

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF EASTWOOD HIGH SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL (Virtual)
Wednesday 11th November 2020 AT 7pm IN EASTWOOD HIGH SCHOOL

PRESENT: James Meneely, Nick Bothwell, Shabnam Ijaz, Cathy Wilkie-Thompson, Natalie McMillan, Moira Forbes, Karen McGrady-Parker, Vicky Clark, Nilam Ijaz, Adele Thomson, Adele Thomson, Wendy Durie, Umza Khan, Fiona Edwards, Beverly Stoner, Jacqui White, Graham Campbell, Jennifer Nesbitt

IN ATTENDANCE: Stuart Maxwell (Head Teacher), Shona McWilliam (Clerk) & Gillian Boyle (Depute)

APOLOGIES: Nil

1. INTRODUCTION

James welcomed everyone to the meeting and especially our new members.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (23rd September 2020)

Minutes approved and seconded. Shona will enter them onto the school's website

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

James confirmed that he is still waiting on the Parent Council Chair feedback from schools.

4. CORRESPONDENCE

James pointed out that Connect have plenty of on-line training for anyone who is interested. James also said that back in February it was discussed that perhaps the Parent Council could create a generic email address for themselves. James will take this forward and organise. Natalie has offered to assist James in setting up of this email.

5. INFORMATION ITEMS

a) Welcome New Parent Council Members

James welcomed our new members, Fiona Edwards, Beverly Stoner, Jacqui White and Graham Campbell.

b) Staffing

Stuart confirmed that in February we will be advertising for a Modern Studies teacher due to the departure of Laura McCafferty. Every February, our NQTs can start applying for teaching posts (interviews – March) with an August start date.

6. DISCUSSIONS ITEMS

a) Covid 19 Recovery Planning

Stuart confirmed that pupils and staff have been great with the wearing of face masks from the start and now our seniors having to wear them all day. Stuart revealed that some of our younger pupils are even taken to wearing masks all day. We have been very lucky up to now that we have had only 8 positive cases and because of when these pupils last attended the school, we have had no involvement with Track and Trace.

Strange statistic but our pupil attendance is actually better today than it was this time last year. We are trying to keep on top of the attendance daily and if need be our office staff will make calls to parents to confirm reason for absences.

b) Implementation of mask wearing for Senior pupils

James said that it must be tough for pupils to wear masks all day and is concerned this will cause mental health issues in pupils. It is a big ask but it is the Government Guidelines which we all have to adhere to, pupils and staff. Stuart mentioned that is he determined to keep our pupils safety as his number one priority and he is happy to purchase better quality wipes for classrooms etc. rather than using blue roll.

James asked if East Renfrewshire Council have indicated if there would be any additional funding this year. Stuart clarified that Education takes up 50% of the council's budget. The Covid Budget which John Swinney distributed is actually for staffing but as we are fortunately with our staff role as present, we were able to allocate the money to an additional teacher in Support for Learning and offer our S4 pupils extra Supported Study over the October holidays. Stuart mentioned that as time goes on pupils and staff anxiety will increase. Now that the 'honeymoon' period is over, and we are heading into winter both him and Gillian have noticed a change.

Uzma asked that as the classrooms are not heated due to the National guidelines would pupils be allowed to wear extra clothing. Stuart mentioned that we have been lucky as present due to the mild climate and the classrooms being checked regularly by our janitors. Even today they were checked at period 3 and the classroom was recorded at 20 degrees. Uzma also mentioned that her child is loving the new supply teacher in Modern Studies.

Graham asked about the school's position on lockers. Stuart confirmed that at a local authority level the council have taken the decision not to allow children to use them due to the increase number of touch points, the cleaning process and the close proximity to other pupils. Stuart did mention that it will be raised again at the next Head Teacher's meeting.

Adele did comment that perhaps the temperature in the classrooms could be taken at a variety of points in the room as eg pupils sitting close to the windows would obviously feel in colder. Stuart mentioned that the heating system has been recently checked and brought to light a value fault in the English rooms which has now be rectified. Teachers will monitor the temperature in the classrooms.

c) S4 Assessments

Depute First Minister has declared that there will be no National 5 SQA exams for S4 pupils next May. At present Higher and Advanced Highers will still go ahead. We do not have the capacity to organise 200 pupils in one room, with social distancing rules for the prelims. Stuart and Gillian Boyle are to have a meeting with S4 pupils this week regarding keeping them informed of the way forward. There will be smaller assessments which will take place before and after Christmas and all will go towards the Teacher Judgements. Gillian has put together a timetable which will be issued to S4 pupils this week, outlining their subjects and their assessment dates. Stuart said that actually this is to their advantage as pupils find it easier to perform well in smaller assessments.

James asked if the prelims for Higher and Advance Higher will still take place in January. Stuart confirmed that they will do, content of course will be adjusted and prelims will be able to be held in the Games Hall allowing for 2m social distancing due to the classes being smaller we will be able to have 50 pupils in the hall at one time.

Umza feels that perhaps having smaller assessments, more frequently may cause more stress and would be good for pupils to sit with their teachers and discuss a planned approach. It would be good for no homework to be issued during assessment time.

d) Parent's Evening

Both S1 and S3 have been moved to May 2021. We have 3 parents nights in January. S2, S4 and S5/6. We unfortunately can't use Google Meet/Team as a school. We are hoping to organise a telephone appointment system through our Booking Evening System. The appointments booked will allow the parent to have a telephone conversation at a designated time with their child's teacher.

Stuart confirmed that one of our teachers is keen to pilot a new system. The EIS union are not happy for schools to have face to face meetings with parents at present. James questioned that there must be a way of using Teams as the PC Chair meetings are organised this way now. Gillian confirmed that Education and Corporate divisions use different networks and for

that reason it is not possible to use Teams. Stuart did mention that Mearns Castle have looked at using laptops but the ones that education use do not have webcams. Nick said there was certainly challenges for Parents Evenings but his concern is for our ASN pupils which for them will be outwith a normal setting. Gillian confirmed that Elinor Mair, Acting Principal Teacher of Learning Support will be in touch with all ASN pupils and parents to discuss Option choices etc as well as involving their Pastoral Support Teachers. Fiona said that a telephone call is a good option as IT is not always good. Stuart agreed that he is looking for a simple option and phones seem to be the best. Adele said that this week she would be having a telephone call from Crookfur for her child's parents night so perhaps she could give us feedback. Stuart said that it will be discussed at this week's Cluster Heads meeting on Friday. Natalie said that Neilston Primary did it this week, which was good but didn't run on time. Stuart did say that they would be leaving a 15 minute gap at 8pm on the booking system so that if appointments run on they hopefully catch up. Wendy agreed with Natalie that her Crookfur telephone appointment went well. Beverly said that her appointment for Crookfur would be tomorrow night but her only concern would be if you have more than one child, how would it work? Nilam asked what would happen if a teacher called you and you were still on a call from another teacher.

7. **A.O.B**

Moirra had contacted Shona earlier in the day to ask if she could forward an enquiry from a S3 parent to Stuart prior to the meeting tonight (Moirra is happy to supply the parents name to Stuart, if required) as to "Why Mearns Castle have microphones in classes for students who are isolating and Eastwood doesn't. Why is no work sent home when a pupil is isolating? Why are some teachers using Google Classrooms for notes, and why can't every department?" Stuart has been in contact with Mearns Castle's Head Teacher this afternoon and he confirmed that a small number of teachers at Mearns Castle were piloting microphones. The teachers at Eastwood put work on Google classrooms for their class. It is difficult to expect a teacher to teach their class then teach children who are off as well.

Natalie mentioned that it had been discussed at the Forum with regard to SQA having 2 exams in the one day and they wished that it was raised at our Parent Council meetings. James supported the point that it would be good to have the subjects more spaced out. Stuart said that sometimes there has been 2 exams at the same time, on the same day (coincidental exams). Start date for SQA exams has been brought forward from Thurs 13th May to Monday 10th May 2021. Gillian has checked over the timetable and it looks fine. We have Higher History and Higher Graphic Communication on the same day and High Maths is this time 2/3rds of the way through the timetable.

Stuart mentioned that it may seem long till our next meeting but he has particular waited till the 10th as we are expecting Depute First Minister, John Swinney to make an announcement re the Highers exams but if need be we can certainly bring forward our next meeting.

Next Meeting will be on Wednesday 10th February 2020 at 7pm

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