

KIRKMICHAEL PARENT COUNCIL

Minutes of Extraordinary Meeting 'Covid Catch-up'

Monday 7th September 2020, 7:00pm

Held via Zoom due to current guidelines re social distancing

1. Introductions and Apologies

Present Andrew Thorne (chair), Fiona Burns, Leanne Campbell, Joanna Clapton, Wendy Clark, Alicia Gibson, Claire Louise Kelly, Irene McBride, Pauline McCartney, Laura McCulloch, Carol Muircroft, Emma Parker, Hugh Simpson, Ashley Smith, Jennifer Wallace (minutes), Liz Candlish, Lauren Miller

Apologies No apologies were received

2. Covid Update

- Liz thanked parents for their engagement during the school closure, and the staff for their creativity and hard work. The school reopened with a last minute change from the blended learning plan, and are delighted to be back. The kids seem happy and ready to learn.
- Additional measures introduced include
 - Regular handwashing on entry and before and after activities, breaks and lunchtime
 - Regular wash down of surfaces after each activity
 - Personal resources to avoid sharing with other kids
- Daily routine is now
 - Break time is 10:15 for P1-3 and 10:45 for P4-7
 - Lunchtime for P1-3 is 12:00-12:30 then outdoor time until 13:00. For P4-7 it is 12:00-12:15 the outdoor time until 12:45. Concerns were raised over their kids being timed for lunch. Liz explained that as per Local Authority guidance, all kids are to receive outdoor play time for their health and wellbeing, Dojo points are being awarded if they finish their lunch on time.
 - P1 parents are permitted to enter the school grounds at drop off and collection. No other parents are permitted to enter the school grounds without prior permission. P2-3 will be escorted to the gates to meet their parents. EYC kids are to be dropped off at the door and will not be allowed access.
- Hand sanitisers have now been changed to auto sensor machines in line with Local Authority
- A Q&A session with parents generated the following further information
 - Other than P1s and those coming off school bus, no other kids are permitted to enter the school grounds before the 9:00am bell. Even if it is raining heavy. This is due to no staff being available to supervise at this time. Parents did challenge this rule as it was felt this may help alleviate the congestion at drop off, which made it difficult to maintain 2m distance. Parents are reminded to attend not before 9:00am and to use both gates.
 - Playground equipment is not on a regular cleaning schedule and kids use so out of hours at their own risk. This is in line with play equipment in public parks. The risk of contamination outdoors is minimal, and gates cannot be locked as this would restrict access to emergency services.
 - In the case of a local lockdown, the previous blended learning plan would be implemented. A letter went out on the new Seesaw platform as this is deemed a better resource due to Microsoft Teams getting slower due to demand. Seesaw also offers an achievements folder to share any news.
 - Parents are reminded to contact the school as soon as possible with any further questions or concerns, as working together is vital for a positive outcome during this time. The school still operates an 'open door' policy although more of a virtual sense at present. The Parent Council are also happy to advocate if preferred.

3. Head Teacher's Report

- With 10 new P1s this year, the school role now sits at 47, compared to just 32 when Liz first joined the school. There are just three in the Early Years Centre as the two-year olds have not yet started due to Covid guidelines, although there have been several enquiries. Places will still be prioritised for three to four year olds.
- Classes have been split into four groups. Music class provision has yet to be determined. Guitar tuition for older kids will be going ahead via online lessons. This has worked well with other instrument tuition. Liz reminded parents that all non-essential footfall has been limited and all meetings are now virtual where possible.
- The focus of the School Improvement Plan remains the same as 19/20, with supplementary content. The plan is with the Local Authority for approval.
- Hot lunches will be reintroduced after the September break, there will be no menus to pre-order from but a selection of meals on offer from kids to choose from on the day. Parents are reminded that school meals can be ordered, or packed lunches provided from home, and cannot be a mix for different days. School meals will be eaten in the dinner hall and packed lunches will be eaten at their desk. The same applies for the Early Years Centre, which will be taken through and plated up by Kirsty.
- Interhouse competitions continue as before.
- Homework packs have been sent home. Kids are required to download and log into Seesaw, the new platform used by the school. No formal homework will be set until after the September break.
- This year's residential trip to Lockerbie Manor was cancelled due to Covid restrictions, and looks unlikely to be allowed before end of 2020. They have retained the money and offered the same package for 2021. This would still involve staff and kids travelling away from home, and possibly mixing with other schools staying at the same time. It was agreed that due to these risks, the uncertainty of restrictions in the future and number of businesses in the hospitality sector having to cease trading, a full refund would be the preferred option to allow for smaller trips to be organised meantime. Other local schools have organised day activities at Dolphin House, returning home at night, it was agreed that this would be an acceptable alternative. Andrew offered to look into other alternatives, perhaps a boat trip by Glenapp Castle.
- Liz explained that although there is no formal contingency for staff are off for self isolation, this would be covered by the current staffing plan. The staff member would be tested as per public guidelines and await result. If this was to be positive, the Public Health Test and Trace Team would then advise on next steps. Liz confirmed that the school is not able to access tests for asymptomatic staff members, such as care homes currently do. A thermometer is available at school to check temperature of any suspect cases of staff and kids alike. A room has been identified to hold any such cases until they can leave the premises.

4. Chairperson's Report

Andrew thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting and reiterated that the Parent Forum (i.e. everyone with a child at Kirkmichael) is welcome to attend Parent Council meetings. It was hoped for such an attendance at the next meeting. Preferred methods were discussed, and felt that due to current Covid restrictions and childcare issued, Zoom meetings would be the preferred option.

The current balance is £1825.22 less the cost of P7 leaver's hoodies which is still to be paid.

Fundraising will be somewhat different this year due to Covid restrictions. It was agreed that this year's Christmas Market cannot go ahead, and look towards remote events such as a Zoom comedy night or bingo session. There is also the opportunity to apply for a share of £5,000 from the Kirkmichael Community Fund. The staging is being progressed with the Kids in the Community Group, and will now need to be stored at the village hall as new equipment takes up space at the school.

It was agreed to proceed with the Christmas card designs again this year. Fiona will liaise with the school to organise. It was suggested that the designs could be done in school to avoid unnecessary contamination of paper etc.

The group were reminded that the pressure is off to raise as many funds this year as highest expenses in previous years were trips and the pantomime, both of which will be on hold due to Covid.

5. Any other business

No other business was raised.

6. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be the Annual General Meeting, which is hoped to be held before the October break. Andrew will liaise with members and the school to agree a suitable date. The venue of the meeting will depend on current guidance at that time. Details will be shared via Facebook at a message from the school.