.
- (d) Derek thanked everyone for attending and closed the online meeting.

6. Date of Next meeting

Wednesday 10th March 2021, at 6pm (Online)