



St Mary's Parent Partnership - Online Meeting

September 13th 2021

Present:

Mrs Guthrie (HT)	K Ferrie
Mrs Blincow (DHT)	V Bonnar
Mrs Macdonald (DHT)	J Boyd
G Forbes (Active Schools)	C O'Donnell
D McLaughlin (Chairperson)	C Burrows
V Pollard (Treasurer)	K McGlashan
G Henry (Secretary) - minutes	S Hastings
J Sheridan (Vice Secretary)	P McKellar
S O'Brien (Vice Treasurer)	H McGivern
J McCafferty	L Owens
S McLarty	

Apologies:

M Cassidy (Chairperson)	J McCabe
S McBride	M Purdue

1. **Welcome & Apologies** - D McLaughlin welcomed everyone and apologies were noted. A special welcome was extended the new P1 parents for joining us this evening. The role of PP was briefly explained.
2. **Active Schools**
Thank you to Gary for joining us to explain his role within the school. Active Schools are now looking to start back extra-curricular activities at lunchtime and after school.
 - P7 playmakers programme will be offered to all P7 pupils
 - P1-P3 core programme will be available to all pupils this year to catch up on classes who missed out in previous years
 - Sports such as athletics, lunchtime football, tennis etc to be offered later in the academic year.

Gary explained that they are following a Recovery Plan so it might take time to get back to the same position as pre-covid but hopefully they can get enough volunteers and coaches to help. It would be great if any Parents/Guardians would be willing to volunteer to help in St Mary's. They would be mentored and supported by Active Schools and PVG checked. If anyone is interested, please contact Mrs Guthrie to obtain Gary's email details.

3. **HT Update** - Mrs Guthrie updated us on a number of items:

Uniform

All children have settled in really well to school and are looking very smart in school uniform - Mrs Guthrie expressed her thanks for this. There was some confusion about the relaxed uniform because information came during the summer holidays and the school were not able to let parents know.

Leavers' Hoodies will be ordered after Easter and given out before the children do their transition visits to secondary. Mrs Guthrie explained her reasons for the timing of this and felt that it is important that P7 children still feel part of St Mary's until the end of the year.

Covid Cases

At the time of the meeting, there were 5 children off school with covid (P3, P6 and P7a) and another 8 isolating or waiting for a test. This number changes regularly but Risk Assessments are in place and the school is doing everything it can to minimise the risk of Covid in the school. This includes continued handwashing, sanitising shared social distancing at breaks between adults etc.

Breaks are staggered but children do not need to stick to bubbles at present. Procedures are in place if the school suspects anyone has covid-19. This includes an isolation area, cleaning of rooms and we also have a day cleaner in school, which is very reassuring.

Primary One Welcome Mass

Mrs Guthrie was pleased to see a number of our new P1 children at this special Mass and she particularly enjoyed their singing.

Sacraments

No dates have been confirmed yet but Bishop John has stated that Confirmation should take place in individual parishes again next year.

First Communion Gifts

The P4 Thanksgiving Mass was cancelled at the end of term so gifts weren't given out then. They have now been given out to pupils.

Parents' evenings/Concerts

It is still unknown what will happen with school concerts/parents' evenings but it is unlikely we will be able to have parents in the school. If this is the case, we will organise phone calls again in November and this seems to be what most schools are doing. It had been suggested that we could use TEAMS but school wifi would make this impractical.

School Improvement Plan

The School Improvement Plan and Standards and Quality Report are both on the school website. Some priorities are mentioned below:

Play Pedagogy - P1 teachers have already undertaken some training and plans are in place for them to spend some time at Glenpark Nursery. Further training and funding is expected from the council. The school has been promised outside storage for Loose Parts, so we can start to gather these up once we have it.

Laudato Si/COP 26/Catholic Education Week - This will be a whole school focus for the month of November.

Digital Literacy - the school had planned to order more laptops so that children can incorporate IT into their learning in the class but Mrs Guthrie has been advised to wait until there is further guidance from the authority. Staff are taking part in online training courses provided by the authority to build up their skills in teaching Digital Literacy.

Pupil Equity Fund

The Pupil Equity Fund plan helps to ensure that poverty does not stand in the way of children learning to the best of their ability. St Mary's were allocated £77,000 this year and most of this is being spent on additional staffing (teacher and pupil support assistants) so that extra support can be provided to identified children.

Changes to Support Staff in Inverclyde Schools

Classroom assistants and ASN auxiliaries have now been moved on to the one contract as Pupil Support Assistants. This is in recognition of how much their role has changed recently and Mrs Guthrie praised the wonderful support they give to teachers and children in class.

Primary 4 Swimming

We have been advised that there are plans to provide P4 swimming lessons later in the session, as long as further restrictions are not imposed.

Bikeability

We currently have only one member of staff trained in this (the rest have retired). Mrs Guthrie has requested training for support staff in February, with a view to delivering this in the final term.

Jubilee Holiday

Dates will be sent out once they have been agreed by councillors.

Funding for the school

Infant teachers have a wishlist of some things that have been recommended for play pedagogy (including large building blocks, Kapla blocks and Tuff Trays. Discussion took place regarding funding for these items and the Parent Partnership agreed to provide money to help cover this. Costs will be calculated and passed on to the PP.

Breakfast Club

A council advert went out a few months ago but there were not enough applicants to cover current vacancies and also set up another breakfast club in St Mary's. There will be another advert going out soon and some of St Mary's support staff have now expressed an interest in this. We are hopeful that this is something that we can get up and running for 2 days a week.

P7 Residential Trip

Ardentinny is booked for 9-11th February 2022. Hopefully it will be able to go ahead but this may change if restrictions are re-imposed.

Kelly Street Landscaping

The work is progressing well and should be completed by the October break. Mrs Guthrie talked about a patch of ground at the reception entrance that we would like to do some planting in. If anyone has any contacts with garden centres or someone who could provide soil and plants for us, then please get in touch.

4. Accounts

D McLaughlin gave a summary of our current account. Accounts have been prepared up to 29th July '21 and our current balance is £2593.85. Accounts will now be prepared in the same way going forward and income and expenditure for the full year will be presented each September. Many thanks to John Boyd for auditing our accounts ahead of tonight's meeting. Accounts are all accurate and we will ensure we have two people counting & recording all cash we receive during the year.

5. Fundraising

We discussed the need to continue with fundraising so we can still support the school and provide parties and gifts for pupils at various times of the year.

Upcoming plans:

Santa Quest Day was a huge success last year and pupils really enjoyed it. It was agreed that we should do this again with updated activities to make it slightly different from last year. J McCafferty suggested that P7s or the Pupil Council could come up with suggestions of new activities for this year. J Boyd and V Bonnar kindly agreed to co-ordinate this event and will liaise with Mrs Guthrie for dates.

Class Christmas Cards were also very well received last year. L Owens agreed to help with the organisation of this again and we are very grateful for Lynne's expertise.

6. AOB

Kelly Street Accessibility

Concerns were raised about the new outdoor stairs/ampitheatre at Kelly St not being user friendly. Lots of discussion took place around inclusion and it was felt by many that all areas of the school and playground should really be accessible for all pupils. We also discussed the possibility of accessible play equipment in the playground. Mrs Guthrie mentioned that Health and Safety was a big consideration and that a barrier would possibly be getting put in to access stairs at the West Stewart Street entrance. We suggested that we contact the Council to express concerns and it was agreed that we should invite relevant council reps to our next meeting. Mrs Guthrie will confirm who is best to contact (eg Eddie Montgomery/Alastair Mackintosh). G Henry will send the original Kelly St plans to the PP whatsapp group for parents to look at. Now that the site is under construction, the plans are easier to visualise than they were when we first saw them several months ago.

Banking

With V Pollard now taking over as secretary from L Brown, we discussed the need for someone else to act as a signatory along with S O'Brien. Julie McCafferty agreed to take on this role.

School Gates

We discussed the current set up with infants going straight to class and it was asked if this is likely to change. Mrs Guthrie explained that the current arrangement helps to protect parents because when infants go straight into class, it should prevent adults from then standing around the gates.

Safety at the infant gate was discussed. It was noted that cars often double park on the cobbled turning point right outside the Kelly St entrance and this is very dangerous. Mrs Guthrie agreed to keep reminding parents in future newsletters.

7. Next Meeting - Monday 25th October at 7pm.