Minutes Parent Council 28/10/19

**Attendance:** Lindsey Shah, Fiona Sufferedini, Katie Mcconnell, Claire Quinn, Caroline Black, Sarah Louise Bailey-Kelly, Tracy Ann Wilson, Evonne Smith, Charlie Smith, Nicola Ferguson, Lynsey Robertson, Kirsty Tyrell, Alison Mcneil

**Agenda:**

**Last meeting**: It was acknowledged that the January meeting was cancelled at last minute due to a variety of other commitments for parent council members.

**Nutrition:**

The parent council were joined by Fiona the school’s catering manager and Gill Bryans and Michelle Gray from North Lanarkshire council at todays meeting to discuss the Councils new menus, which were introduced in November 2019.

It was explained that the changes were introduced in response to a number of changes that are being implemented by both HMIE and the Scottish Government along with the Council’s bid to be food for life accredited. Some of the changes are also a direct result of the council’s commitment to reduce the use of single use plastic.

Michelle noted that NLC have to ensure they are meeting the Scottish Government criteria and that HMIE inspect both the school and their catering facilities to ensure these guidelines are being implemented to a high standard. Previous guidelines focused on the amounts of salt, fat and fried food limitations. The new consultation which took place in 2017 has produced guidelines around the use of processed meat and free sugars. All local authorities are now implementing these recommendations.

Michelle noted that the removal of ham sandwiches from the menu has been unpopular with parents and children across North Lanarkshire and this has been raised within Woodlands specifically. It was explained that there is now a proven link between the amount of processed meat consumed and the risk of bowel cancer in later life. As a result the current limit for school is that there can’t be more than 170g of red meat on the school menu each week and that only 75g of this can be processed meat, given that a ham sandwich would contain 45g of processed meat in one serving this significantly limits the kind of meals that can be served for the rest of the week.

The council are applying for food for life accreditation. This focuses on the idea of buying fresh and quality produce and means that all meat served in school meals is sourced from red tractor producers and is therefore good quality and high welfare standards from farm to fork. Other changes include changing from liquid egg to fresh free range eggs, changing powdered milk to fresh milk etc and there is a real focus on fresh good quality produce for the children.

Flavoured milks and juices have been removed from the menu as a result of the restrictions on free sugars. Milk and water are the only options available to children now. Similarly this has reduced the use of single use plastic bottles.

It was noted that there has been no specific move to reduce the amount of chicken consumed and that quorn options are there to provide variety rather than a move towards a vegetarian diet. It was noted that Quorn products are well received and the children really enjoy them.

Fiona noted that there are always two vegetable options available and a salad option. Children are encouraged to take these but not forced, the focus is on ensuring the children eat something.

Nicola and the parent council gave the following feedback: Taking away the option of baked potatoes has not been popular as this is an option that was regularly chosen, particularly by children who were picky eaters. Michelle noted that in a recent research project baked potatoes gave one of the highest waste results however she would take this feedback on board and discuss with the working group.

The reduction of single use plastic bottles, while understandably beneficial for the environment had left many children who don’t have water bottles or who have forgotten their water bottles without an option to refill for taking into class. It was noted that they are not allowed open cups in class although they do use these at lunch.

Further info regarding the new menu and pictures of each menu option can be found at <https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=5594> or by googling primary school meals north Lanarkshire. The team are open to feedback from parents.

Nicola agreed to consider further house points/reward type events to encourage children to try new foods etc.

Events:

It was agreed the focus of todays meeting would be on future events:

Parent council members discussed a range of options for fund raising including easter events, social quiz nights etc however due to a busy school calendar coming up the following was agreed:

* + A family competition to generate the childrens interest in recycling. This will also support the schools eco credentials. Families will be asked to work together to create something out of recycled materials. All entrants will need to be in school by Wednesday 18th March when the winners will be chosen and displayed at parents night on the 19th March. Fiona and Lindsey will co-ordinate this including gathering prizes. There will be no fee for entry.
	+ The parent council will again hold a stall at sports day in May and will provide food and drinks for children and parents. This event will operate as a fundraiser.
	+ A regular swap shop was discussed however it was recongised that this could create an excess of donated items. The parent council will focus instead on specific times of year such as Christmas jumpers and uniform exchange. It is hoped that a uniform exchange event will be held towards the end of the final term. These events also help the school demonstrate their eco credentials.

**Club 365:** The parent council have been asked to seek feedback from parents regarding the current format and use of Club 365 which runs at weekends and during holiday times to provide free meals and activities for children. We discussed that members already using the club 365 really enjoy this, the atmosphere is welcoming, helpful and positive and children are enjoying it. Despite this however there is limited uptake and club 365 are looking for feedback on how to improve delivery. All feedback should be forwarded to the parent council email address to be collated: woodlandsparentcouncil@gmail.com .

**Nursery provision:**

There is still a significant lack of clarity about nursery provision for August 2020. Woodlands has been confirmed as a term time nursery providing 9 to 3 pm provision. Returning parents have been lettered to ask what days they wish to apply for however a new letter will also be released to determine whether parents are seeking to split their placement between providers or would prefer an am/pm spilt option for their children. It is unclear whether this will be possible however when further info is available it will be released. Nicola noted that significant work has been undertaken in relation to thinking about the nursery day and how this will fit young children who are in for longer periods however it was also noted that the capacity of the nursery will be impacted upon by the changes being introduced and there is likely to be a waiting list for places for next year. Children who do not attend woodlands nursery will still be offered a full induction programme for starting school. Application forms for children due to start nursery in the 20/21 session have yet to be released by north Lanarkshire council.

**Bullying:**

The issue of bullying was raised and how this is dealt with within the school. Nicola advised that the school has a no tolerance policy and that any child who feels they are being bullied will be supported. It was noted however that the school has to take a realistic approach and that it recognises that children, particularly in the younger age ranges will often fall in and out of friendships as well as occasionally hit out at each other during fall outs. Despite this however any incidents reported to the school will be looked into and parents should feel confident about coming forward to talk to staff. It was acknowledged that there is no one approach that will fit all circumstances but that parents will be contacted and incidents discussed with them if the school feel things are escalating. A number of tactics are used within the school and often incidents are dealt with without children even being aware of them being reported. Children who need support are checked on regularly and staff will take reports of bullying seriously. Nicola asked that parents who are concerned contact her and that even when children are reluctant for the school to be made aware parents should feel confident that incidents can and should be reported and dealt with discreetly.

**Homework:**

It was raised that some parents feel the current homework system is not working. Nicola acknowledged that the current return of homework is very low. Despite this however the homework system has been reviewed and consulted on four times in the last 11 years and that regardless of the outcome of these reviews there is never a significant improvement in homework. Nicola advised that parents should focus on reading, interacting with their children and encouraging them to be creative, inquisitive and to explore what they are interested in. The current homework structure (other than P1/P2) should be the grid given out each term and sumdog. Despite this however if children complete other tasks which they feel have been a valuable use of their time they are encouraged to consider this as part of their homework. It was noted that there will not be a further review of homework at this time.

**Next meeting: Monday 2nd March 2.45pm**