

## **Beith Parent Council Meeting – 26<sup>th</sup> January 2022**

### **Attendees**

Colin Wright –Chair

Una Doolan – Facilities Management

Shelia Dalton – Area Catering Officer

Fiona Dunlop – Head Teacher

Morven McLean – Depute Head

Russell Lambert – Depute Head

Catherine Thom

Avril

Anna Sutherland

Lisa Davenport

Welcome . Apologies from Joanne, Amanda and Kirsty.

### **Update – School Dinners**

Una Doolan and Shelia Dalton from NAC Facilities joined the meeting to discuss the concerns over low uptake of school meals, despite the increase of the offer of free school meals now covering P1 – P5. They had compiled an overview from the cashless system comparing two dates, one in November 2021 and the second in January 2022, both dates offering the same menu and displaying similar pupil attendance and found that in November there was at 56% uptake of school meals when in January the figure had dropped significantly to 40%. Ideas were discussed to help improve the numbers e.g a simplified menu with accompanying photos in order that the children across all primaries knew what they were choosing. Ideas for tasting sessions were discussed as they had been previously successful. Una acknowledged that the removal of some things from the menu were beyond their control and were due to supply issues and staff shortages due to the Covid situation. New menus are in development and will be issued in due course and will reflect the Government guidance on the reduction of red meat and the inclusion of a meat free hot meal. Sandwich options will continue to be available. Miss Dunlop expressed the importance of pupils who are eligible for free school meals ensuring that they sign up whether they use them or not as this how the Pupil Equity Fund is generated and the school uses this money to fund vital activities and projects. It was agreed that this would be more widely shared both on the PC Facebook page and through Seesaw. Mr Lambert will send a message direct to P5 parents stating that the free school meal eligibility extends to P5 as it was felt that it hadn't been widely advertised.

### **School Update**

Mr Lambert started by saying how delighted all the staff and pupils were to be back after the holidays but expressed that it hadn't been without its challenges due to the Omicron outbreak and the guidance that was in place for that. Despite staff absences reaching dangerous levels ,the school was able to remain open and teaching continued as normal despite staff substitutions .

Beith Primary were awarded a Sustainable Learning Grant for £5000 which will be used to further the development of the gardens, including a pond being built. Thanks was given to Mrs McMillan and her relationships with the local businesses in regards to securing help with these works .

The school also received a grant from the Youth PB for £1000 on behalf of the sporting clubs and activities. This money has been used to purchase new sports equipment and Beith Primary are proud to say that they are the top in North Ayrshire with regards to how many before/after school sports clubs and activities we offer. A huge thank you to the staff and pupils engagement in this.

A Cash for Kids grant for £1200 was also received and this was used to purchase Tesco vouchers and vouchers for a local café to give to the vulnerable families of our school community.

Danielle, the Family Living Worker has been established in the school for a while and has been running the Family Support Group with success. Concern was raised over this months activity being low on the uptake. Activities based around STEM and aimed at P5 &6. Mr Lambert will continue with encouragement to take part via Seesaw and visiting the kids in class.

### Play Based Learning

Miss McLean spoke on the Play Based Learning that is in place for P1-P3. It is running very well and the teachers are seeing huge impacts on how the kids are responding to it and how its being used to help further their development.

The Uniform Swap Shop is now up and running and staff are keen for it to be used by all families ,either by donating unwanted/outgrown items, by swapping an item for another size or by expressing a need for anything particular. Parents are to be encouraged to access this by using the form displayed on the PC page or by contacting teachers via Seesaw. It was emphasised that this was not just to help out with the general cost of the school day but to encourage recycling and sustainability.

### Covid

Miss Dunlop mentioned that due to the escalation of Omicron cases towards the tail end of last year and the beginning of this current year were of a huge challenge to the staff. But she expressed her thankfulness that the school remained open and extends appreciation to all the staff. The school are still under restrictions and so guidelines in place for face coverings etc still have to be adhered to

### Absence Management Procedures

School Policy states that if a pupils absence rate falls below 90% then letters are sent home expressing concern. Obviously, due to the current Covid climate then absences are higher than normal and the school are aware of this. Most parents are also understanding that procedures have to be followed regarding this. Miss Dunlop expressed her concern over the pupils who aren't attending regularly (not due to covid) and the huge impact that has on an individuals learning. Miss Dunlop stated that there is help and support for parents who struggle to get their child/ren to attend school and that open communication with the school is key in helping this take place. Parents are encouraged not to book holidays within term time. Miss Dunlop highlighted the links between absences and the attainment gap and the school is keen to reduce these with the pupils individual progression being the main reason for this. Regular tracking meetings between SLT and teachers are seeing improvements with regards to the main areas of literacy and numeracy but there is great hope for a more substantial improvement.

### Positive Relationship Policy

The Positive relationship policy is based on the school values and is aimed at providing children with the skills and resilience to help resolve situations. Miss Dunlop acknowledged that the school hasn't been great at sharing that message and was looking for input as to how that could be addressed. Colin suggested a short video from staff explaining the policy in a way that was accessible to all and it was agreed this would be done. There will be a review of the leaflets that are given to adults and children on how we aim to resolve conflict. Links to videos will be sent in due course.

### Finance Update

Current balance is £1859.99

- £392 - payment to NA
- £450 - Payment to NA
- £124.76 on Halloween Bags
- £80.43 on Christmas Quiz Prizes

School will send invoice to PC for selection boxes.

### P5 Trip

Miss Tyeson shared a video from P5's asking for help and ideas with fundraising for their trip to Harry Potter Studios. It was discussed that additional fundraising ideas would be difficult to factor in to an already busy calendar but if they were able to provide a figure that they were hoping for then the PC would meet and discuss how we could help. Figure was to be obtained before PC meet next week to discuss their own fundraising activities.

A xpressions message was requested from Colin to appeal for raffle prizes for the upcoming quiz night.

## P7 Transport Transitions

A parent had requested that this issue be brought up at the meeting. The query was that would the transitioning P7 pupils be offered free transport to Garnock Community Campus as they begin their attendance at the school.

Miss Dunlop advised that the transport policy was based in North Ayrshire Council and did not come direct from any school. The policy states that because the campus is within three miles of the catchment area and there are safe walking routes then there is no expectancy of any free transport provided by the Council