



# Kilmarnock Academy

## Parent Council Meeting

4<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Conference Room, Kilmarnock Academy

**Present:** David Rose, Stephen Coyle, Donna Rae, Aileen Baillie, Jen Graham, Julie Connor, Fiona Anderson, Carol Macinnes, Laura McChristie, Lynsey Kerr, Hayley Fitzpatrick, Bethany McGrath, Stuart Edgar, Karen Paterson, Allan Reid, Graham Boyd (Councillor), Graham Barton (Councillor), Elaine Cowan (Councillor)

### Parent Steering Group – Stephen Coyle

SC provided an update from the recent steering group which included updates to the safer school's app which are due soon. The main content of the meeting was about the upcoming changes to Education budgets. Councillor Graham Boyd explained that the overall population is reducing in the local authority and explained how this impacts the overall allocation of government spending divisions. Although there is a desire to manage costs effectively DR and his team are aware of the budget requirements placed upon the school and they have a plan already in place so that this shouldn't impact on our young people's education provisions.

### Focus 7 – Outdoor Learning – Stuart Edgar

SE took the attendees through the outdoor learning programme that Kilmarnock Academy runs. In S1 the focus is on the John Muir award which sees an interdisciplinary project throughout almost all subjects within the school. Teachers are focusing on creating outdoor opportunities to learn including creating birdfeeders, science ecosystem sampling, discover, orienteering and days assisting park rangers at the Dean Park.

For young people who struggle to access the normal curriculum SE explained about the S1/S2 group focusing on building confidence, life skills and creating a positive school experience. This group have undertaken activities in locations in and around Kilmarnock and have included time with Police Scotland mounted unit and Kilmarnock Fire Brigade. Last year saw orienteering championships held at Dean Park and was a great success. SE plans to run these again with S2/3 core classes and is looking at Eglinton Park to provide some variety of location.

For the first time ever, this year SE is running an outdoor residential trip for S2 pupils between 18<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> March. Numbers aren't as high as he would have liked, however the hope is that after a successful trip, more pupils will engage with this next year.

Kilmarnock Academy offers the opportunity for S6 pupils to obtain the Duke of Edinburgh bronze award. Each year c. 60-70 young people get involved which involves physical, skills and volunteering sections. The attendees asked if the school plans to offer other year groups or the other levels of the award, however DR mentioned that these awards put a large requirement on teaching staff to do them and with budget cuts on the horizon it would be activities like this that are first impacted to protect the young people's education. SE did ask if there are any parents willing to volunteer to help the school with the Duke of Edinburgh activities to please get in touch.

If you would like to volunteer to help with the Duke of Edinburgh activities, outdoor learning or if you have any other suggestions for activities to consider for outdoor learning please email us at [kilmarnockacademyparentcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:kilmarnockacademyparentcouncil@gmail.com) and we will pass this on.

### **Focus 3 – Closing the attainment gap – Bethany McGrath**

DR explained that this focus will continue into the next academic year. BM took the attendees through the work that has been progressing this past year and DR mentioned that Kilmarnock Academy has the highest positive destination across the local authority. BM explained that the Hayward report of education is around adapting skills and curriculum meta skills framework. Skills Development Scotland helped create the language to build the framework being used. BM explained that Meta skills are timeless, higher order skills that create adaptive learners and promote success for whatever context the future brings. These are the skills that enable individuals to perform highly today, in a changing world of work.

BM explained there are 3 groups of Meta Skills which are

Self-Management – focusing, integrity, adapting and initiative

Social Intelligence – communicating, feeling, collaborating and leadership

Innovation – curiosity, creativity, sense making and critical thinking.

Within all subjects at Kilmarnock Academy the teaching staff will use similar language to help young people understand which Meta Skills they are developing by completing pieces of work, helping them create tangible working examples that they can pull on for future opportunities. The next steps for this programme will happen in May when the timetable reduces, and this will be to embed the skills into the BGE courses.

### **Non-Statutory Subsidised Transport – Stephen Coyle**

Over the past few weeks this topic has been highly discussed by parents of our young people. The attendees explained about the frustrations felt by our parents around Ayrshire Road Alliances lack of consultation with us as they promised last year. We were joined by Elane Cowan (Councillor) as well as Graham Barton (Councillor) who both sit on EAC cabinet. All councillors explained that they too hadn't been consulted prior to the communication sent to parents about the trial period. The parent council discussed challenges with the comments section on the survey, links that didn't work and the bad timing of the communication at the end of the week, when no-one was able to assist. ARA will be reviewing the feedback from the survey and a paper was due to be presented back to cabinet. SC asked if the details of responses would be shared, however this may possibly go to the parent steering group. EC explained that there was a pre agenda meeting scheduled for the following day and that she expected the revised paper to come up at the next cabinet meeting. It was explained that Stagecoach have now been approached about the changes, which hadn't happened in previous attempts last year to reduce this provision. Direct routes to school that don't include the bus station, confidence that Stagecoach wouldn't pull the service if it wasn't profitable and capacity concerns were also discussed by the PC. The main concern from all in attendance was around the timing of the proposed trial and the impact this could have to those young people sitting exams which was also strongly supported by DR and his team. That feedback has since been heard and ARA have now adjusted the dates the trail will run. At the time of the meeting the councillors didn't have timetables or numbers of buses proposed for the trail. KP discussed the fact that these changes may impact more young people than those surveyed as this was only sent to secondary schools, and that the feeder primary schools weren't included, those parents are planned to be consulted in future engagements. Please keep up to date with communications around the trail running via the safer schools app.

### **AOCB – David Rose**

Supported study – DR discussed targeted support study for young people who are off target on 3 or more subjects will be given a mentor and parents will be contacted if that is the case. For those 2 subjects off target, they will given support from the support staff and if one subject is off track that pupil will be passed back to the department for assistance. Master classes will happen again this year a few days before the exams where teachers will be available for young people to come in. Brain breakfast will be on before exams on the day and SE has a study weekend planned.

DR explained he is trying to modernise Easter school to increase engagement numbers. He is planning to open the school for 5 mornings for young people to come in. This would be the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of the easter holidays with 5 staff supporting. Some subjects will be face to face, whilst others will be on remote service.

Young people can choose to come into school when open to access the remote service or to come in to complete revision.

The next parent council meeting will be held on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May at 6.30pm in the conference room, Kilmarnock Academy.

If you have anything you'd like to bring to the attention of the parent council, please get in touch by emailing [kilmarnockacademyparentcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:kilmarnockacademyparentcouncil@gmail.com) .