

WEST KILBRIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL
Parent Council AGM- Monday 11th September 2023

Head Teacher Report- Mrs Carson



1. Welcome

Firstly, I would like to thank parents for the warm welcome I have received. The support from the local community, parents, staff and most importantly, our pupils, has been overwhelming and I am looking forward to working very closely with our stakeholders to ensure West Kilbride Primary is a success and sits at the heart of the community. I have already met a number of our parents whilst I have been out in the playground and look forward to meeting many more at our parental engagement events this week.

2. Staffing

We are currently recruiting for two 1.0 FTE Classroom Assistants, who will be funded through the Inclusion Group. Adverts for these posts closed on Sunday 3rd September and I am compiling a short leet this week. I am also undertaking a Job Sizing exercise prior to the recruitment of our permanent Depute Head Teacher position.

3. Communication

I appreciate there may have been some historic barriers to communication between the school and the parent body. Moving forward, we aim to be open, organised and consistent in our communications with parents. We have created a weekly diary for staff to ensure they have an overview of the coming week- this will reflect changes to staffing, assembly times etc. to ensure classes are organised and run smoothly. We have already issued an annual calendar to parents- this is to support parents to arrange childcare and work commitments to ensure they can attend school events, where possible. The annual calendar will be updated and re-issued termly and will also be available to view on our school website. Event specific information and reminders will be sent throughout the year. Termly newsletters will also be issued.

Whole school communications will be issued via the Xpressions app. Class-based communications will be shared using Seesaw. Given the Working Time Agreement signed this year, class teachers have been given a nominal allocation of time for Seesaw updates and so correspondence via this platform will be at class teacher's discretion and some may choose to share more than others. Unfortunately, we are not in a position this year to add more time to our WTA to promote this further. Sharing of whole school events such as our Arran residential, will be shared via the school's X page (formerly Twitter) to ensure our local community can share in our successes. You will have seen links sent via Xpressions to class WhatsApp groups- although not managed by the school, these are a great platform for getting to know other parents and for informal advice or guidance.

Thank you to the Parent Council for supporting our communication strategy by re-sharing key messages within their Facebook page- the support is noticed and appreciated.

4. Attainment

Draft data shows West Kilbride Primary as one of the lowest attaining schools across our Local Authority and assessment data completed at the end of last term and the beginning of this term is showing that we have a significant number of pupils who are not on track to meet expected levels of attainment. As a school, we will be primarily focussed on improving our attainment this year and for the next few years. This work will take many forms, including the development of learning and teaching input, professional development opportunities and the creation of robust planning, tracking, monitoring and assessment practices. This may mean that other elements of the school year, for example school shows, need to be simplified or paired back to accommodate. However, it is important that we prioritise the learning experiences of our young people. This will also have a substantial impact on our school budget- again, our spending focus will be on educational resources and programmes of work to improve attainment levels. This will also have a residual impact on other school experiences. At present 54.5% of our core school budget for this financial year has already been allocated and so, future spends will need to be considered carefully.

5. Parent Helpers

Given that so much time has been allocated to developing our capacity for learning and teaching this year, we are looking for our parent body to offer support to ensure we can maximise our offerings to pupils. Ideally, we are looking for a few consistent volunteers who would be able to offer a full day a week to support the delivery of our intervention programme, with full training provided. I will send a request out to parents for support this week.

Our class teachers are able to offer lunch-time or after-school clubs at their discretion but they cannot be asked to lead these, as per working time conditions. We are looking at the possibility of parents leading these without staff supervision and we are awaiting guidance. Again, communications will go to parents regarding this.

6. School Trips

Our school budget will be more restricted than usual this year to support the delivery of interventions and to fund programmes of work, which we are currently without. However, the response from the Parent Council survey regarding school trips suggested 91% of parents are keen to provide financial support to ensure pupils are given the opportunity to learn beyond the school grounds, with the Parent Council also looking to contribute in support of this. I am keen to explore what we will be able to offer and will take parental feedback on board whilst doing so. Therefore I have asked each stage to suggest a school trip linked to their learning experiences. Our main barrier to engagement is the cost of buses- our trip to the Day of Dance has a transport cost of £235. However, we will do what we can to maximise pupil attendance at out-of-school learning experiences and hope that every pupil will benefit from a trip this academic year, subject to funding restrictions. Of course, families who are not able to contribute financially will not be placed at a disadvantage and all pupils will be supported to attend.

7. Playground Activities

New chalkboards have been installed in the playground for pupil use today. Playground resource boxes are in place for each stage, with each class allocating a weekly helper to bring out and pack away their resource box during break times. Classroom Assistants are on hand to engage pupils in playground games and to foster friendships- I have reminded support staff that pupils should be encouraged to engage with peers beyond their own class. There are no plans to provide additional playground activities at present. However, the Parent Council are welcome to take this on board should they have the capacity.

8. Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy

I am aware that a survey was distributed prior to the summer to gather parental views regarding a positive relationships policy update. This is something that I am keen to update moving forward. However, this will not be possible immediately due to competing priorities. I aim to have an update before the end of the calendar year.

9. Homework Policy

New homework guidance was issued to staff this week to ensure we have a consistent approach across the school. Staff have been asked to issue some homework today and for the guidance to be fully realised by next week. Moving forward, homework will be issued each Monday with a return deadline by the following Friday, although it will be accepted in at any point during that week. Homework will not be issued on a shortened week. Homework will always be marked. However, this will not always be before the next set is issued, given the timescales. It is strongly suggested that parents support their child to complete homework. However, this is not mandatory and we understand that home routines may not be able to lend themselves to this. As a result, all homework issued will be pre-learning or consolidation work and as such, will always be covered in class. An overview grid will be sent via Seesaw. This may contain links to online learning activities. A homework jotter will also be issued for handwritten tasks, alongside worksheet tasks as appropriate. Further information on this will be shared with the larger parent body during our Learning Conversation events.