

Braidhurst Parents' Group

Minutes of Meeting Tuesday 10th October 2017

School Library, 6.30pm

Present: Claire Wright (Chair), David Clark (Vice-Chair), Jackie Thomson, Vikki Speirs, Jacqueline Smith, Lesleyann Dougan, Carolyn Rooney, Ruth Anderson, Tom Paterson, Karen McAra Ruth Watson (Treasurer), Linda McGurk, and Kirsten Scott (Clerk).

Apologies: David Richards, Natalie McPake, Lesley Burns, Moira May and Meghan Gallacher.

1. Welcome. CW welcomed everyone with a special mention to the two new members VS and JS. Group introduced themselves to the new members.

2. Minutes from previous meeting adopted by DC.

3. Matters arising from previous minutes.

DC updated the group on the matter of road safety at the school gates. A visit took place where Campbell Dyer (Head of Roads for the Southern section of North Lanarkshire Council) inspected the road markings etc. surrounding the school. Mr Dyer concluded that there were sufficient markings on the road and therefore the road was deemed safe and satisfactory. He also advised that the group can write a letter detailing their concerns.

RA raised the point that Mr Dyer needs to view the movement of traffic and pupils at the start and end of the school day as this is when problems arise.

CR asked DC to invite Mr Dyer back to inspect the road safety at the end of the school day.

4. Tom Paterson and Karen McAra presented the group with an explanation of the school's 'Merit and Demerit' System.

TP and KMc informed parents that pupils are rewarded merits by teaching staff for good behaviour whilst pupils behaving badly in class are given a demerit. These are then fed back to pupils and parents via pupil reports and are used to determine which pupils attend school reward trips e.g.: our recent trip to Blackpool.

KMc asked if parents/carers were aware of that merits are issued for behavioural performance rather than academic performance?

The group agreed that this perhaps could be made clearer and that a question asking parents/carers whether or not they know what they 'Merit and Demerit' system is and what it rewards would be a good question to open the survey.

KMc asked: are pupils fully aware what merits/demerits are for?

The group responded that pupils were possibly not aware and that this could be made clearer and that the school should stress to pupils that merits are only part of their school report.

DC remarked that personally he is not interested in the merit/demerit part of his son's report and instead focuses on the academic sections to make sure they are heading in the right direction with their subjects.

TP and KMc are eager to get the views of parents/carers on this system so asked the group what would be the best way to ensure that a high number of responses are returned.

Ask parents/carers face-to-face at an Information Night.

DC commented on the poor attendance of parents at the recent S4/S5/S6 Information Night so this may not be the best option.

Survey parents/carers by sending home a paper questionnaire.

The group believed that this was a risky strategy as many pupils fail to give their parents/carers any school letters and so the survey may languish at the bottom of a school bag.

A questionnaire sent by email.

The group agreed that this was the best option especially as we have emails on Seemis for the majority of parents/carers.

JT remarked that TP and KMc should keep in mind that the same parents/carers return everything all the time so no matter what approach they follow they might not receive responses from certain parents/carers.

A general discussion to place regarding the issuing of merits/demerits as some pupils who exhibit constant good behaviour do not receive merits whereas those pupils who are present challenging behaviour are awarded merits when they show improvement.

CR remarked that merits are subjective and may never be 100% fair but that the school are committed to creating a merit/demerit system that is as fair as it can be.

KMc supported this by stating that staff are keen to come up with a clearer and more unified system.

5. Head Teacher's Report

The school newsletter will be issued to parents/carers prior to the October half term break.

Interim reports will be issued imminently.

The group were shown an example of an interim report and were given an explanation on the 'Progress' section of the report e.g. the star system:

* = Unsatisfactory

** = Fair

*** = Good

***** = Very Good

Mentoring groups are also starting up with our high tariff S4 and S5/6 pupils.

Personal support is also being offered to pupils and this will be streamed by pupil destination after school e.g.: university, college or work/apprenticeship.

CR also discussed pupil interventions as a means of extra support. If any of the following sections are red/amber on pupil reports the individual will receive an intervention e.g.: meeting with Pupil Support or subject Principle Teacher to discuss the issue/concern and steps to improve:

Behaviour

Homework

Effort

The school are keen to increase awareness amongst pupils that everyone is being monitored.

Interim reports are now being displayed (only for a short time) as some pupils are sensitive that everyone can see their report. However, this has also proved useful as pupils are becoming more proactive if they have a red/amber for any section and are motivated to change this.

Our recent inter-house 'Fun Run' raised £2000.

We have another inter-house event scheduled for the afternoon of Friday 13th October.

Our Halloween disco 'Fright Night' will take place on Thursday 26th October and this is being organised by a group of S5/6 pupils.

The S4 Parents Night has been re-scheduled for 30th October.

We are trialling an online booking system for parent appointments for the S1 Parents' Night. This will save paper appointment sheets being handed out to pupils.

However, the group commented that it is always hard to stick to the running schedule for appointments on such nights so this has the potential to go awry.

6. Financial Report

RW outlined the current financial position of the group.

£2400.21 in fund.

We have sold 3 or four lockers.

The Modern Languages bid that was approved at the last meeting has gone through.

7. Bids

CW handed round the group bids received from the Science and Performing Arts departments and the Prom Committee.

Science Bid = £777.47 for calculators, dictionaries and thermometers.

Group approved £402 to Science.

Music Bid = £933 for a drum kit and music stands.

Group approved £683 to Performing Arts.

Prom = £500.

Group asked that this be put on hold till 2018.

8. Communication

CW highlighted the need for group members to always send in their apologies in advance of meetings if they are unable to attend. This is even more important regarding training sessions as we could be barred from attending future training dates. Some courses have a limit on attendees therefore if we are booking places and then not turning up this reflects badly on the group and could result in us being excluded. Apologies can be sent by email or text to any member of the group especially CW as chair DC as vice chair and KS as clerk.

9. AOB

LMc updated the group with news that over the half term break some of the Pupil Equity Fund money will be used to provide our own version of the 'Make, Munch, Move' initiative. Targeted pupils will be invited in with their parents/carers to school on Monday 16th and Tuesday 17th October. Attendees will be preparing a healthy lunch, having their lunch and then taking part in a healthy activity such as trampolining.

DC volunteered a contact as a chef – Bob Beattie from Motherwell Football Club who perhaps could come into school during the summer break to offer similar sessions.

CR provided the group with a quick update on the school building works. Unfortunately the work is not starting when expected e.g.: the October holiday. The work has been signed off between the council and the Hub and we are now waiting for it to be signed off between the Hub and Keir. Once this has happened CR, RA and school janitor Fraser Lawson will have to sit down with the builders to come up with a schedule of work within the school.

JT raised the issue of falling standards in school uniforms in particular the length of school skirts.

CR/RA suggested holding assemblies to reinforce appropriated uniform standards.

8. Next meeting – Tuesday 16th January 2018 at 6.30pm in the school library.