  

  **St Augustine's Primary and Nursery Class Parent Council Meeting**

**Minutes of Meeting on 25th of November 2020**

**Parent Council Members Present:**

Stephen Kirley (Chair)

Jamie Doran (Vice-chair)

Amanda O'Dowd

Gillian McCaul

Iain Kinnear

Martin McWilliams

Nojki Sawaya-McLeish

**Others Present:**

Caroline Docherty (HT)

Father Kane

**Apologies:**

Aileen Digweed

Lisa McDines

Cllr Tom Castles

Cllr Geraldine Woods

**Agenda:**

**1. Chairperson Welcome and Apologies**

Chairperson welcomed everyone to tonight's Parent Council Meeting, with special thanks to Father Kane for joining. It was noted that this would be the last Parent Council Meeting of 2020, and everyone was thanked for adapting to the meetings on MS Teams this year. It is hoped that we can return to some normality in 2021.

**2. Parent Council update on matters arising since last meeting**

* Mr Kirley and Ms McCaul both attended the Parental Consultative Group meeting on the 9th of November run by Derek Brown. It was highlighted that NLC has had an increasingly difficult year, especially now going into Tier 3 and subsequently Tier 4. Since the start of term there have been over 4500 children in NLC contacted by Track and Trace and affected by self-isolation. At the time of the meeting there were over 1000 children in self-isolation.

NLC have been putting together a questionnaire for people's feedback on the children's mental health, however Mrs Docherty has not yet received this. Stephen will contact them for further information on when to expect this.

It was also noted by Ms McCaul, and seconded by Mr Kirley, that in speaking with other school's parent council members, it is clear that others are not as well informed on what is happening within the schools in regards to COVID regulations as St Augustine's parents are. This is a credit to the school's senior management and to Mrs Docherty's ongoing communication, and it is clear they are dealing with the current ever changing situations very well.

**3. Received Communications**

NLC Communications

* NLC has emailed this year's Certificate of Employers' Liability Insurance. This has also been forwarded on to the Chairperson of the PTA. As advised this should be on display in the school.
* NLC has set the date for the Criterion Let Selection training of Thursday the 26th of November from 6.30pm-8pm. Stephen Kirley, Gillian McCaul and Andrew Wilson have all volunteered to attend this. It was mentioned that Mr McWilliams also volunteered but at the moment three is the maximum allowed participants per school. All were thanked for volunteering their time.

PC Email Communications

* There have been 3 emails to the Parent Council regarding parking at the school, particularly at the new nursery entrance. Due to the location of the entrance, there has been difficulty crossing the road with pre-school children and this seems to be a safety hazard especially with the distance from the roundabout. It was asked if Mrs Docherty was aware of these issues, and if so was there any plans for a zebra crossing or did she require the Parent Council to raise this with the local councillors?

Mrs Docherty commented that the placement of nursery entrance was likely chosen by NLC officials due to the location of the ramp for disability access. Mrs Docherty said she will speak with her Lead Nursery Contact Jennifer O'Hara in regards to this, as well as ask for feedback from the JRSO children. Mr Kirley will also approach the council via letter, however it was mentioned that they may reject the proposal due to the closeness to the roundabout.

* There was email communication from various charity groups, and also from parents who had noted that other schools in the area have a partnership with the LAST charity to end single use plastic. Mr Kirley asked Mrs Docherty if there was any current plans for future charity visits.

Mrs Docherty responded that due to the current restrictions this was not something she would like to consider. However during this week's assembly they were reflecting on the charities the school supported throughout the year which are extensive (St Andrew's Hospice, McMillian, the Coatbridge Foodbank, Stay Connected, the Shoebox Appeal). The school will be holding 12 Days of Giving in which children will be asked to bring in something small each day to donate (eg Day 1 tins, Day 2 pasta) which will go to Coatbridge Stay Connected charity. However Mrs Docherty felt due to the struggles of this year it was not appropriate to ask more of parents over and above this.

* There was an email from the HT of St Ambrose Mr McPartland who asked that parents of those going to be attending the high school in the coming years were made aware that he was the new HT and outlining the current NLC tier 4 restrictions with his school.

**4. Head Teacher report and school improvement plan**

* COVID update - the school continues to be impacted with teachers/support staff self isolating while they await the outcome of test results for either themselves or a family member. This has generally resulted in affected staff being absent for a period of two days necessitating cover. This has impacted upon our capacity to continue providing NCCT and also for our Attainment Teachers to provide the targeted support for identified groups across the school. The school is delighted that Mrs. Fraser has returned to post after a long absence.
* Digital Learning - this remains a priority in school and across the authority. It played a vital role during lockdown and ensured regular communication between teachers and pupils with quality programmes of work provided at all stages. Previously this was accessed on Sharepoint via glow, it is now on teams also accessed via glow. All pupils have login details for accessing teams and teachers are using this platform to deliver homework tasks and activities. Pupils all have login details for Sumdog, Espresso and many have logins for IDL Literacy and Numeracy and Rising Stars. Pupils are also uploading their homework for review, correction and feedback from their teacher. Any pupil who is required to self isolate receives a letter from their teacher with clear guidelines about work to undertake whilst absent from school if well enough to do so. Pr. 7 teachers have created a virtual classroom where pupils are able to access the programme for work assigned to that class each day. Teachers have been sharing their approaches to using digital learning as part of our improvement priority this session.
* Communicating with parents - school blog, Twitter and Facebook are our platforms and are greatly used by parents. We are also using groupcall to e-mail parents - this was used to issue NHS letters. The school is still chasing up parents so we have e-mail addresses for everyone. The most recent newsletter was issued via groupcall last week. The school has informed parents that if they wish a paper copy they can contact the school.
* Reporting on Progress and Achievement - staff have updated their tracking sheets to indicate how well children are on track to achieve Early, First and Second Level in Literacy and Numeracy after this period of teaching and learning. The school has purchased MALT assessments to administer in January with a view to attaining updated data around performance in Maths. MALT Assessments were administered in August and indicated, quite significantly for many, the impact of lockdown on learning and attainment. Attainment teachers are focusing on pupils who are at risk of not achieving and also pupils who work from more individualised learning programmes. Tracking of attainment remains a clear focus across the school.
* Business Continuity Plan- Our Business Continuity Plan remains under constant review. Ongoing cover requirements mean that the school has to respond very quickly to daily/ weekly changes to the staffing structure.
* PEF Money - recent meeting with AFA Finance Officer- indicates the school, whilst committing to enhanced staffing, has an allocation of money that it intends to spend on i-pads. This would ensure all classes from Pr. 3-7 have an allocation of 10 i-pads for each class. As part of our rolling programme of upgrades all remaining chalkboards will be replaced with whiteboards.
* ICT Devices - the school made a return to the authority to confirm families in the school who did not have access to ICT devices at home or did not have internet access. Money from Scottish Government has been downloaded to support vulnerable families across the authority to access online learning. Phase one has been rolled out which will mean families receiving laptops in the not too distant future - at the moment I believe these are being configured before issuing to families. This supports the equity for all strategy.
* Senior Management Team will meet with Education Manager Jill Woodward to discuss progress of School Improvement Plan, attainment, use of PEF and pastoral matters. The school feels well supported by Jill and other members of the Senior Leadership Team. The demands on teaching staff and SMT have been significant.
* School infra structure/ school grounds update “Painting work remains outstanding “ Infant corridors, stage, two offices. There still remains some outstanding repair work to school grounds which the Clerk of Works is chasing up. The school is awaiting delivery of chairs for our meeting room on the first floor. Outdoor seating provided by PTA has arrived and will be located in the playground. The school aims to send out a newsletter with pictures highlighting the makeover around the school.
* Nursery Update - nursery team fully established with a great mix of experienced staff and newly qualified Early Years Key Workers and Support Workers. The nursery is now fully operational and sited on the school campus. The nursery is now delivering the 1140 hours provision for all families - 3 -4 year olds. The nursery will accommodate 45 (this was reduced from 48) children on a term time basis. There remains ongoing issues around the glass dome as this will need to be replaced - ongoing leaks that can’t be repaired. It is anticipated this work may take place during Easter week holiday. Nursery grounds need some work - turfing. There is concern about the current grounds when so much outdoor learning takes place. The school remains vigilant around the impact of varied drop off and pick up times as the nursery gate is locked. This has necessitated drop off and pick ups at the main entrance.

Nursery uniform - samples of the nursery polo shirts have arrived at the nursery with agreed nursery emblem. Staff will also be provided with polo shirts and jackets. Outdoor play wear is on order for all pupils.

* First Communions - services now complete with all children receiving their First Holy Communion just ahead of Level 4. Many thanks to Father Michael for accommodating families for the services.
* Counselling service - The Exchange have commenced their work with identified pupils this session. Counsellor visits Mon and Tues each week. Children completed a Health and Wellbeing assessment on their return to school that will necessitate pastoral checks with a number of children this term.
* Mrs Elliott will continue to deliver the LIAM programme to identified pupils support programme for low intensity anxiety.
* Outdoor learning - current provision for PE remains outdoors.
* Virtual Assembly - Pr 7 house captains and vice captains deliver their virtual assemblies at the end of every month. The children love doing it and the whole school love watching them. They are very professional. Pr. 7 recently scripted, presented and edited their own information video for the school about Rights Respecting School Award.
* SMT represented school at recent Education Masses at both St. Augustine’s and St. Gerard’s. PFFA continues with Mrs. Drummond providing a grid to supports pupils in their service to others. Christmas Appeal - the school will remain focused upon supporting Stay Connected, People’s Pantry and Coatbridge Foodbank. This will take place with our Christmas Appeal - 12 Days of Giving due to commence next week.
* School events - such as St. Andrew’s day celebration and Christmas are significantly impacted by current restrictions. The school will continue to create learning contexts and with arrangements for Christmas parties and other fun events as the term progresses. The Nov/Dec. newsletter provides full details

**5. Parish update**

Father Kane thanked Mr Kirley for the invitation to join the meeting; he is aware that there was an issue with communication to him previously as his email address was incorrect. If there is any problem contacting him in the future we are encouraged to call the parish and he is always happy to attend the Parent Council meetings.

* The First Holy Communions have now concluded as of last week, all of which were successful. Although there were many restrictions and it was very different to previous years, those who attended commented they had had a lovely time.
* The Catholic Education Mass was held on Thursday the 19th of November, at the end of which Mr McPartland introduced himself to the community. He is very keen to engage with the surrounding primary schools to St Ambrose, as well as potentially having a monthly pastoral newsletter to keep in communication with parents.
* Parking may become an increasing problem for the church with NLC's proposal of Buchanan Street becoming permitted. This will have an impact on services within the church, as well as with drop off and pick up times at the school. There was however some positive news that the new church car park will be started on the 30th of November.
* The parish are hopeful that they will have some more clarity on what is allowed over the Christmas period soon with COVID restrictions. Father Kane is preparing and hoping for good pastoral outreach and will communicate this as soon as it is confirmed.

* Christmas Toy Appeal

The church is currently in full preparation for their Christmas Toy Appeal. Father Kane has been promoting this along with Stay Connected on their social media pages and asked if this could be shared on the St Augustine's pages also as would like best possible outreach.

The deadline for requests is the 6th of December and the form can be found on their website and Facebook page. There is also links for donating to the appeal and to their Amazon Wishlist, and as always they are keen for volunteers to help organise and deliver to families in the run up to Christmas.

**6. Any other business**

* Mr Kirley wished to discuss a letter received from SCIAF with Father Kane for their 'real gifts' appeal, and asked if we should be promoting this within the school. Father Kane said that following a directive from the Dioses they have already made a donation from the Parish Central Funds to SCIAF.
* Social Distancing

Question raised to Mrs Docherty on how she thought the parents have been managing the social distancing/mask wearing at school gates during pick up times. Mrs Docherty replied that she felt this was much better than the start of term, and is continuing to promote it on the school blog and social media. Parents are reminded they should be leaving as promptly as possible after their child is dropped off/picked up.

It was also asked if the children were continuing to stick to social distancing/COVID measures in school such as one way systems and hand hygiene. Mrs Docherty feels that children are complying great and having no issues within the school in regards to this.

* Father Kane reminded all that he is open for any ideas for pastoral initiatives and encouraged everyone to contact him should they have any.

He also wished to thank Mrs Docherty for sharing the letter he put out recently in regards to request for sharing of data from the parents in the school. He said it would great we could continue to promote the lines of communication being open.

He also gave the suggestion that the Parent Council Meetings are opened with a prayer. Mrs Docherty encouraged this and said she would bring along the St Augustine's prayer for the next meeting.

Some questions were also raised by Mr Doran;

* He asked if the safety of Dundyvan Road could be addressed as seems to be becoming increasingly busier, with a potential accident occurring with children crossing recently. Mrs Docherty says she will look into this.
* It was asked if it was still needed for the windows to remain open in classrooms now that we are getting into colder months as there has been complaints from children who are too cold and worried this will affect their ability to learn. Mrs Docherty said it is a requirement for ventilation, however has not heard of any particular issues with this; windows only open small amount for safety in tower block and some rooms only have 3 windows. She also said that now that the new heating system is in place rooms are much warmer, but will advertise the need for children to be appropriately dressed with jumpers/cardigans during winter especially with windows open in classrooms.
* Mr Doran asked how the bubble system was being implemented outside. However public health not concerned in outdoor play in terms of bubbles for children.
* How is the school currently managing PE as only able to take place outside and now that winter incoming this would become increasingly more difficult, and some are worried children will lose out on an important part of school. Mrs Docherty understands importance of this, however very difficult to short notice change class timetables if the weather not appropriate, and at the moment still not allowed indoors.
* Mrs Docherty was asked if she required any help with grant applications this year, as Parent Council happy to help in any way they can. She said this was welcomed and would keep Parent Council updated with anything which comes up.

The Parent Consultation Group will meet before the next Parent Council meeting, and Mr Kirley will laisse via email should there be anything to note.

The meeting concluded with Chairperson Mr Kirley thanking everyone for their participation, especially being the last meeting of the year. He hopes everyone has a lovely Christmas and Happy New Year.

**Action Point**

Road Safety

Letter will be sent to NLC regarding safety of road at nursery entrance and request zebra crossing be considered.