

Prestwick Academy Parent Council

Minutes of 'Zoom' Meeting – Monday 14 June 2021

In attendance (virtually):

Gordon Bone (Head Teacher); Elaine Harrigan (Head Teacher Appointee), Alastair McIntyre (Chair), Jerry Ferguson (Vice Chair), Fiona Baird, Fiona Heron, Lesley Reid, Pamela Paterson, Christine Thomson, Sharon Graham, Steven Fentie, Pauline Ferguson, Karen Menzies, Anne-Marie Tierney, Gemma Wallbanks, Emma Boughen, Sheona Johnston, Caroline Lyon, Euan Terras, Euan Duncan, Jillian McIntyre, Heather McLeod, Fiona Hainey, Dilip Mishra, Monique Morrison, Joan Brockie.

1. Introduction

Alastair McIntyre welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Parent Council.

2. Attendance and apologies

Those attending were noted. No apologies

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The draft Minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 May 2021 had been circulated by email in advance. Their acceptance was proposed by Gemma Wallbanks and seconded by Fiona Baird

4. Report from Chair

Alastair reported that there had been a meeting of the Parent Council chairs on 19 May. Discussion topics had included the new school meals arrangements and full discussion of the current COVID situation and rules on self-isolation. A presentation had been given on the Alternative Certification Model. It had also been noted that free music tuition would continue.

5. Head Teacher's Report

Mr Bone reported that pupils would be receiving the results of assessment next Tuesday. Mr Anderson would be leaving next Friday, and would be taking up the post of Head Teacher at Girvan Academy on 17 August. An Acting Deputy Head Teacher would be appointed by the end of next week, and a national advertisement put out for a permanent appointment in the new session. The staffing situation is currently quite fluid. There has been an appointment of acting Principal Teacher of Biology. The Home Economics post had been advertised for the sixth time and had attracted one applicant. There had been fourteen applicants for the full time post in Business and Computing, and three applicants for the three day post in Computing.

The P7 transition days had gone well.

On 9 June the school had received the Rights Respecting School Silver Award. The UNICEF representative had met staff and pupils and the event had been marked in online assemblies.

In relation to COVID an outbreak letter had been sent out today. There had been 4 cases between August and December, there was possibly double that at the moment. Any decision to close the school would be taken by Public Health officials. In the meantime learning will be uploaded to Teams and parents given an information letter tomorrow. In response to parental questions Mr Bone confirmed that pupils withdrawn from school as preventative measures against COVID would not be considered unauthorised absences.

6. Introduction of Ms Harrigan

Ms Harrigan acknowledged that COVID had been a challenge for schools although fortunately at Girvan Academy they had largely escaped. She is really excited to be taking on Mr Bone's legacy when he leaves in August. She has been in the school for a few days and had some conversations with young people. Ms Harrigan told the meeting of her previous experience at Girvan, as a Quality Improvement officer at the Council and at Auchinleck and how much she was looking forward to getting to know the school and the community.

7. AOB

A parent pointed out that there seemed to have been very little feedback from the school this year. Mr Bone advised that he had conversations with Ms Harrigan about getting a report out early in the new session. There will be no parents evenings until Christmas at the earliest. There would be class-based assessments for S3 and P7s. Ms Harrigan advised that there would be additional "closing the gap" teachers.

A parent raised the "whole school" experience – is there a working group looking at this? Ms Harrigan confirmed that mental health is on the agenda. With regard to wider achievements it is very much "watch this space", there are a lot of unknowns and schools are working very much in a reactive mode, and having to be creative.

Mr Bone advised that there is a school-based counsellor who will be working through the summer. In response to the comment that a more preventative approach could be desirable Mr Bone acknowledged that the biggest loss has been real-time assemblies.

In relation to vaccination of young people, nothing is known at present of COVID vaccination. There would be new flu vaccination in the diary for next session.

8. Close

There being no further business Alastair thanked everyone for attending online. The first meeting of the new session would be on 13 September 2021. The meeting closed at 8.00 pm.