

Aith Parent Council Meeting
Monday 1st June 2020 at 7:30pm
via Vscene

Present:

Inga Irvine, Jacqueline Johnston, Duncan McWhannell, Frances Moffat, Kirsty Nicolson, Sarah Quinnell, Lynn Ritch, Ingrid Smith, Michael Spence, Erica Gadsby, Jimmy Mercer, Angela Leask, James Garrick, Inga Irvine

Apologies: Kirsty Nicolson had trouble joining the Vscene meeting.

Approval of 10.02.20 Minutes: Angela Leask, Ingrid Smith

Matters Arising: Betty Ferrie is standing down as the community representative.

1. Questions for Hayfield. RE: Return to school

Jacqueline announced the questions asked by the pupil forum, Michael replied to the questions that has been discussed regarding the Aith School:

- How many bairns in each class?

According to social distancing each pupil will need 5m², the primary classes could take between 5-7 pupils and a teacher. There is discussion regarding the use of community halls as space for extra pupils.

- How many days will bairns attend school?

1 week off at school and up to 4 weeks at home

- How will they have lunch? Will it be a packed lunch?

All lunches will be eaten in the classrooms. School dinners will be taken to classrooms.

- How will break times work?

Breaktimes are still in discussion, the pupils may have to stay inside the classroom or stay inside social distancing boundaries.

- How will secondary 4 pupils do their practical work for the exam year?

Woodwork, PE, cookery etc

Pupils may have to stay in one class all day, finishing one subject at a time. This has not been discussed yet.

- Will there be any childcare help for parents who work after August? if not all children will be back all the time.

It is unlikely to receive childcare for children when they are not at school as it is only grade 1 essential workers receiving childcare from the government

- Will the teachers, cleaners and other adults in the school be wearing masks?

Teachers are unlikely to wear masks.

- How will break times be managed in poor weather?

The pupils may have to stay inside the classrooms or stay in socially distance in other areas around the school

- Will primary and secondary children be back at the same time?

Yes, although the new primary 1's and secondary 1's may be in earlier for a look around.

Angela suggested a question regarding the young children coming into early years education who have not been meeting anyone outside their direct family since lockdown was

enforced. Also, young children coming into a building they have not been to before, when they have not been in a building apart from their own for months.

Ingrid answered with the plan to phone or video call every student and incoming children before the summer holidays. Sarah added the early years staff have been sending children videos of themselves reading stories, for the children to familiarise the staff.

Jacqueline then inquired if this could be done for the older primary. Michael replied remote learning is at a very early stage, and this must be agreed with parents beforehand. The two programmes used for contact is Microsoft Teams and Vscene. Teams is a one-way video call where only the teacher can be seen but all members of the call can be heard. Vscene is a two-way video and phone call.

Jimmy asked if Perspex screens or back to back desks could mean more children in classes. Michael replied this has not been discussed but social distancing should still be enforced.

James answered a question previously proposed by the parent forum, in the practical classis's teachers would move not pupils. This would delay germ movement within the school. Michael added there would be a full time cleaner at the school to do general cleaning and clean up after lunches and practical classes.

Angela suggested outdoor hand washing facilities would be beneficial for the pupil, teachers and visitors to school as an alternative to hand sanitiser.

2. Celebration of achievement for S4's

Michael emphasized the need for a celebration for the S4's hard work and dedication over the years. Suggesting an outdoor leaving ceremony may be an option if all participants keep to government guidelines, of staying 2m apart and keeping the numbers to a minimum – only students, no parents.

Additional to the celebration, Michael added it would be nice for the leavers to come to the school to say goodbye. As of government guidelines now this would not be allowed, after the summer this will not be adequate as the number of pupils in the school in term time. Discussions are happening around the new S1's returning to Mr Balfour's class for two mornings to say goodbye.

Ingrid confirmed the need for celebration of both the Primary 7 and Secondary 4 leavers. Adding the usual P7's transaction week has been unable to continue. The school has organised a questionnaire regarding an online event to be sent out to pupils.

3. School Update

Building work

We are unsure of the completion date of the Nursery extension. This will depend on when the contractors are allowed back on site by the Government.

Hatch in the office – there is a hatch being put into the school office so pupils, Parents and Staff do not enter the school office.

Accessible toilets – two staff toilets outside the school office are being converted into an accessible toilet.

Staffing

Staff who start after Summer

Music Teacher – Mr Alistair Justice

English Teacher – Probationer

Chemistry teacher – Mr Gordon Stove – 3 days.

Primary teacher – Mrs Mandy Anderson

Early Years – Miss Catherine Henry

School Dates

The government has announced the start date for Scottish schools will be 11th of August – this is earlier than usual, leaving the school 5 extra holiday days.

4. Communication with pupils

Jacqueline introduced the topic highlighting the sole use of emails as insufficient, asserting the need for phone calls and video calls. In addition to the students need for more materials.

Ingrid first addressed materials, replying all primary students have been offered materials. Many know if they need anything to get in touch, and materials are posted out to households. Secondly addressing the aim for teachers to personally speak to all students before the summer holidays.

Michael asserts remote learning is only just being established thus taking up a lot of the teacher's time creating and dispersing work, especially around the older students working towards SQA qualifications. On communication Michael added all the students will be contacted to support and engage with students. Continuing Mr Garrick has created a spreadsheet for the older students for pupil support to contact students doing well or lagging.

Angela suggested a video call for each pupil as it may be challenging for pupils who have not seen anyone to be encouraged to study.

Michael then stated the aim to contact each pupil individually before the summer holidays, after parents and carers accept the legalities behind direct contact.

5. AOCB

Betty Ferrie is standing down as the community representative and will need a formal thank you from the Parent Council. The new member should have an interest in the school, in the past it has been ex-chairs. Michael suggested this could be a member of the Lifeboat to grow connections with the charity and the school.