

Parent Council Liaison Meeting
Council Chambers, Renfrewshire House
Wednesday 6 May 2020, 6.30pm

1.	Welcome, Introduction and Apologies	Chair
<p>The meeting was chaired by Steven Quinn, Director of Children’s Services.</p> <p>The meeting was attended by 30 Parent Council Representatives via Skype.</p> <p>Also in attendance was Councillor Jim Paterson.</p> <p>Apologies were received from the Parent Council representative from St Andrew’s Academy.</p>		
2.	Previous minute and matters arising	Chair
<p>There were no matters arising and the minutes were approved.</p>		
3.	SQA Update	Steven Quinn
<p>Parents were aware that there were no exams this year and the mechanism for producing results was explained. Results will be based on estimated grades submitted by the schools based on both demonstrated and inferred evidence of pupil achievement. Schools will be submitting information to the SQA on 29 May. There will be an appeals process, details of which are still to be determined.</p> <p>Decisions regarding the 2021 diet are still to be made. SQ highlighted that the proportion of time spent in class may be different and therefore there will need to be careful consideration to what course content looks like, teaching practices used and the assessment methods employed by SQA.</p> <p>Question: Will the appeals process be free for schools? Yes, it will be free</p> <p>Question: Can you confirm that pupils won’t know any estimated grades until 4 August? That is correct and is different from previous years because the estimate will play a significant part in determining the overall award.</p>		
4.	School Hubs Update	Steven Quinn
<p>There are 3 schools and 2 EY hubs in Paisley, 2 and 1 in Renfrew, 1 and 1 in Johnstone, and 2 out of school care providers providing additional support. There are c. 300 children and young people in the hubs on any given day. Criteria for awarding places has been set – all parents in the household must be key workers and be out at work (not working at home or isolating). No child or staff member with an underlying health condition should attend. Applications continue to come in. We have dealt with around 3000 applications and offered 1300-1400 places. Many parents subsequently do not take the place up. RLL and CLAD staff are supporting education staff, and all staff have volunteered to undertake these roles. SQ noted his thanks to all staff involved.</p>		
5.	Remote Learning	Steven Quinn
<p>SQ explained that this is not intended to replicate the school environment and that there are different types of learning, including play as a learning tool. The importance of not being in front of a screen all day was stressed.</p>		

JC advised that the online resources allow Heads to see who may not be engaging with the material.

Question: what level of confidence does the council have that we are able to communicate with 100% of the school roll, particularly in relation to digital poverty. What steps can the council take to alleviate this?

From next week, 500 Chrome Books and 215 4G-enabled dongles will be distributed to children we have identified who do not have access to either a device or to Wifi. Last week an additional 400 learning packs were delivered to houses without internet access. Schools have also made arrangements for delivering paper-based resources. We have engaged with as many children and young people as possible and have identified families in need of extra support particularly in relation to health and wellbeing. Staff keep phone contact with many families and have also assisted with welfare issues, such as food deliveries. This delivery of IT kit is just the first stage and we will continue to identify, with schools, families who would benefit from this and other supports. There are also home visits, where appropriate, taking place.

SQ stressed the importance of relationships between schools and families, particularly as circumstances change rapidly and needs change.

Question: Why are schools taking different approaches with some issuing new work rather than just consolidating? In the main, yes, it will be about consolidating learning, but there are also opportunities to learn new things. Any parents who are struggling should contact the HT if the children are feeling anxious about school work. It is critical that we do everything possible to alleviate anxieties about school work.

Question: Will there be additional financial support for purchasing digital resources? All PEF guidance has been relaxed to allow schools to use it for items such as this. Not aware of any school not having funds to purchase these.

Question: Is the IT provision for primary and secondary? Yes, both.

Question: Is Glow adequate to the task? We need to recognise that it was never intended for use in this way and is being used by all schools in Scotland. At a national level, there is work ongoing to try and increase capacity to support greater usage. If you are having difficulties accessing online resources, please let the HT know and we can find other ways to provide materials.

Question: I have some concerns about ASN children and their ability to be fully engaged in all the tasks set. Again, please contact the HT or SQ/JC (who will link on parents' behalf) to look at ways we can put different or more supports in place. We can find alternative work for the children to be engaged with. We recognise the additional challenges facing families may face.

Question: Are there any schools offering online live classes? Schools are trying new and creative ways to engage children and young people. This has included some teachers testing live lessons. There is not the function to record these lessons via glow; however, some schools are exploring different platforms which have this function which would enable pupils to access a lesson at any time. We need to enter this next stage of remote learning cautiously, as it could face challenge from professional associations for reasons such as we cannot control what happens to any footage once released. The recording of lessons could only take place on a teacher by teacher basis, it would not be something that could be insisted upon. There are alternatives such as a voice over on a Powerpoint or worked examples being filmed which are being tested across some schools.

Question: Some parents are asking why the home learning is not intended to replicate the school day? A school is much more than about academic learning, it is about building relationships, growing up, to be part of a community and right now, we are not able to provide that so

we could never replicate a school day. We cannot engage with each other online in the same way we would in person; we can't replicate the face to face interactions or the extracurricular activity. We also recognise that some parents have circumstances which mean they can spend the whole day supporting their child's learning but many cannot. We also need to acknowledge that we have teachers unable to work in 'normal' school hours through ill health, or who also have their own children to look after, and that still others are working very long days to support their school. The most important thing is looking after the welfare of our children and young people and their families.

Question: Is there any chance of standardising the online platforms for simplicity? In preparing for closure, we gave the schools the chance to choose, as some schools were already using some of these platforms as part of normal school life, and we wanted to retain this. Teachers have different preferences depending on what they are teaching, so we don't prescribe a platform as long as it is appropriate to support learning.

Question: What if a school has limited PEF? If a HT identifies an issue, they know they can speak to the central team. At present, there have been no approaches and no schools are without funding. We are aware that there may be issues and challenges to overcome once schools return.

Question: I understand HTs are communicating with each other to work out what works and what doesn't – is this the case? Yes, secondary heads meet every week and the primary heads meet in groups every week, to learn from each other. We are also working with the RIC to take wider learning, as well as the national groups our staff sit on, and from international examples.

Question: Some senior school parents are very concerned about the amount of interaction and work set. Should this be addressed directly with the HT? At the moment, schools would normally be starting to change timetables for the new year, and S4-S6 would be on exam leave. HTs want to make the most of this time and are actively working on how they can set timetables to ensure online learning can be taught across and within schools. IF you have concerns (eg not enough work) you can contact the head or if you prefer, contact SQ/JC/GMcK to take it up on your behalf.

Question: What is the access to and availability of guidance teachers? They are continuing to make contact with young people and support health and wellbeing. We recognise the challenge for young people when the routine of school is gone, and in staying engaged. Schools are making every effort to keep their children and young people engaged. This will be happening in all schools – we believe that every member of staff has a role in pastoral support.

6.	Planning for a return to school	Steven Quinn
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It is not clear what a return to school will look like and when this will be. We are trying to identify every possible option for getting children back into school as soon as it is safe, and by ensuring we are following all the guidance available. This will include adhering strictly to national guidance and expectations on class sizes, social distancing etc. This might also include alternate days or weeks, with different groups in on a rota basis. We are also working on a recovery curriculum. We know that we cannot immediately pick up where we left off, because routines and relationships have been disrupted. We are trying to plan for the unknown and are using learning from local, national and international situations. We need to balance learning with the wellbeing of our children and young people which will be a focus.

Question: What is the current thinking on transition from p7 to S1? P7 parents are concerned that children need to be ready emotionally and educationally for secondary school. In a wider sense, there will be a transition for all children as we transition back to school. However, we recognise some points are milestones for children and families. We don't want our children to miss out on these milestones but are looking at ways in which we can facilitate some transitions and give staff and children a chance to say goodbye and move on to the next stage. This will obviously be

different from what has gone before but we still want to do something meaningful. We also need to look at the needs of our children, both individually and collectively to ensure they have the right supports in place to move on to the next part of their educational journey. We know some children will need more support than others.

Question: Can we ask HTs to engage with pupil councils to inform the new normal? We expect that HTs are probably already doing this, but will feed it back to heads. Many of our Schools are really good at engaging pupils in decision making but we can always be better. One of the Central Team is leading on engaging with pupils about the return and we have issued a survey to those in the hubs about their experience and this will be widened out.

Question: What provision will there be for children of teachers/support staff in school if children are only back part-time? Yes, we need to consider who is classified as a key worker when businesses start opening and this needs to recognise that people need to earn and need to go back to work. We can't run the school without the teachers and the support staff so we need to take that into account. We also need to ensure that we get our vulnerable children back into school.

Question: Some parents may be reluctant to send children back even if good health practices are in place. How much leeway will be given to parents before pupils are required to attend? As we move towards a phased return, we will do everything we can to ensure we are following national guidance. There will always be an element of risk in bringing children back together and there needs to be some national guidance on the approach to be taken when parents don't want to take the risk.

Question: Is sibling attendance being considered in the mix [in relation to how a return to school might be phased]? Yes, this has to be a consideration so that families are able to get back to work.

Question: Learning through play has been evidenced to be working well but is at odds with social distancing. Do you anticipate this approach to learning may have to change? Yes, we know this can be highly effective and will be a consideration as we look at how the curriculum can be delivered whilst social distancing is maintained.

7.	NPFS Update	David MacDonald
David provided a verbal update and signposted parents to the resources available from the NPFS website.		

Date of next meeting: to be confirmed