



# St Joseph's Primary Parent Council



Held via Zoom

## Minutes of Parent Council Meeting 21<sup>st</sup> September 2021

### Parent Attendees

Katrina Adams (Secretary), Samantha MacConnell (Chair), Sharon Constable (Vice Chair), Jackie McHendry (Treasurer), Ian Anderson (Vice Treasurer), Stacey Hogg (Social Secretary), Kirsty McDiarmid (Vice Social Secretary), Marie Charnley, Caroline Gray, Julie Richardson, Nicola Hill, Lynn Johnson, Trish Gordon, Jennifer Borthwick, Laura McBrearty, Julie O'Meara, Claire Campbell, Karen Jordan, Daniel McKendry, Clare Rae, Kaneez Sakeena

**St Joseph's School Representatives:** Suzanne Martin (Head Teacher), Karen Wynne (Deputy Head) Clionagh Leddy (Principal Teacher), Jennifer Wright (Principal Teacher)

**Community Representatives:** Cllr Ireland

Opening Prayer

Introductions and Apologies

**Apologies:** Cllr Miller, Cllr MacDonald, Fr Steven, Rose O'Connor, Gillian MacKinnon

Minutes of previous meeting and circulated and approved

Proposed by Samantha MacConnell Seconded by Trish Gordon

Matters arising

### Chairs Update

It has been a very busy couple of months since the start of term. My main objective was to survey our parents ahead of the change of office bearers at our AGM, in order to assist those taking over and to establish what our objectives for the coming academic year should be.

Taking in order then from the agenda:-

I am pleased to report that our **Connect Membership** has been renewed free of charge for the coming academic year. Connect provide invaluable support and guidance and numerous events throughout the year.

In terms of the **Cost of The School Day**, we went out to our parents via the Class WhatsApps & email to canvass views. The feedback in terms of volume of responses was really very poor; possibly timing related given it was almost at the end of the summer term and I think there may have been a degree of survey fatigue. Indeed, that is why we decided to hold back our own Communications Survey until August/September.

In terms of tone the feedback was positive. There is an overwhelming support for the school uniform and the Authority's Dressing for Excellence policy. Some commented that badged items are expensive and could the Parent Council not provide badges so that cheaper generic ones

could be sourced by parents. A few commented that it might useful be to introduce unisex blazers.

Most felt that the school and Parent Council were supportive in terms of fundraising for school trips and events, mindful of differing, individual circumstances and that we worked in partnership with our HT to support parents discreetly with higher cost items like the leavers hoodie & school trips where the school is aware of a family struggling, absorbing any shortfall in such circumstances. Praise of the Parent Council's anonymous methods of fundraising was also made.

We didn't receive any ASN comment from our parents. I forwarded all of this feedback to Marilyn Breenan at the Council at the end of June.

In terms of the **Children's Hearing Recruitment** advertisement from the Council, this was circulated by our Class Representatives to parents through the Class WhatsApps.

I attended the **Parent Council Chairs Meeting** on 1<sup>st</sup> September. The focus of the meeting was upon the current mitigations in our schools, the examination results and plan for the coming year and upon the Authorities evaluation of Parental Involvement & Engagement 2018-21. The Authority plans to issue updated data soon, however current stats appear to show that within the Authority 86% felt informed by their Parent Council but only 76% felt involved. There were some interesting comments from other Chairs which I took away:-

Some are using 'Sway' presentations to revamp their newsletters with hyper-links to draw attention to important information. Some have added photos to their section on their school's website and to their newsletters. Most were in favour moving forward of a hybrid meeting model, mixing virtual and in-person meetings where, if the tech could support, where there are in-person meetings having a function for parents to join that meeting online as well, to facilitate the greatest possible inclusion. These are some ideas which committee members may wish to take forward this year as we strive to continuously improve and to deliver the best service we can to our parents, young people and school.

A final point of interest to me was that Simon Cunningham Chair of Williamwood High School Parent Council raised the issue of defibrillators in schools. This is an item which he is championing at his school; Williamwood only has 1 – he would like to see a second given the size of the school. Our HT has confirmed that St. Joseph's doesn't have one. Simon will be contacting all Chairs about this and Mark Ratter to discuss. This again might be of interest to new committee members for the coming year.

I have noted the dates of the upcoming Equalities Forum Meetings on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2021, 19<sup>th</sup> January 2022 & 11<sup>th</sup> May 2022 and also the next Parent Council Chairs Meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2022. All of these meeting dates have been forwarded to Sharon and I am sure as a collective committee we would all be happy to assist Sharon as and when she may need us to.

I am very pleased to be able to feed back the results of our recent **Parent Council Survey** of our parents in which we focused upon canvassing views on how we are performing communication and inclusion wise and with our fundraising efforts.

Although I would have preferred to see more than 121 responses from a school with a role of 410, I am very pleased with the overall feedback, which is in the main extremely positive.

In terms of the Parent Council's overall performance, this positivity is reflected in 97.5% of those who responded feeding back that they would feel comfortable to attend a Parent Council meeting and almost 60 of the 121 who responded gave the Parent council a 10/10 score for

performance. 98.3% of those who responded feedback that the Parent Council is communicating well with parents and the same figure of 98.3% said the Parent Council engages well with parents. 99.2% agreed that the Parent Council has a good partnership with the school.

In terms of the Parent Council's fundraising performance, 115 out of 121 responded saying they thought the Parent Council is good at fundraising with the vast majority, 103 out of 121 supporting our current online banking fundraising. The majority though not by such a large margin believe we should continue with online banking fundraising alongside in-person fundraising methods when the restrictions ease enough to make that a possibility.

In terms of our 5 main fundraising objectives which have been:-

Playground Equipment, Garden Improvements, Social Events for Trips, Equipment for the School and Buses for Trips; every item scored the highest category of support, all ranging between 60-75%.

These are excellent stats and I am grateful personally and on behalf of all of the Parent Council committee members to have received these.

Moving forward with 85% of parents who responded stating they were happy for the Parent Council to hold their email addresses for communications, and given communication via email is the second highest preferred method by which to receive comms, behind the Class Whats App, then I believe we should move to develop our own email data base to sit alongside that of the school office's. Our Newsletters remain popular with parents. There appears to be less appetite for Twitter and not a great deal for a dedicated PC Class Whats App. I would suggest we should take this account as we move further through this academic season.

To summarise the key comments to the question 'what do you think the Parent Council could do to encourage greater parent participation, we received the following feedback:-

A greater presence in school when restrictions allow; Set up a closed/private Facebook page for more interaction; Clear explanations of Parent Council roles; Communicate what is involved in being a Parent Council member; Continue communicating what's going on in the school, fundraising targets etc.; Continue to encourage via platforms established; Diary invites for meetings / sign up; Some said it's hard to keep up on what's app as it's used for missing blazers etc.; Less information on what's app and more by email please; Let parents know how much work the Parent Council does and how important it is for the school and our children; Let us know if specific things are needed to be done; Alternate the nights of the week the meetings are held; More of these easy to complete questionnaires like this, which are a quick and simple means by which to gauge parents thoughts/feelings; More engagement with new parents; More family days/evenings/events when covid allows; More information on what parents can do to help; More notice of meetings; Need more of a presence - photos in newsletter and focus on x2 class reps as well; & Use Twitter.

A fair few of these comments are things which we already do fairly well, so we shouldn't be too dis-hearted; we can always improve upon the way we do things and some of the suggestions are absolutely views that we should strive to accommodate.

In terms of a summary of responses to the question we posed of how the Parent Council can we improve;, responses include:-

A closed Facebook page for the Parent Council; Development of local business partnerships that are mutually beneficial; Have meetings on different nights of the week; PC involvement in organising extracurricular activities for our children and after school clubs; Make parents more aware of the things we need support financially with and this may encourage more parents to get involved; Target recruitment for year groups which are underrepresented; Fundraising to

support Digital Learning; A return to in person family social events and evening school discos when this is possible.

There is plenty of food for thought within these points and the new committee may wish to debate which they plan to take forward first. I would personally comment though, we can only deliver more for our parents if we have enough willing volunteers to share the burden of the work involved.

I will **round off** by saying that given our focus upon strengthening the quality and frequency of our comms with parents, we have utilised and promoted parental participation within our new Class Whats App system. Our Class Reps share information with parents and issues or concerns raised can be discussed at Parent Council meetings. This method of communication has proved to be very effective over the academic term. WE have from the start of this year elected to have not only Class Representatives for each class but also a Deputy for each class, where there is a willing volunteer, to ensure assistance in disseminating the increase in our communication and to ensure a smooth transition of ownership into the following academic year. This also strives to ensure greater inclusion of parents to the Parent Council. On a recent evaluation of parental support of our Class Whats App system, undertaken by our Reps, we appear to have between a 90 – 95% uptake from parents. This initiative will hopefully encourage more parents to volunteer to help our committee members and take up office bearer roles. One disappointing exception to the above however, is that our new P1A class still, despite pleas for a volunteer by all of our Rep, doesn't have a Class Representative. This is something we must rectify as engagement with our new parents is absolutely key and with our upcoming P1 Welcome Trail in early October, we really need a parent in P1A to step up. I have mentioned the issue in my Autumn newsletter so hopefully that may bear fruit.

In addition to our Class Whats App system, we have greatly increased our comms and following through our Parent Council Twitter account. We have issued termly Newsletters to parents via school email, with a comprehensive one being issued yesterday via school email and Class Reps.

My **final comments** would be to thank all of my office bearers and committee members for their support this year. My particular thanks to Katrina for all of her invaluable secretarial support. And to our HT and her management team and staff for the carefully planned support of our children's health and wellbeing since their returned to school; and furthermore on behalf of all on the Parent Council, our gratitude for the unprecedented, additional work put in to facilitate online learning and the practical difficulties, many of which are still ongoing, caused by the pandemic.

Completed by Samantha MacConnell

19/09/21

### **Head Teachers Update**

Staffing: The school currently has 1 vacancy with Mrs Wallace leaving, she's moving to an educational charity. Interviews have been arranged for her replacement. Mr Faulds, the NQT has left P2A. Mrs Downs is due to go on maternity leave in October. The 0.9 FTE for recovery will be filled by Mrs McCardle with an additional PSA in p4. Mrs Stewart is due back from maternity leave. Social distancing is still to be maintained within the staff room, this means breaks continue to be staggered with teaching time covered. This uses 25 hours each week of PSA time.

£13k PEF will be used for reading recovery and towards the costs of the p7 residential trip for families that need support with the cost.

Staff and pupil absence due to covid is stable, currently there are 10 associated absences.

The school has 15 classes this term with 400 children.

98% attendance was recorded for the last school year.

Diagnostic assessments in spelling, maths, literacy have shown no significant gaps. However there have been some children who have not progressed and some that have fallen backwards.

Overall attainment is good, this is has shown through the assessments in p1, 4 and 7.

Most of p7 were awarded the PFFA

Playful pedagogy is being used in p3/ 4

Questionnaires on resilience and my world triangle are being completed this term

The children have settled well this term and parental support has been good.

The school are hoping there are more opportunities for parents to be involved in the school in this academic year.

Parents night will take place on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of November and will be on the phone.

There are new toilets in the school

The water in the classes is now piped in rather than from a tank

All areas of the curriculum have now been re-introduced

There will be Respect Me training in November with a chance for parents to get involved.

The Scottish government contingency plan for lockdown remains google classroom

There is a bill for repairing the trim trail of £1,500 is being by the school.

The council are supplying 10 iPads and 7 laptops

## **Treasurer's Update**

. From the opening balance of £1,704, there has been additional parental donations of £425. Easy Fundraising has paid £205 and a further £12 has been raised through the sale of ties. This gives a bank balance of £2,346 as at 19 September.

<b>Opening balance as at 1 August 2021</b>	<b>£1,704</b>
<b>Parent donations</b>	£425
<b>Easy Fundraising</b>	£205
<b>Ties</b>	£12
<b>Revised balance as at 19 September 2021</b>	<b>£2,346</b>

## **Social Secretary Update**

New Year, new fundraising target of £15,000. It is hoped there will be a few opportunities for getting people together to work towards this target.

For p1, a welcome event is planned with an activity trail for families to work through.

The Social committee is looking to register with the Morrisons good for growth scheme.

They are hoping to encourage more parents to register with Easy Fundrasing

Upcoming events include:

- Halloween Howl
- Christmas fun day

Next meeting is on 5 October

## **Uniform Update**

All new P1 uniforms were successfully delivered with exchanges in time for the start of term with exception of some knitwear and one winter jacket. This year I would like to focus on conducting a parent consultation on uniforms in particular moving to unisex blazers but also with a proposal to move items to online. Winter top up order will be issued WC 27<sup>th</sup> September for delivery after the October break. Prior to Christmas the leavers hoodies order will be issued.

## **AOCB**

Employability and Money Matter session from the council has been offered and the PC will facilitate this for parents to join.

Next Parent Council Meeting will be held on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2021