

**Parent Council Meeting 4th September 2023**

**Zoom Meeting**

**Present:** Amanda O’Donoghue (Chair), Geri Collins (HT), Karen Carruthers, Linda Biggins (Clerk), Katie Ferguson (Pastoral Care), Julie Brown (Treasurer), Gill Docherty, Joanne Ferguson, Laura McInally, Alison Pearson, Julie Waugh (Maths Teacher), PC Tanya, Fiona Hunter, Gail Thomson, Yla Barrie, Emma Durnan, Charles Gay & Cllr Ferguson

**Apologies:** Lesley Best, Jill Stevenson, Jade Graham, Jigjit Kaur Tait

**Minutes of Last Meeting**

The Minutes of last meeting 4th September 2023 were approved.

**Matters Arising**

Seasonal uniform results

i. Staff: 66% in favour, 22% happy with either, 12% no

ii. Pupils: 73% in favour, 17% happy with either, 10% no

iii. Parents: 72% in favour, 20% happy with either, 8% no

**Head Teachers Report**

Senior Awards Ceremony - lots of lovely feedback received.

Issued our first S4 Tracking Report

Collated our first S5/6 cause for concern alert

Issued our first S1 and first S3 Tracking Report

PC Tanya gave an update regarding the reduced bus service. Noted that the majority of the 57/57A had been reduced to a single deck bus due to criminality. Although this had not involved Hillpark kids it had negatively impacted on them. More parents were now doing drop off/pick up having an impact on the surrounding streets. Cllr Hussain has been engaging with First Bus in order to try and get this resolved. With winter nights/poor weather/lack of bus shelters it is becoming difficult for the children to use public transport and also there is a lot of the cohort coming in late. All feedback from parents has been taken forward and Cllr Ferguson (present) agrees that this is difficult. Also the No 29 service will be effected by reduced funding later this year and this too may also negatively effect the children who are catching public transport. Katie Ferguson also raised the free bus pass and the passes that the children are issued change when they turn 12. Some drivers are taking expiring passes off children which again means they are unable to travel. This too will be raised going forward. Cllr Ferguson has asked to be kept in the loop as things progress, as this service will ultimately impact here. PC Tanya will kindly keep Parent Council informed.

A general round the room welcome was given and parents confirmed year group for their children. The parents who attended the AGM were welcomed and are invited to join Parent Council should they wish.

**S3 Inspire a Cohort**

Young people in S3 again enjoyed the Inspire a Cohort Programme which involved study skills, growth mindset techniques, problem solving activities and entertainment via our amazing Soul and Rock bands.

**House Captains**

Interviews have taken place to appoint our School Captains and we are already impressed by their attitude and their commitment.

**STEM Roadshow**

All of S1 and S2 enjoyed a STEM Roadshow through the BAE Systems, RAF & Royal Navy Education Programme.

**Supported Study**

Supported Study programme is well underway but could be better attended. Please encourage your child to attend and benefit from an early focus.

**Whole School Improvement Plan 2023/24**

Evaluate the appropriateness of our Values (ASPIRE) – Ask all stakeholders. Achieving, Supportive, Positive, Included, Respectful, Equal.

Do we want to continue with the acronym ASPIRE. Yes / no

If we continue with ASPIRE are there better words we can use? Please provide suggestions for : A, S, P, I, R, E. (maybe sustainable and equity rather than equality). Parent council members also asked if the children in the posters were indeed still at the school, as they are not it would be good to update any posters. Mrs Collins has advised that budget is very tight this year, and if the school is to do this it will need to get creative about funding - ie fund raising or perhaps going for grants. This will need to be explored further with Parent Council as this progresses. Cllr Ferguson commented that there is grant funding we could apply for.

Review current Health and Wellbeing policy. Parents Council to represent Parent Forum when evaluating our current Policy. This will be led by B Haldane.

We need to improve our data analysis of tracking within the BGE in order to ensure effective interventions designed to improve outcomes for our learners. Parent council to help wider Parent forum to understand BGE tracking in line with Curriculum for Excellence. Workshops could be organise inviting parents and carers into the school.

Continued partnership working within the Collaborative Improvement Group will support improvement when assessing progress within the BGE. Members of Parent Council to be part of collaborative improvement programme looking at IDL across the BGE.

Embrace diversity through celebration of Music, food and sports etc to include all nationalities within the school community/dept. Parent Council to support any such events.

The continued reinforcement of the wellbeing indicators to ensure that they are embedded within the culture of the school. Parent Council to regularly seek the views of the wider Parent Forum and raise as agenda items at Parent Council meetings.

Could the parent council be more involved in supporting young people towards a positive destination – mock interviews, subject knowledge / skills required to secure a job? How would this be organised etc.

Departments will continue to think creatively when engaging parents and carers. Can Parent council support our parents and carers either informally (Cosy café) or through parents evenings – S4/5/6 have an extra parents evening now.

We will continue to improve our communication channels including, groupcall, twitter, facebook and our website. Could Parent Council have their own channel for communication with the parent forum?

We need to improve out systems for monitoring parental participation. How do we measure this within the parent council?

Dates to consider:

P6/7 Information evening – Wednesday 11th October 6pm till 8pm

Friday 13th October – Inset day 3

Monday 16th till Friday 20th October – October Week holidays

S2 Tracking Report to be issued 26th October

**Parent Comments**

Amanda asked if Parent Council should be present for the P6/7 information evening on 11 October. If so, then in what form could this take - eg a desk with questions, or a QR code etc. Julie highlighted that it could be good for parents coming up from primary to know that there is an opporunity to join Parent Council. Geri thinks it might be better placed for the S1 parents night on the 7th November, we will decide at next parent council (the day prior). Charles commented it would be good to get involved and noted that good communication from Parent Council would be key. Katie said it would be nice to have a meet and greet table for parent council to be there.

Geri confirmed we do not need a large Parent Council as long as we heard the voice of the school and conveyed this that is the essence needed. Gail asked if we have different ethnic group contacts within the school? Geri adviced the school is a real melting pot of culture and the go out their way to ensure that everyone feels welcome and part of the school. Fiona commented that it needs to feel personal to get people involved and sometimes a Tweet doesn't cut through. Yla asked if a parents comments box could be available if we had a meet and greet table and perhaps that might spark some engagement.

Amanda asked the Parent Council if they would prefer in person meetings or Zoom (to try and encourage more engagement). Also, though we all really like to hear the Head Teachers report - should that be the leading point on the agenda? Or should Parent Council (per above) have more projects/queries? It was agreed within Council that Zoom meetings are more convenient (and perhaps for the winter months better) so for Nov/Dec they will be via Zoom and we can decide then for Jan. We currently have a member who gives access to Zoom as Parent Council does not have an account. Should access be needed after this year, then Yla advised Merrylea Primary Parent Council have an account and perhaps this could be used (this will be explored if need be in 12 months).

A question was asked regarding lockers - and when will these be available to the Cohort? Geri advised that a lot of the locker doors needed fixed and the batteries replaced. This work is underway and the lockers will be available after October week. Julie asked if there would be a fee? This led to some lively discussion about previous years fees. If there is one this year - perhaps the funding could be used to update the ASPIRE value posters (if these were changed).

The Parent Council would be keen to support the ASPIRE values revisit, Emma advised she may be able to help with a more fiscal way of updating posters if this was taken forward. Noted that this will be explored further should posters indeed be updated. Julie W advised most of the children in the posters have now left the school so along with the wording update (if taken forward) new posters would be good to have.

Charles asked if there is a fund for children who cannot afford trips? Noted the Paris trip is back up and running, however there was not a lot of lead time for parents to make the decision regarding the cost (circa £700) and then pay the deposit. Geri advised the school is too big to have a fund for this - how would you pick one or two children above all others? Pastoral care could have a role in this, but it could prove very difficult. Noted that the school is trying to get back into the routine of offering trips (after everything was suspended due to COVID) but again, it is difficult. The West Linton trip will be offered for S1 this year. Charles commented it would be good to have a calendar for parents at the start of the year for what is potentially up and coming for the cohorts - and with an approx cost and due date. It would give parents the opportunity to plan/save.

**Any Other Business**

**Date of Next Meeting**

Monday 6th November, 2023 - via Zoom