

Minutes of Parent Council Meeting

Johnstone High School

28th November 2016

Attendees

Parents: Diane Spence (DS), Shirley Ormond (SO), Arlene Motherwell (AM), Jacqueline Tavendale (JT), Jennifer Murdoch (JM), Anne Campbell (AC), Angela Kerr (AK), Gillian Williams (GW), Cassy Auld (CA), Andy Steel (AS), Elaine Gray (EG), Martine Wylie (MW), Lorna Hendriks (LHe) & Kirsten Lyons (KL)

Staff: Lynne Hollywood (LH), Tracy O'Malley (TO'M), Gordon Menzies (GM) & Ainsley Brown (AB)

Apologies

Ryan Miller, Paul Cameron, Lesley Reid, Neil Fowler, Cllr Iain McMillan

Previous Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 5th September were reviewed and approved

Litter Issue

LH explained that there had been complaints about littering by some pupils in the local neighbourhood. The school believe that having bins in the community location would be helpful and asked the Parent Council for assistance in writing to the local authority requesting that bins are installed **(1)**.

Diane will remind John Hood of his offer to assist **(2)**. It was also suggested that a litter pick is carried out by pupils which could also be a PR opportunity. AS said that he would also raise this with the community council for the area **(3)**.

Attainment Challenge Money

LH provided an update regarding the fund from the Scottish Government that is being given to the local authority in order increase staffing specifically to improve the attainment gap. LH to advise the Parent Council once more information is available **(4)**.

Sub Groups

The two sub groups – Funding & Sponsorship (Mr Fulton) and Engaging with Parents (Mr Miller) have had meetings with progress being made by each group. DS has invited Iain Cunninghame from Engage Renfrewshire to attend a meeting with the Funding sub group. The Parent Council has applied for a HMRC reference which is as good as a charity number for the purposes of applying for funds and fund raising.

PT Assessment Centres

LH explained the format for the assessment centres being held on 9th and 12th December to find PTs in Music and Guidance. A minimum of 3 parents are requested at each assessment centre. Volunteers were agreed.

LH advised the Parent Council of a consultation which is being conducted by the Scottish Government to look at how we govern our schools. This is looking at taking some controls of education away from local authority control and placing more under the control of a centralised or regional hub e.g. West of Scotland. The consultation process is not very user friendly but the government is very keen to receive feedback. Parents can find out more information by searching for The Governance Review.

Update from the Chair

AC will support the Parent Council secretary by taking the minutes of the meetings. JT and GW will be the signatories on the Parent Council Treasurer's account. The application for this account should be finalised by mid-December. GW was nominated to the new position of Treasurer for the Parent Council. This nomination was seconded by LHe.

Head Teachers Report

LH discussed the items in the HT report which is available on the school website.

Staffing

There has been difficulty in finding a suitable French & Spanish teacher but hoping to get a current NQT language teacher for an Aug 17 start.

Behaviour Policy

AB explained the new behaviour policy and reward system that has been put in place and well received by pupils. Providing pupils have one demerit or less then they can achieve a behaviour award every 2 months. Awards were handed out in October. The next awards are expected before Christmas break. Pupils can also achieve house badges for participating in different activities with a corresponding colour of badge being issued if the pupil has participated at either local, regional or national level in their activity (e.g. music, sport, etc.), colour specific to each house group.

Newsletter

The next newsletter is due in December 2016. A pupil section is to be included and a parent section. The Parent Council have been asked to come up with suggestions for what might be included in the future. (e.g. fundraising and engagement) **(5)**

School App

TO'M explained that she was investigating a new app for the school called My School App. TO'M is trialling this and has populated it with some useful news and information which parents and pupils can access via the app. The app can issue, push notifications to parents therefore making the information less static than information displayed via the website. TO'M is looking for feedback from the Parent Council and has therefore asked the parents to download the app and use it over the coming few weeks. Parents to email T'OM with their feedback **(6)**.

Homework Update

A system will be set up with text messages to home should pupils fail (after a second chance) to complete their homework. Following texts a formal letter would be sent home. Notifications would eventually stop after 5 communications to home. It was noted that teachers take into account a child's home life and the repercussions that may happen if they do not do their homework. Each department has been asked to share its policy regarding homework.

Edmodo is used by many teachers to set homework and parents can ask their child's teacher to give a parental invite to access the site and view what has been set. Parents cannot go into Edmodo without their child's permission.

The key issue raised by the Parent Council is that parents are unaware of what homework is being set and where it is not being completed.

One specific case in 2nd year was mentioned and T'OM was asked by LH to look at what homework had been given to this pupil and communicate privately with the parent.

It was agreed that parents would like more consistency with homework. LH said that pupils know they should revise, read a book, work on their vocabulary, etc. even if they are not set formal homework.

A homework club has been set up for S1-S3 on Mondays and Thursdays. Supported study is available for S4-S6 and details are on the website. A quiet study zone has been set up for S6.

The Parent Council asked if LH could perhaps add information about Edmodo and Scholar (available for senior pupils) to the newsletter and perhaps include tips about homework and studying (7).

Parents' Night

Parents noted how much support was offered by staff at the recent S4 parents' night and wished to pass on thanks. The staff were all very positive and professional and gave parents and pupils a feeling of encouragement as well as reminding pupils of how hard they will need to work. LH appreciated the feedback for the staff.

LH suggested that Brian Costello (Headstrong Life Coach) attend another parent event following the successful talk he gave at a recent meeting for senior pupils and their parents.

MW asked if the S3 parents' night could take place before they make their final subject choice. It was noted that the key choice was in S2 and that priority was given to arranging this parents' night early in the calendar year.

AOB

LH is looking to have a 'bubble' built at the main entrance to the school to provide greater security.

The school was looking at its legal requirement to provide religious observance. Concerns were raised about this being biased towards any particular religion but LH said that it would be geared towards reflecting on morality and would, largely, be based on the school values.

S5 and S6 pupils are looking for gifts which they will be distributing amongst the elderly in our community. Gifts to be handed in as soon as possible before Christmas.

Education Scotland Visit

Between 14-18 November 10 Inspectors visited the school to assess the school on 5 areas, 4 of which were being graded. School Inspections work on a rolling programme and Johnstone High had not been inspected since 2008 therefore it was just the school's 'turn'. Ahead of the inspection staff, parents and pupils were asked to complete questionnaires concerning the standards for the school and LH thanked those who took part. The school also had to carry out a self-assessment. The management team and staff worked tirelessly in preparation for the visit, working 14 hour days and weekends to gather the evidence and information the Inspectors would need to review.

LH explained that she is not allowed to divulge the grades but that feedback on the inspection will be available in December or January. The Inspectors provide details on strengths and weaknesses. A 10-page summary will go into the public domain in January and parents will be guided towards this website. What LH could tell the Parent Council is that the school has a very good awareness of its own strengths and weaknesses and that it was acknowledged that the school had been through a very testing time. At this stage, LH said that she cannot say if there is to be any follow through visit.

DS thanked LH and all the staff for all their hard work and dedication throughout the time of the inspection which resulted in a round of applause from the Parent Council members.

PTA

Debbie MacDonald has requested that a "PTA" is put in place to raise money for items such as badges and awards for ceremonies.

It was also noted that the idea of a social event for the junior school had been put on hold due to the work required for the inspection.

It was suggested that perhaps former pupils could be approached for donations for funds for awards etc. These suggestions to be considered by the fundraising group **(8)**.

Summary of Actions

1	Parent Council to write to council asking that bins be installed in areas adjacent to the school where there were complaints of littering	DS
2	Diane Spence to remind Councillor Hood to request bins via the council	DS
3	Andy Steele to also raise issue of bins with local community council	AS
4	Further update to be given on Attainment Challenge Money	LH
5	Parent Council to provide feedback on what could be included in Parent's section of the school newsletter	Parent Council/DS
6	Parent Council Members to provide individual feedback to T O'M on MySchool App	Parent Council
7	Information on Edmodo, Scholar and tips on homework to be included in the Newsletter	LH
8	Fundraising group to consider setting up a PTA and approaching former pupils for donations	AC/LR/JT

NEXT MEETING

7 p.m. Monday 6th February 2017