

Prestwick Academy Parent Council

Minutes of Monday 14th March 2022 at Prestwick Academy

In attendance : Alastair McIntyre, Elaine Harrigan, Jill Wright, Nicola Anderson, Kerry Russell, Katie Grant, Callum Johnson, Fiona Baird, Euan Duncan, Jerry Ferguson, Euan Terras, Christine Thomson, Hugh Hunter

1. Introduction

Alastair McIntyre welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Parent Council and explained the purpose is to discuss matters of general interest and any specific issues should be raised with the school.

2. Attendance and apologies

Those attending were noted. Apologies from Emma Boughen, Stephen Fentie, Fiona Heron and Monique Morrison

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The draft Minutes of the previous meeting held on 18th of January 2022 had been circulated by email in advance. Their acceptance was proposed by Euan Terras and seconded by Fiona Baird.

4. Report from the Chair

A Parent Council Chairs meeting was held on the 8th of Feb, unfortunately there was a technical issue preventing attendees from logging on. Minutes were circulated. These included a Covid update with a significant number of cases in Primary schools. The Education Services update stated there is a new Director of Education, Lindsay McRoberts, who will take up her post on the 11th of April 2022. There is a new Head Teacher in post at Belmont Academy, Kevin Boyd, a former teacher from Prestwick Academy.

The Prestwick North Campus is expected to open in August 2022.

Alistair highlighted a survey which was currently open regarding Parental Involvement in Education open until 1 April, the school also sent this out to parents.

5. Head Teacher's Report

The Head Teacher welcomed Mrs Katie Grant, PT English and Mr Callum Johnson, PT Music to the meeting.

Recruitment continues this session with the following posts:

English Teacher x 2 – to be interviewed on Friday 18th March

Art Teacher

Maths Teacher

Physics Teacher

COVID-19 Update

Updated COVID mitigations in place in relation to face coverings. From Monday 21st March face coverings will no longer be required, however, young people and staff may choose to continue with this mitigation. We await further update from First Minister briefing on Tuesday 15th March in relation to updated guidance.

SQA Update

We have now moved to scenario 2 for SQA arrangement. Advice on arrangement was released last week and staff will work with young people to prepare for forthcoming exams using the guidance issued. Supported study continues and Easter school plans will be out this week. A parent commented the advice from the SQA had not been 'kid' friendly. Mrs Harrigan stated clarity for young people will be brought from teachers.

A parent asked if Covid had resulted in an uneven playing field and Mrs Harrigan stated this is why the SQA have moved to Scenario 2.

Parents' Evenings

We have 2 remaining parents' evening, and both will continue online:

- Tuesday 15th March – S2
- Monday 25th April – S1

Feedback in relation to online delivery has been positive and we look at feedback for future plans for session 2022/23.

A parent stated they liked them being on time with another parent liked the booking system.

A parent stated 5 minute appointments were not long enough for any meaningful discussion to happen.

Key Dates

A reminder of the following key dates:

- S6 last day will be Friday 22 April 2022
- Exam leave will start on Monday 25th April

- Timetable change will be Monday 6th June

Uniform

Consistency in approach for uniform has been a challenge this year. Sportswear has crept into the uniform in the senior phase and standards have reduced. Mrs Harrigan asked the Parent Council their view on polo shirts but these were felt to be too young.

Proposal school ties:

- Junior S1-S3
- Senior S4-S5
- Sixth year tie

The Head Teacher asks for support of the parent council to further promote school uniform. A parent asked if the Pupil Leadership Council was still running and what their opinion was on uniform – the response had been pupils like uniform.

Events

The school are in the process of organising and planning a range of events:

- P7 Transition events and planning for ‘bump up days’ is underway
- S3 Lochgoilhead Residential – letters have been distributed
- Erasmus project – trip to partner school in June 2022
- Summer Musical Showcase
- Rewards trips – M&Ds/Blackpool
- Prize Giving (BGE June and Senior Phase September)
- Ski trip rescheduled to February 2023
- History – Berlin Trip for June 2023

A parent commented there had been confusion over the organisation of the Lochgoilhead trip. The Head Teacher will clarify these points, eg cost and numbers. A parent commented the school should let parents know about such trips not just pupils.

A parent commented there are issues with pupils completing Silver and Bronze Duke of Edinburgh awards.

Fundraising

Rising costs in relation to transport etc for event. We are looking for ideas for fundraising events and would be keen to involve parent council/volunteer parents/carers.

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6. School Captains’ Report

No school Captains attended the meeting; however, Mrs Harrigan gave an update. The school prom for S6 will take place on the 9th of June at Brig O’ Doon. S6 pupils are in the process of organising Leaver Hoodies and Yearbooks.

7. New Principal Teachers Music and English

Mr Callum Johnson is the new principal teacher of Music. Previously in post for 5 years at Girvan Academy. Mr Johnson feels Prestwick has a strong performing department and is very keen to get the department up and running again post covid. Emphasis will be on live events. The department currently has a young musician competition running virtually. The Music Partnership Education group has given the department £100 and this will be used to buy a trophy for the winner with all participants being given certificates. The winner will represent Prestwick Academy at the Authority round at the end of April with the Authority winner moving on to the RCS final in May. Mr Johnson is currently looking at opportunities for performing at the Cares Day, Prize giving and a Summer Showcase. It will be 2023 before the summer show returns. Mr Johnson stated he is keen to build relationships with other departments.

Mrs Katie Grant is now principal teacher of English. Mrs Grant stated her priority is attainment. There are two new members of staff starting in the department and course planners will be looked at in May for S1-S3. The senior phase folios are the priority at the moment.

8. Mental Health Ambassadors

Mrs Kerry Russell introduces herself and S6 pupil Amy. Amy has taken on a leadership role with the Mental Health Ambassadors and explained the role in the school and the plans going forward. The team offer support and challenge stigmas around mental health issues using LIMA, Lets Introduce Anxiety Management. This consists of 8-9 sessions talking about different strategies eg fight or flight. A safe space has also been set up, originally for S1's.

Amy visited primary schools to speak to pupils and organised a Wellbeing day for S1's this included a silent disco, anxiety workshops and walk and talk sessions. It was a success and maybe rolled out to staff and parents.

9. Anti Bullying Strategy

Ms McGoldrick explained the next steps for anti bullying work within the school. Young People should have had experience of assemblies, workshops and competitions highlighting anti bullying strategies in the school. 'Respect Me', Scotland's Anti Bullying charity and Prestwick Academy have strong links. Respect Me have recently been in touch with an invitation for the school to self evaluate and begin a new 3 year journey – The Self Assessment Toolkit for Anti Bullying Policy and Practice. This starts with a 6 week self evaluation for the school with 4 stages. 23 Schools are involved in the pilot before a national roll out and charter mark are awarded. The process involves parent collaboration. A survey will be opened and Ms McGoldrick encouraged parents to complete. Respect Me want a parent representative involved and Fiona Baird took up this opportunity.

Printed copies of the policy are available from the school.

A parent asked how the survey will be made available to parents, Ms McGoldrick stated via groupcall and email.

A parent commented he liked the use of the word Anti

10. AOCB

There being no further business Alastair thanked everyone for attending. The next meeting will be the second Monday in May 2022. The meeting closed at 8.30pm.