

THE PARENT COUNCIL OF ST NINIAN'S HIGH SCHOOL

PARENT COUNCIL MEETING

11th SEPTEMBER 2023

Present: J. Stewart (Joint Chair) ("JS")
S. Reid (Joint Chair)
A. Wilmott (Vice-Chair)
G. McLaughlin (Church Representative)
Michela Pagliocca
Katrina Adams
Joanne Logan
Christopher McLaughlin
Mo Wright
Lynsey O'Dwyer
Jennifer Clare Abalo
Dougie Wilson
Iltaf Dean
Elizabeth McHaffie
Adeolu Alagbe
Helen Alagbe
Meenal Poddar
Multesh Poddar
Lorna McIntosh
Anne-Marie O'Brien

Apologies: Samantha MacConnell
Julie Flaherty
Mairead Brophy

School: G. O'Neil (Head Teacher) ("Mr O'Neil")
J. Cumming
T. Creighton
C. Boyle

1. Welcome

The Office-Bearers ("OB") welcomed the Parent Council ("PC") Members in attendance. JS led the meeting in an opening prayer.

2. Apologies

A note was taken of the PC Members & School staff in attendance, and of intimated apologies.

3. **Adjustment/Approval of Previous Minutes**

The draft Minutes of the 16 May 2023 PC Meeting were proposed and approved, without adjustment.

4. **The Exam Results (Analysis)**

Mr O'Neil gave an excellent presentation on the School's 2023 exam results (for Nat4s, Nat 5s, Highers and Advanced Highers, as well as vocational results), all supported by detailed Power point slides.

To the credit of all pupils and teachers, the School's results have been wonderful.

By way of illustration:

- (i) Nat 4s – 96.5% of those sitting the exams achieved 5+ Nat 4s, compared to 96.4% in 2016, which is considered to be the strongest comparable (non-COVID) year).
- (ii) Nat 5s – 86.8% of those sitting the exams achieved 5+ Nat 5s Highers, compared to 87.6% in 2016, which is considered to be the strongest comparable (non-COVID) year. (The ERC average is 82%.) Those achieving 9+ Nat 5s has increased from 36.9% to 45.3%. The quality of passes has also increased.
- (iii) Highers (5th Year) – 76.7% of those sitting the exams achieved 5+ Highers (increasing from a figure of 70% in 2022).
- (iv) S6 Advanced Higher – 57.8% of those sitting the exams achieved 1+ “A” at Advanced Higher (compared with a figure of 59.5% in 2022)
- (v) Vocational Results – 91% of vocational course students completed and passed the courses.

Mr O'Neil observed that SNHS is out-performing other State schools in “A” passes.

Mr O'Neil also took the opportunity to emphasise the good work of (i) Pastoral Teachers, (ii) the Saturday Supported Study Groups and (iii) 6th Year mentors in assisting those pupils who may be experiencing difficulties in their studies.

The PC Members extended the gratitude of the Parent Forum to Mr O'Neil and his whole teaching & support staff for all their hard work and commitment in achieving these results.

5. **Brief Updates on Agreed Action Points from last Meeting**

The following updates were noted:

- (1) New Learning Base – The new learning base is aimed at supporting pupils who experience particular challenges in returning to full-time schooling by providing a supportive, dedicated area for them, staffed by teachers. Mr O'Neil hopes that work will be completed, and the keys to the new Base will be handed over, this weekend.
- (2) Improving Attendance - Mr O'Neil reported that improving attendance (including punctuality) remains a priority. He reminded the PC that a 90% attendance rate equates to a month of missed schooling. He reported a 1.5% increase in attendance, based on last year's statistics, but the issue remains a key objective. Attendance equates directly to attainment.

The PC supported the Head Teacher's objective.

A number of PC Members enquired whether statistics indicating decreasing attendance may be attributable in part to a tendency to discontinue teaching in the days and week leading up to the end of the School terms.

If so, the PC Members suggested that it may be beneficial to issue a clear message to pupils and parents that teaching will continue right up to the end of the School Terms – and that attendance is mandatory up to that date. It was suggested that thought might be given to offering some sort of incentive to encourage attendance to the end of Term, such as a prize.

The PC requested that Mr O'Neil give thought to how the message can best be communicated to parents and pupils that teaching will continue (and attendance is expected) right up to the final day of Term.

AGREED ACTION

The agreed action points were:

- 1. Mr O'Neil will consider how the message can best be communicated to parents and pupils that teaching will continue (and pupil attendance is expected) right up to the final day of each Term.**

5. Key Ambitions & Challenges

There was general discussion on key ambitions and challenges for the School in the forthcoming year.

Mr O'Neil wishes to look at (i) the treatment of children with additional support needs, (ii) inclusion (in its widest sense) and (iii) pastoral support.

PC Members requested greater promotion of extra-curricular clubs, especially to new parents; and perhaps Pastoral Teachers could be tasked with promoting the same to reluctant pupils. Mr O'Neil confirmed that there is high uptake of extra-curricular activities and that it is "tracked".

The OB expressed interest in finding out more about the School's Religious and Spiritual Curriculum. This is an area of interest for the Diocesan Parent Forum (a forum established by the Bishop of the Diocese of Paisley to discuss issues affecting the faith life of Catholic schools within the Diocese).

6. Mandarin Initiative

MW proposed that this item be held over for discussion at a later stage. The issue is tied up with the requirement for pupils to select subjects at an early stage perhaps after only a brief "taster" session of a subject such as Mandarin.

The PC agreed to revisit the issue when requested.

AGREED ACTION

The agreed action point was:

1. **The PC will revisit the opportunities available for pupils to study Mandarin within the School.**

7. **Head Teacher's Report**

Mr O'Neill reported the following to the PC Meeting:

- (i) The Inaugural Mass – This was well attended though parental numbers were lower than in previous years.
- (ii) New windows - A substantial project of window replacement has been completed on one side of the School. This should improve heat and ventilation efficiency.
- (ii) Vocations Mass – the Vocations Mass at St Mirin's is approaching. All are encouraged to attend.
- (iv) The Salesian Sisters have now left the School, but a series of Prayer Breakfasts has commenced, organised by teachers and senior pupils.
- (v) School trips are in full swing. Trips to the Hadron Collider in Cerne, Switzerland, to Salamanca, and to Rome, will all take place this month. Other smaller trips are in progress or imminent.
- (vi) The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme – Gold, Silver and Bronze trips have also now set off this month.

8. **Parent Questions**

The following question was raised by email by a parent:

- (i) *Traffic congestion in the car park is increasing and can hinder access to disabled drop-off places. Should access to the car park be restricted to staff and disabled access only?*

Due to pressure of time the PC did not have the opportunity to discuss this question. The question was therefore held over for discussion at the next meeting.

9. **AOCB**

Two issues were raised by PC members:

- (i) Drugs – A PC Member asked if the School was experiencing any problems with drug possession/use. Mr O'Neil stated that the campus officer would deal with such issues, if it were discovered.

- (ii) Vaping – A PC member asked whether vaping in the School was a concern. Mr O’Neil confirmed that while smoking is now almost non-existent, vaping remained an issue. However, it was dealt with robustly by staff. The children are educated on the dangers and anti-social aspects of it (including through science experiments). It is firmly opposed and dealt with by the staff.

The business of the Parent Council Meeting was then concluded.

The next PC Meeting is on Monday 9 October 2023.

**SUMMARY
OF
AGREED ACTION POINTS**

<i>Learning Centre</i>	<i>Who?</i>	<i>Timescale</i>
1. Mr O'Neil will update the PC on progress with the construction and use of the new Centre.	HT	October 23
<i>Improving Attendance</i>		
1. Mr O'Neil will consider how the message can best be communicated to parents and pupils that teaching will continue (and pupil attendance is expected) right up to the final day of each Term.	HT	Ongoing
<i>Mandarin Initiative</i>		
1. The PC will revisit the issue of Mandarin choice once more information is available	PC	Ongoing