

Minutes Troon Primary Parent Council Meeting Thursday 14th September 2023 – 6.30pm

Attendees – Mrs Alcroft, Mrs McGilp, Mr Robb, Melissa McCulloch (SAC)

Nigel Fullard, Jen Wood, Jayne Carson, Rachel Fullard, Pamela Foster, Nichola Hopkins, Millie McNish, Jacqueline Creighton-Macaskill, Susan Forsyth, Derek Whiteford, Zoe Gibson, Lynfryn MacKenzie, Dawn McGartland, Gemma Fraser, Meryl Elmslie

Apologies – Ms Roan, Carolyn Jamieson, Kate Glasgow, Vikki Kewney, Ali Brown, Lynn McFarlane, Natalie Kelly, Rachael Tochel, Lynsey Meikle-Wall.

Introduction

Chairperson welcomed everyone and reminded the group that the AGM will be on Thursday 5th October at 1830. All attendees introduced themselves.

Melissa McCulloch – SAC

Melissa is a link officer for SAC and specialises in external funding for community groups. She explained that to be considered we must have a constitution, a bank account and audited accounts. We confirmed that we do and reaffirmed that our AGM is coming up.

There is a lot of external funding available to groups for the planning of projects, activities and events and she can help us to access it. In order for applications to be successful the 'what' and the 'why' are usually the most critical, she explained that some groups have surveyed members to gather ideas on their priorities and that the survey results can provide good evidence for use in applications. Troon Primary Parent Council plans to go ahead with a parental survey.

There are many of sources of funding, supporting different initiatives and available at different times of the year. Successful bids are most commonly for physical assets and to help reduce the cost of the school day. We asked about trips (e.g) funding buses and Milissa explained that this is often not approved, but suggested we ring fence funds from our own fundraising for such things if this is a priority to us and aim to source external funding for other things.

Milissa also discussed Crowdfunding and how she has seen an increase in this, plus the use of Match funding.

There is a Funding Fair in Ayr on 26/10/23 and she suggested we may wish to look into sending two representatives to that.

Headteachers report & Parental Queries

Mrs Alcroft gave a Headteachers Report:

Early Years Centre Update

The elected members meeting takes place in October to decide on the proposal for the Early Years Centre moving into Troon Library. We will update you as soon as we can and hope there is positive news!

Seesaw has been removed by SAC and more widely due to GDPR issues; the EYC have moved to Learning Journals – please be patient with us as we work together to develop this and fully embed this in our practice – as the children progress to school, Teams will become their online platform.

Parent Involvement and Engagement

Annual calendar has now been issued – please save the dates, further details for events is always closer to the time as a gentle reminder.

Staffing

Senior EYC interviews took place this week, we hope to notify of the successful candidate as soon as recruitment checks are complete.

South Ayrshire Reads

A significant focus will be given this year across SAC to reading skills and reading for pleasure – the best way you can help with this is to read for pleasure with your child every day at home. We would encourage each family to become a library member and use this free resource to support reading at home. A copy of our School Improvement Plan and Standards & Quality Report are available on the website.

Parental Queries

EYC

Learning journals have been emailed but it is asking for log in details as well as pins. Are these being emailed to parents?

Parents choose their own password and PIN; this is not set by the EYC ,username is the adult name.

Primary 1

Last minute notice for parents/carers to attend sessions doesn't allow for high engagement. Can dates for activities be provided at the beginning of each term if possible.

Dates will be issued this week for the full year, this has to be finalised with staff and other agencies prior to sharing with all families which can take a few weeks at the beginning of the session.

Can events also be considered outwith the standard working day to allow for attendance from those that can't get away from work?

Times for events are planned within the annual working time agreement; dates are shared for the year to allow families to plan ahead. As the year goes on, there are always opportunities for additional dates to be added, these will be communicated as quickly as possible.

Primary 2

P2 parents have asked to raise the use of teams as a tool for sharing homework. The main issues are:

-child can't take ownership for their own work i.e. a child cannot just get out their homework and start it themselves, a parent needs to feed the information to them.

-homework can't be shared out amongst grandparents and other carers throughout the week without sharing tiny screenshots of a page meaning that one parent is always in charge of being responsible for this

- reduces independence

- shouldn't need to rely on technology

- concerns over this continuing over the years towards p7 where children should be in charge of their own learning to prepare them for high school

- for parents who already use teams at work there are issues switching between log-ins frequently.

As part of digital skills progression children from P1 upwards (December onwards) use Teams for homework.

This is discussed in class with children and should be a paired activity, at this stage we view homework as an opportunity to share the learning together to allow parents/families to support their child as appropriate.

Some activities will be more suited for extended families and carers to help with such as reading books and practical task without the need to use Teams.

As the children progress through the school it is vital these skills are further developed to show progression and prepare them fully for a digital world and to ensure their skills are to date for S1.

Online homework significantly reduces waste and is more environmentally friendly; this approach is adopted many schools in SAC and Nationally.

Do the classes have an assistant like how they had Mrs stark in p1?

Classes are not allocated school assistants, these are based on pupil needs and are allocated accordingly

Is the school considering using the new online "learning journals".

Seesaw the online app has been closed through South Ayrshire and replaced by Learning Journals. I know

Troon didn't use seesaw in the school (only the eyc), however wondered if they were joining most schools in using the new app as a way to share learning with parents. Parent feels that learning shared on Twitter is teacher dependent.

Learning in school is shared through Teams with the class teacher and peers. Learning Journals carries a significant cost - for 60 children in the EYC this was ~£500 per year with 15 members of staff sharing the workload. This platform was set up for EYCs and early years, not for primary schools ,it is not really designed for schools. We will continue to use Teams as per our digital strategy.

Primary 3/4

On wet weather days will the composite class be allowed to mix with their friends in the straight p4 class?

No, they will stay within their classrooms on wet days to allow for appropriate supervision. Children have significant opportunities to mix during working times and at break and lunch.

Primary 7

Do we still need to be using teams for homework? Can we not just hand in a jotter?

Homework club for P5-7 will be offered this term, details to follow.

The use of Teams prepares the children for S1 and is part of transition preparation. Children's digital skills have to increase dramatically and it is vital, as previously discussed, that we maximise this and prepare the children effectively for S1. This is the fourth-year children have been using Teams for homework and is part of the digital strategy.

Will there be a function via parent pay to make payments towards dolphin house? (i.e to pay in instalments)

Yes , this will follow in due course.

Will the girls football team have a kit like the boys team has?

Yes, our sponsor has now been secured and kits are currently being ordered.

Chair

The minutes were agreed from the last meeting (May 23)

We are the first cluster school to meet this session so there is no cluster update.

Similarly, the Chairs Meeting was postponed to October so there is no update.

Officer Bearers/Class Reps / Members

We now have Class Reps for all year groups and we confirmed with Mrs McGilp that Natalie Kelly is the EYC rep.

It is approaching time to approve memberships and office bearers for this academic session. A communication to be sent via expressions tomorrow (15/9/23) inviting self-nominations.

A recap of the Officer Bearer positions was given and a reminder of the scope of Class Reps.

Uniform

We discussed:

1. The merit of continuing with uniform swaps (with one problem being that we end up as more of a donation point and we don't have storage space – how can we get the uniform to be taken away as well as donated?) Zoe has agreed to take this on and review how we communicate the scheme. Ultimately, the group believes this is a highly valuable endeavour in making sure that uniform is not wasted.
2. Badging. The Micah Project already has a badging system in place with other local schools where parents/carers can pay a small fee to have any generic uniform items badged with their school logo. They can support us in starting this for our parents too, with a tiered offering from them running it all for us, to us hiring a machine and offering the service ourselves. We concluded that this is something that we want to be able to offer in some format, but it should be revisited in Spring as most families are likely to have recently acquired uniform for this term.

Road Safety Update

Ongoing since January following parental concerns regarding safety when arriving/leaving school due to traffic and illegal parking at/around school, the most recent response that we have from Ayrshire Roads Alliance is as follows:

1. Our depot has been instructed to install the half section of guardrail and remove the redundant patrol sign, this work will be carried out before the end of September. **This guard rail was actually installed the day of the meeting**
2. We have ordered additional zig zag marking time plates, all going well these will be installed before the end of October.
3. We are currently procuring the service of Atkins to carry out design works, to investigate potential road safety / active travel enhancements along the Troon Primary School / St Patricks Primary / Walker Hall / Library corridor. The scope of the works is likely to include Academy Street, Barassie Street, Church Street, St Meddans Street and Ayr Street. We will ensure that the locally elected members are kept informed / involved in the process as well as Education and the parent councils.

AOB

P1 queries:

- Is there a way to reunite the children with the many, many lost items? *Mrs Alcroft explained that they encourage everyone to make sure they have their belongings at hometime and they return all named items to classrooms but they are still left with a mountain of unlabelled items.*
- Some new families are feeling overwhelmed with the amount of information. The calendar is appreciated, but could there perhaps be a new parent checklist of things to look out for? *Mrs Alcroft understands the frustration and explained that they are school communications that have to be sent plus there are communications from the authority that must also be sent to all families. The calendar is sent as soon as possible after the start of term.*
- Can the P1 children please be reminded what they can choose for lunch within the allocated budget? Some are choosing everything and building up unexpected costs. *Children will be reminded, and Mrs Alcroft also confirming that meals chosen at home cannot be changed in class as it was also reported in discussions that this was happening and it should not be possible.*

Easyfundraising:

Nigel reminded the group of the use of easyfundraising and how much money has been raised for the good of the children for free, just simply by using the feature when doing any routine online shopping. Over £800 has been raised in this way since we began using it, but we only have 59 supporters so we should share this again on class chats. Jayne reminded us that a 'donation reminder' can be added to your device(s) so that whenever you are using an online shop that supports easyfundraising you will automatically be reminded, it is easy to add and very helpful.

https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/troonprimaryparentcouncil/payments/9fb2cb/?utm_medium=email-share&utm_source=Whatsapp&utm_campaign=dd-aug-23&utm_term=Q2231&utm_content=socialshare

Calendar:

To alleviate pressures caused by all of the local schools printing their Christmas cards, we hope to get order forms out to parents for the School Calendar and back in BEFORE the October holidays. Templates have been handed in to school for the children to begin drawing their self-portraits.

We raise funds for the printing of the calendars by asking local businesses to sponsor a month (their advert is featured alongside that months self-portraits). We still have a few

opportunities to sponsor a month if we have any school families with local businesses who would like to place an advert.

Swaps:

Should we do another costume swap? Christmas jumpers? The consensus is that this is a super way to reduce waste from these items, as well as to reduce costs so we will go ahead with this at Parents night in the first instance.

Summer Fair/Christmas Fair:

Summer fair raised just under £4K, so the group agreed that a Christmas fair should definitely be planned as it is a great way to raise funds as well as being an enjoyable event. Date TBC.

Swimming

The PC has now paid for additional swimming lessons (as agreed in a previous meeting) and this is allowing P4 to have their swimming lessons next term or summer term and ultimately for swimming lessons then to be in P4 from academic year 24/25 onwards.

The next meeting is the AGM on Thursday 5th October at 1830.