

St Joseph's Academy Parent Council

Minutes of Meeting 14th March 2022

Attendance

| Parents | |
|--------------------------|---------|
| Gavin Duffy (Chair) | |
| Julie Batchelor | |
| Dawn Bias (Church Rep) | Apology |
| Deborah Boyd | Apology |
| Jim Campbell | Apology |
| Pamela Chigbo | Apology |
| Mairi Gribben | Apology |
| Shirley Harkness | Apology |
| Amanda Busam Kennedy | |
| Jackie Livingstone | |
| Catriona McCrindle | Apology |
| Paul McLaughlin | |
| Kate McLean | Apology |
| Anne Queen | |
| Marion Smith | |
| Douglas Thomson | Apology |
| Grace Walker | |
| Staff | |
| Joseph Kane (HT) | |
| Est Ayrshire Councillors | |
| Fiona Campbell | Apology |
| Maureen McKay | Apology |

Opening Prayer

Gavin Duffy opened the meeting by welcoming everyone on the call and leading the opening prayer.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

Passed as accurate.

Matters Arising

Miss Cathie will clarify when P7 information packs will be issued to pupils. **Action: Miss Cathie**

Head Teacher Report

Mr Kane presented the [School Report](#), and updated the PC on progress against the following areas:

Health & Safety

- Mr Kane provided that some COVID mitigations remain in place including staggered break times and 1-way movement around the school campus.
- Mr Kane stated that there may be some changes to this after the Easter break. However, split lunch times may continue as they have proven to be logistically beneficial. Discussions are ongoing with the HT of St Andrews PS.
- Face coverings must still be worn in communal areas and on transport.
- Although pupils are no longer required by law to use face masks in classes, all have been encouraged to continue to wear up until study leave. Pupils have generally been receptive.
- COVID is at higher levels in EAC than ever before. However, positively, Saint Joseph's has never come near to a partial closure or been moved to outbreak status at any time.
- Staff absence at times problematic but well managed in terms of cover by SLT.

SQA

- Revision guidelines / study supports published by SQA as promised prior to upcoming exam diet.
- For the most part, disappointingly, they have not brought much/any new information to the table.
- Maths guidelines have been useful and details specifics about what will and won't feature the exams.
- 12 of the supplied guides are being revised this week as a result of feedback received. More to follow when updates received.
- **P.McL** asked if there were links being made available. Mr Kane stated links were sent to S4 and above and stated that S3 pupils this year would be held next year to a full SQA subject and exam diet. It was acknowledged that there would be a gear shift in terms of work rate for next years S4 and that staff were already preparing the current S3 for this.
- Mr Kane added that SQA appeals this year were different than usual in that pupils will not be able to appeal for a grade above the school's estimate.
- **GW** asked what happens if a pupil needs to self-isolate during their exams. Mr Kane provided that this would be treated in the same way 'exceptional circumstance' have been treated any other year (e.g., a bereavement or illness). A submission would be made by the school for that pupil. Guidance was only released last week; Miss Quigley will clarify with young people and parents the specifics of this year's exceptional circumstance process. It is anticipated that Exceptional Circumstance grades would also be capped against estimated grades. This will be clarified in communication sent to parents/carers.

Parents Evenings

- Mr Kane stated that feedback was generally positive.
- Negative raised by some parents was length of appointments being too short. However, appointments are same length as 'in-person' appointments.
- Longer appointments not logistically possible without changes to WTA.
- Some technical issues reported from both staff and parents. However, mainly user error.
- **GD, JB & PMcL** all reported a positive experience personally from the online Parents Evenings but noted that they appreciated that the pace of appointment turnaround was challenging for staff. Overall, good experience though.

Options update

- Options changes were opened until today (14th March) but are now locked down until first draft of timetables is completed.
- Pupils can still request a change of subject, but no changes will be made at this time. Any changes after the timetable is created will sit against timetable columns rather than 'free choice'. As is the case every year, a small number of pupils may have to re-select subjects if the specific combination they have selected is not viable.

'Insight' results

- Analysis of results across school can't yet be shared publicly in any detail until uploaded to Scot Govt website. However, Mr Kane was able to share some highlights.
- N4/5 above virtual comparator in literacy and numeracy.
- Attainment for the lowest 20% of leavers shows a 300% jump over a four-year period and is now above virtual comparator and local authority figures. This is a significant step forward given that the school was sitting at around 3rd/4th lowest in Scotland when Mr Kane first arrived in session 2017/18.
- Mr Kane explained that too many pupils were leaving with no qualifications in 2017/18 and that since then PEF funding had been used for focussed staffing to help improve this.
- School improving year on year at all levels. Mr Kane cited further examples such as provision of advanced Highers rising from 3 to 8 over the period, improvements overall in behaviour and ethos as well as the recruitment of some 30 staff. Positive destinations figure for Saint Joseph's now matches the Authority average also.

Vision, values & aims (incl. Learn Well)

- Father Martin and a group of pupils have now re-written the school prayer which has been passed to Mr Kane today. Will be shared in due course.
- Final Vision Values and Aims shared as a PDF and available on the school website. Mrs Shearer has co-ordinated a formal launch on Friday 18th March.

PEF funding

- PEF will reduce next session. PEF funding linked to numbers of families/pupils qualifying for free school meals. Not all that are eligible apply for several reasons although a lot of work has gone into contacting families and encouraging to apply. PEF funding down £10k on last session. In part this is also due to removal of a top up allocated for this session only.

Other matters

- School Handbook now published and on EAC website.
- P7/S1 transition meetings have already been happening and visits should now take place in June 2022.
- SCIAF fundraising ongoing – pupils being encouraged to get involved
- Pupils performing at a high level competitively in athletics and in football

Willowbank Consultation

GD shared that there was to be an EAC cabinet meeting this coming Wednesday (16th March). In the published agenda there are discussions tabled to take place around EAC plans to pursue funding from Scot Govt for the redevelopment the Onthank PS and Mount Carmel PS sites (PROPOSALS FOR LEARNING ESTATE INVESTMENT PROGRAMME BID FOR NORTHWEST KILMARNOCK). These proposals also include development of ASN provision including meeting the needs of Willowbank School.

The published proposal states that there would be no plan to re-visit the previous consultation involving the Saint Joseph's Academy Campus - *"In addressing Willowbank School specifically, this paper does not replace the work ongoing in the transformation of ASN provision in the authority as expressed in paper to cabinet in January 2020, but it does now delete the proposal of moving any young people to St Joseph's campus."* See below

<https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/CouncilAndGovernment/About-the-Council/MinutesAgendasAndReports/Meetingscalendar.aspx>

<https://docs.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/CRPADMMIN/2012%20AGENDAS/CABINET/16%20MARCH%202022/Proposal%20for%20Learning%20Estate%20Investment%20Proga>

Mr Kane and JL both cautioned that at this stage these proposals have yet to be discussed by cabinet. Furthermore, if pursued, funding is not guaranteed to be secured. It is encouraging however to see attentions turning away from Saint Joseph's Campus and towards potentially longer-term solutions for Willowbank.

Fundraising

GD reminded all that requests had been made for ideas for fundraising at the past two meetings. However, at present there are still no fundraising plans yet. GD appealed for any ideas to be brought forward.

Some discussion then took place about meeting formats going forward. GD asked if there were any thoughts of turning to 'in-person' PC meetings again. Mr Kane stated that at this time there was no change and that parents were still only able to access the school in emergency circumstances.

AQ stated that virtual meetings had been far more convenient in many ways and called for the ability to attend virtually to be maintained. GD stated that the topic would be tabled for further discussion at the next meeting

ACTION: add 'Virtual / in-person meetings to agenda for next meeting GD

Treasurer's Report (Account Balance = £1395.30)

GW stated that the bank had made some further errors on the forms and at present we still do not have access to the accounts. GW is hopeful of having this resolved prior to the next meeting **Action: GW**

PC still to fund the purchase of St Joseph's athletics vests at a cost of £73.50 (reimburse school once accounts have been accessed)

Correspondence/AOB - None

Closing Prayer - GD led the closing prayer.

Dates of Meetings:

- 9th May 2022
- 20th June 2022