



Who Said What?

Responses to our Improvement Plan Consultation, 2020-21



Areas of Strong Agreement

Of responses received:

- All pupils, parents and carers were in favour of identifying early, and supporting, pupils at risk of finishing S4 without (as a minimum) seven Nationals at a minimum of National 4. This included acknowledgement that there will be individual exceptions which are appropriate and understandable.
- All pupils, parents and carers were keen to see an increase in pupil participation (decision-making, evaluating and leading).
- All pupils, parents and carers support additional Literacy and Numeracy for identified pupils.
- There was huge support for the appropriate distribution of laptops for identified pupils. (There were some questions about how these pupils are identified.)
- Almost all pupils, parents, carers were supportive of pursuing the Rights Respecting Schools Award.
- Almost all pupils, parents, carers were supportive of continuing to embed Pivotal practices.

Areas of Partial Agreement and Points to Note

Of responses received:

- A majority of pupils, parents and carers agreed that in S4-6, dropping a subject to have “study periods” is not a good idea. However, a minority felt that it is a useful way to ease exam pressure.
- A large majority of pupils, parents and carers agreed that more learning materials should be available online to allow greater access from home. However, a minority of parents and carers asked us to be mindful of the fact that this increases screen time for young people who are already very screen-reliant. In addition, they noted that it’s often easier to feel organised with paper copies and asked that both are available. Many pupils felt the same way.
- A large majority of pupils and a smaller majority of parents/carers saw the benefit of building self-evaluation moments regularly into coursework.
- Almost all parents and carers agreed that if pupils are absent due to shielding, but are not unwell, they must continue to participate with lessons. However, they noted that this is difficult for parents/carers to enforce. Staff views were supportive but noted two concerns: 1. It is difficult to teach properly through two streams - those in attendance and those at home. 2. We must ensure pupils unable to attend through no fault of their own are carefully supported with the pressure that online learning brings. Many pupils noted they find it hard to work at home.

Areas of Some Disagreement

Of responses received:

- Many parent/carer responses revealed a desire to receive explicit guidance about how to help their child to study at home. However, several parents/carers felt that this should mostly be a matter for teachers because parents/carers have other responsibilities which make supporting home learning difficult.
- Significantly, more than half of pupil responses noted that providing parents/carers with additional information about their home learning would be unhelpful because it would add to their pressure or be a source of tension in the family.
- A majority of pupils, parents/carers were not keen for individual progress through PSE themes to be tracked and reported. However, they did express a wish to have a clearer year-by-year overview of themes and for increased pupil and parent input to the shaping of PSE content and approaches. There was keenness from all that PSE should be debate/discussion-based rather than jotter work.

What have we done with this information?

- The final school improvement plan was amended to incorporate some of these views and is now in action across the school.
- The document above has been shared with all staff.
- Unfortunately, we cannot afford to pay for the branded programme for the Rights Respecting Schools Award. (The cost for all three levels is £3025 exclusive of VAT, then the school would pay every three years to apply to retain the Gold Award.) Instead, we will use Unicef's free resources, in addition to various other free resources focusing on the UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child). This will be led by Ms Marshall (Science) and Ms R Brotherston (Modern Languages).

Other points raised by pupils

You said...	Response...
Can we have access to the school wi-fi?	East Ayrshire Council is trying to make this happen for you. The plan is to allow you to connect your own device to the school wifi – we'll keep you posted. (At the moment, not even the Head Teacher has the password!)
Could PSE include First Aid, self-defence and how to understand finances?	These are great ideas. Your thoughts have been passed to the Pastoral Support Team (who write and deliver PSE lessons).
Can we have a school counsellor?	The Scottish Government has provided each Local Authority with money to pay for school counsellors. You will be able to book appointments. You'll hear more about this in the coming months. In the meantime, as always, your Pastoral Support (Guidance) teacher is your counsellor, supported by your House Head. Remember, too, that you can approach any teacher you feel comfortable with to ask for a listening ear at interval or lunchtimes.

Can we have air-con in changing rooms?	The building was designed with ventilation in the changing rooms. We agree, it would be miles better to have air-conditioning too because the rooms become stuffy over the course of the day when they're heavily used. Unfortunately, we are not in a position to be able to install air-con.
Can we have mock interviews for seniors?	Fantastic suggestion. Passed to DHT responsible for DYW (Developing the Young Workforce) and to SDS (the school careers advisors from Skills Development Scotland).
Can we have gym equipment such as running machines etc.?	We'd love to set this up and the possibility was investigated. Sadly for now, we simply don't have the space in PE or elsewhere on our very busy shared campus to give a room over to this. In addition, the cost of the machines (including ongoing maintenance) is simply beyond the school budget.
Could courses slow down to include in-class study time?	Yes, having time to pause and absorb new learning is a crucial step before moving onto the next new thing. (Remember our 4 steps! https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/ea/eastayrshiregrangeacademymain2017/news/4-steps-to-success/) This request has been passed to all teachers so we can reflect on the pace of courses and whether we are building in enough in-class study time. Please note, though, that for some S4-6 courses, there is such a lot of exam content to cover that a significant proportion of your study time needs to be at home.
Could the library re-open at lunchtime?	Request granted! It has been closed at lunchtime and interval since August because we are trying to control where groups of pupils gather at social times (for Covid reasons). However, following your request, we will open for small groups – more details will follow in the Monday bulletin.

Other points raised by parents and carers

You said...	Response...
Could S1-3 pupils have Home Economics?	We would love to extend the number of pupils HE is available to; the reason we can't is staffing. We have two HE teachers who are both timetabled to the maximum number of periods possible. There are various places in the school where we'd recruit additional staff, had we the budget to do so.
I have some concerns about bullying.	Please do contact your child's PT Pastoral Support (Guidance) with the details. Bullying is absolutely unacceptable.
It would be good if PSE could include political awareness, how to be financially sensible and personal growth journey.	These ideas have been passed to the Pastoral Support Team (who write and deliver PSE lessons). Generally, political awareness is taught in the Social Subjects Department and financial awareness in Mathematics; however, it will be useful for us to do a spotlight evaluation on these themes from a pupil perspective.
Request for lockers.	This has been raised several times over the years and is understandable. Budget is not what prevents this from being possible though – it's space. There has been investigation into the options of where on campus we could accommodate lockers and there simply isn't room.
Perception that some classes spend time off-task on phones in PSE.	This is not what we see in school. There are some wonderful learning interactions happening in PSE. However, it's possible that something is going unnoticed in a particular class so we'd ask that any

	individual parents or carers who believe this is happening in their own child's PSE class to contact the House Head, who will look into it.
Request for more teacher interaction to supplement teaching materials in event of future closure.	In the unlikely event that we return temporarily to blended learning, there is a clear understanding that feedback and interaction is required in addition to the provision of lesson materials. Almost all of our staff meeting time since August has been devoted to developing digital learning.