



## MEARNS CASTLE HIGH SCHOOL MINUTES OF PARENT COUNCIL MEETING

**Meeting:** Monday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021

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**Present:** S Clark (Head Teacher), K Vallance (Chair/Secretary), A Blair (PTA Chair), L Donaldson (PTA Vice-Chair), Cllr Bamforth, S Hale (DHT), S Hussain, S Sadiq, E Morrison, J Scott, J Wong, L Jones, L Fraser, J Brindley, J Thomson, L Branter, J Carter, C Dodd, Z Robertson, G Gass

**Apologies:** J Murphy, L Ferguson

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### 1. Welcome and Apologies

K Vallance welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed apologies had been received from L Ferguson and J Murphy. K Vallance extended a welcome to the new attendees at the Parent Council meeting.

### 2. Minutes of Last Meeting (7<sup>th</sup> December 2020)

The minutes were accepted on the proposal of L Jones and seconded by J Scott.

### 3. Matters Arising

*MCHS Sports Facility* – S Clark noted that officials from ERC had met with the Principal PE Teacher (Mr Gibson) to review the specific requirements for the sports facility. Cllr Bamforth confirmed that the funding of £1.72m was still allocated in the Education capital projects budget. *Post Meeting Note – Site Investigation process now underway with the technical fieldwork phase.*

*JP Morgan IT Programme* – Mr McGarry (DHT - DYW) is exploring the matter further along with other general employer partnership opportunities. S Clark confirmed that the funding stream was now available to provide a specific school post for supporting Employer Partnerships.

### 4. Head Teacher's Report

S Clark commenced by outlining the complexity of the current situation and the difficulties in trying to plan ahead given the fluid situation.

#### *National 5, Higher & Advance Higher Mock/Prelim Exams*

S Clark highlighted that as there was no definitive return date, assessment dates could not be confirmed at this time. If the schools were to return on 15<sup>th</sup> February then it is likely that the S5/6 exams could commence on 5<sup>th</sup> March. It was noted that S4 had already managed a full mock exam diet prior to the Christmas break therefore the post lockdown period would naturally focus on providing an opportunity for S5 and S6 mock exams.

*Post Meeting Note – The Scottish Government announced that S4 to S6 pupils with practical subject requirements would be re-introduced to schools from 22<sup>nd</sup> February onwards subject to strict 2m distancing rules. It is expected this would only apply to 5-8% of pupils overall. Other year group return dates have yet to be announced.*

#### *SQA/ERC Working Group*

S Clark introduced S Hale (DHT) to discuss the above working group. S Hale confirmed that there would be a FAQ Guide produced at school level covering S4 to S6 initially. This will be shared with the Parent Forum and updated on a regular basis. *Post Meeting Note - See attached FAQ Guide v1.*

S Hale noted that there were sound moderation and validation processes in place and that regular meetings were taking place with Principal Teachers in each subject as well as close working practices with the SQA Liaison Manager and meetings with other school representatives in the Council area.

S Hale confirmed that the upcoming in-service days would be utilised by Teachers for assessment validations



#### 4. Head Teacher's Report (Cont'd)

##### *SQA/ERC Working Group (Cont'd)*

S Hale discussed the following topics:

- SQA Updates and Information Dissemination
- Online Exams – not currently planned
- Remote Learning – Preparation work being done for return to school to boost pupil engagement
- SQA Assessment Guidance – Assess pupils once they are back at school
- Assessment Evidence – Review of assessment options if lockdown continues
- Grades Calculations – MCHS moderation to awards with cross school review and validation
- Specific Grade Calculation Items – Parents and Pupils will be aware of these in advance of assessment
- Other Factors if Exams are not possible – assessments and coursework
- Impact on Timing – Flexible for pupils and teachers – there will be time for revision and consolidation
- Sharing of Grade – This will happen but timescales are flexible
- SQA Moderation – Hyperlink to the FAQ's section - <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/95157.html>
- Timeline – Pupils to prepare for assessments on return to school
- Practical Subjects – Specific guidance required but SQA may feature online assessment processes
- Learning Loss/Gaps – This will be addressed when pupils return to school
- Repeat School Year – It is not envisaged that this will be required
- Appeals Process – To be advised within SQA guidance

J Wong queried whether an exact result will be available or whether it will be limited to a grade, banding or percentage. S Hale noted that this would be included in the school FAQ Guide.

##### *Feedback – Parental Survey Findings and Teachers on Remote Learning*

S Clark was grateful that feedback from all parties was overwhelmingly positive and that it has led to a significantly better process during this lockdown. S Clark noted that all parties noted the importance of live lessons, with 80% of respondents saying they were vital. Protocols for the live lessons were being worked on to ensure that pupils were turning the camera on to provide a sense of connection between pupils, Teachers and peer group. It is also good for presentation skills. The upcoming in-service day will host a good practice workshop with Teachers.

S Clark confirmed that Teachers were constantly reviewing the amount of extension work that was being issued to pupils and that the delivery platforms were constantly being reviewed for better working methods and use of technology. J Brindley noted that there were much better protocols in place for this lockdown period and singled out Mr Gooch (Drama) as being superb during the period.

##### *Pupil Assessment Reports and Subject Choices*

S Clark admitted that the reports for S5 & S6 were very much dependent on the mock exam timetable that is possible after pupils return.

The S2 reports will be issued on 15<sup>th</sup> February and the Options Booklet issued online with a presentation on 18<sup>th</sup> February. Options will be administered via an electronic form. If pupils require to discuss matters they will be interviewed by phone. This will be run via the Guidance Team.

The S4 reports were issued on 29<sup>th</sup> January. S4 and S5 Options Booklets will be issued in early February. All S4 subject choices to be made by 12<sup>th</sup> February and all S5 subject choices to be made by 16<sup>th</sup> February.

The S3 exams and parent evening were due to be held in May but S Clark noted that this was unlikely to take place as planned. It may be possible to re-arrange for June subject to when the schools return.

S Clark noted that it is possible that the S6 year may be extended and that the finishing date will be later than normal.

S Clark confirmed that the P7/S1 Transition will consist of a virtual induction at an ERC level and that discussions were on going with all cluster primary schools. Z Robertson noted that despite the circumstances, she had a positive induction experience during the P7-S1 transition and was very much appreciated given uncertainties at primary school.

K Vallance thanked S Clark and S Hale for their reports and the continued superb efforts of the school management team and teaching staff under very challenging circumstances.



## **5. Finance Report**

L Jones outlined the current financial position of the Parent Council bank account as follows:

Opening Balance	£1,142.21
(Expenditure)/Receipt in Period	(£ 0.00)
Closing Balance	£1,142.21

## **6. Parent Teacher Association Report**

A Blair once again confirmed that it was a very difficult year for the PTA as it is for everyone connected with the school. A Blair noted that it was unlikely that the planned dress down day on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 would now go ahead but there was hope that the dress down day planned for nearer the end of term could take place.

## **7. Correspondence**

K Vallance highlighted the current Children's Panel recruitment campaign that was running until 14<sup>th</sup> February 2021 and referred to the email issued to Parent Council members for further details.

K Vallance intimated that the Equalities Forum meeting postponed from 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021 was now being held on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2021. K Vallance to attend and report back at the AGM.

K Vallance noted that the PC Chairs Forum would be taking place on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2021 and requested that any issues that Council members wished to raise should be issued to the Chair in advance. K Vallance to attend and report back at the next Council meeting.

## **8. Any Other Business:**

C Dodd was invited to highlight the work of East Renfrewshire Larder for the wider Newton Mearns community who operate a drive by service from Whitecraigs Rugby Club (Monday & Wednesday). Delivery options are also available.

## **9. Date for Next Meetings**

The next Parent Council meeting will take place on **Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 7pm**. The link for the MS Teams meeting will be advised nearer the time.

The one remaining meeting for the academic year is the **AGM** to be held on **24<sup>th</sup> May 2021**.