



Bathgate Academy Parent Council

Minutes of Online Meeting

Wed 10th March 2021

Attendees:

Grant Abbot (HT), Tracey Bredski (PTC), Derek Cornwall (Chair), Dorthe Davidson, Richmond Davies, Clare Dignall, Michelle Gapinski, Susan Griffin, Tracey Ironside, Delyth MacDonald, Leigh Maybury, Alison McDermott, Carol McNicol, Hazel Mushet, Helen Neary, Karen Smillie, Amy Sparrow, Avril Stewart, Patricia Ure, Hazel Young

Topics

1. Apologies

Received from Lisa Lumsden, John Findlay

2. Minutes & Matters arising

Derek advised a correction to the minutes that was omitted in that Derek stated he would email out the revised Backup Your Child Poster to members for wording comments. No further matters and minutes were approved.

3. Chair's Update

Derek stated that West Lothian Council had an online Parent Forum meeting on 11th February and that nominations for Chair had to be received by 26th February. Derek had decided not to apply but following no other nominations from other parent councils across West Lothian, he decided to take up the West Lothian Parent Forum Chair position. With Derek also being West Lothian's representative for the National Parent Forum of Scotland both positions are an ideal platform to promote support initiatives and raise awareness about educational issues within West Lothian.

Derek made comment that Connect Scotland are offering a free live online Information session on Wellbeing for Parents/Carers with Big Futures, Tuesday 30th March 2021 8-9pm. To register please use the link below:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/connect-members-wellbeing-workshop-with-big-futures-30-march-tickets-144384930213>

4. Head Teacher update

- a. **Returning to School update** – Grant advised members that the recent Scottish Government announcement for pupils to return to school in part from 15th March was a huge logistic exercise and would impact on remote learning. A class of normally 30 would now have to be 3 classes of 10-12 pupils and utilise 3 teachers. The school had to balance and protect remote learning but at the same time keep in school learning meaningful.

Three models were discussed within the school to use, the first being Year group, the second House Group and the third a hybrid between the first two models. The latter was deemed too complex both logistically and for communications. The House group whilst accommodating family siblings being in school at the same time meant that subjects would have to be taught three times and would take a week to cover was deemed impractical and would impact on remote learning. Therefore, the Year group was selected as the best option that protected existing remote learning structure and aligns remote learning and in school timetables together.

In school timetables have been set at 3 lesson blocks during the day as this reduces the amount of circulation within the school and complies with covid guidance mitigations of 2 metre social distancing, all pupils now having to where a face covering unless exempt. Parents to contact the school where exemptions to face mask wearing applies, otherwise all pupils to wear a face mask.

Grant gave an update on the relaxed 2 mtr outdoor spacing or outdoor PE activities but changing rooms will remain closed. The dining hall will accommodate 20 max and offer a collect and go service. Pupils can go back to their classrooms for lunch should they wish to do so.

Grant answered some questions around timetables and reiterated that the timetable in school would be the same as existing remote learning. S6 pupils at this time can go home after their Block session or stay within school where study space can be accommodated.

Grant explained the Lateral Flow Testing (LFT) kit requirements which are already in place for staff, will be issued to pupils during their 3rd block session on their first day at school and testing to be done at home, either the night before or morning of coming into school over the next three weeks. Testing will then be carried out at home every 3rd day when pupils are all back in school full-time.

No in school LFT testing will be done on school premises, unlike our English counterparts as used kits are classified as medical waste and the school has no licence in place. Consent e-forms will be sent out to parents/carers for those pupils under 16 years of age to allow kits to be distributed to pupils next week. If the LFT test shows positive then pupils will have to self-isolate from home and request an

NHS PCR test online. The result of the PCR test over rides any result from the previous LFT test.

The social distancing requirements for pupils who travel on School buses have been relaxed to 1 metre to align with public transport

All pupils will receive an online assembly on their first day back into school. Grant will issue a brief letter to pupils S1-S3 tomorrow (Thursday 11th March) to state that they will stay in the one classroom and teachers will come to them and senior pupils will move between classrooms for their 3 block sessions.

- b. Progress Reports and Engagement Tracking update** – Grant highlighted that the Senior Phase S4-S6 online parents' night will now be Thursday 29th April 2021. S1 tracking reports will be available after Easter. The final date for teachers' assessments to be uploaded to SQA has been changed to 25th June and likely that school timetables will change soft end of May or around 10th June.

Grant has an SQA meeting tomorrow with other head teachers and there maybe a requirement to call another meeting with the parent council before Easter. Grant to notify Derek if that is the case so that an extra-ordinary meeting can be set up.

Staff are updating (Red, Amber and Green) remote engagement tracking on a weekly basis and is seen as a snapshot of learning at that point in time. Grant advised that amber description is now for where an assignment is due in a subject. Derek stated that the system had been in place for a couple of weeks now and that the amber description now more accurately reflects what is being presented to parents and parents are becoming more familiar and comfortable about pupil remote learning engagement updates provided by teachers.

SQA assessments are more about the pupil journey progression throughout the year, rather than based solely upon holistic assessments. The school's focus over the next three weeks will be upon learning and development and not assessment.

- c. Course Choices** – Grant updated members on the importance of pupils making their course choices online and pupils who still have to complete their course choice will be reminded to do so. The normal school timetable change of 6th May will now not happen and that the school awaits instructions from the local authority on when timetables across West Lothian schools can be undertaken. Grant also advised that where pupils have made their course choices, unless pupils have been notified directly, then their course choices will have been deemed okay.
- d. Staffing update** – Grant explained that there were still some financial decisions to be had around student teachers who normally spend a year in school but have not done so due to remote working.

Staff are having an additional two inset days that have still to be agreed by the Local Authority.

Staffing within the school has a full complement with no vacancies at present time. The interim promoted post of the principal teacher in the science block that Tracey Bredski currently undertakes due to Sarah Moffatt's DHT award is going through the formal interview process.

There will be no school Easter Holiday study support, however there is information on National offers via the school app, head teacher updates and school twitter account should these wish to be undertaken by pupils.

- 5. Backup Your Child Poster** – Derek presented to members the revised wording on the poster to make it more generic and suitable for use across all schools in light of the success of the 2020 campaign. Members suggested alternative wording that could be used and Derek to take away and present again at our May meeting. It is intended that as well as a school neutral poster, our parent council will also create a Bathgate Academy version to complement the suite of posters for use within the school and our parent council web site.

6. AOCB

There were no AOCB items arising.

Derek thanked Grant for his very informative update that helped to reassure parents and carers during these uncertain times and thanked everyone for attending and hoped that all stay safe and closed the online meeting.

7. Date of Next meeting

Wednesday 12th May 2021, at 6pm (Online)