

Minutes of the Sandwich Junior High School Parent Council Meeting

Monday 4th November, 2019

Sandwich Junior High School

Present: Hilary Burgess (Chair), Stuart Clubb (Head-Teacher), Vaila Irvine, Lyndsey Joyce, Debbie Jamieson (Treasurer), Carolyn Hand, Sian Wild, Linda Tait, Karen Hall, Peter Wood, Karen Wood, Jenny Welsh, Alice Adamson, Gordon Irvine, Emily Jamieson

In Attendance: Gary Cape (Clerk), Councillor George Smith (Ex-Officio), Peter Haviland (Quality Improvement Officer).

The meeting began at 18:06. Hilary welcomed everyone to the meeting

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Michael Manson, Jennifer Wadley, Claudia Saunders, Stephanie Bain, Steven Jamieson, Katie Leask, Fiona Henderson and Claire Smith.

Actions

2. Minutes from 20th May 2019:

Approved.

3. Matters Arising/ Action Points

Homework - Stuart advised he is currently looking at planning. A session was held at the latest in-service day for the secondary department. A current draft is looking at two pieces of homework per subject per session, where this is a reasonable expectation. Hilary asked how that would be communicated to parents. Stuart advised that planning has just been agreed and that there is now a process to be followed to finalise that. Once finalised Stuart will report to the next meeting as to how close we are to being able to communicate that to the wider school community.

Stuart to report progress on homework to next meeting.

UKMT (United Kingdom Mathematics Trust) - Carried forward.

Carolyn to share website details for UKMT via Facebook.

Encouraging school meal take-up - new menus have recently been introduced. Stuart advised that it may be a good idea to wait and see what the uptake is. Hilary asked if any surveys had been undertaken. Stuart said no, but that it would seem to be a reasonable piece of work to undertake. The menus are still not in place for secondary.

Gary to invite Neil Beattie to an upcoming meeting.

Hilary stressed the importance of school meals for health. Carolyn said how pleased she was to see vegetarian options on the primary menu. Stuart advised that we should invite Neil Beattie. Hilary asked if the free

meal situation had affected the drop-off in uptake. Stuart thought not and that there were likely to be several issues at play including choice and lack of flexibility. Gordon thought perhaps that peer-pressure could also be a factor. Having a trial week was suggested as a way of getting people interested. A Facebook survey could also be useful.

Linda thought that it was a good thing for the parent council to champion. Stuart agreed. Hilary said that we needed to identify what was putting people off. George said that Neil Beattie had been very proactive in promoting healthy options and increased choice, within the constraints of budget and procurement. Hilary also suggested that this could be a useful agenda item for the pupil council.

Linda asked if there had been any consultation on mobile phone policy. Stuart said he had taken it to the pupils last Thursday to ask for feedback after the pupil council had refreshed the policy. The policy is now in draft form awaiting feedback from staff and Parent Council. Linda had been given the impression that the new rules were set from her child. Hilary advised that a lot of the discussions surrounding the policy refresh had been shelved due to the inspection. Stuart said that he has always been keen to involve parents, and that perceptions could have played a part.

The new policy, broadly, has been updated in several key areas. Phones are not to be used during class time without permission. The school's view on phones is that they are acceptable, and can be taken into classes, but must be in bags. They cannot be used between periods. Headphone use is, again, only with permission, and only using one earphone. S.I.C. policy was also incorporated with respect to not taking photos and videos without consent. Taking videos of experiments in science classes would be possible with permission. Bringing chargers is done at their own risk.

Linda said that she was against having phones in classroom settings. Stuart confirmed that the policy, so far, is specific to the secondary department. Hilary asked for the timescale of implementation. Stuart advised that he can consult with parents and staff at some point this week. Linda thought that there should be a chance for immediate feedback. Hilary said that this should be perhaps put out to the messenger group for feedback. Peter Wood wasn't sure how the policy could be policed. Stuart said that there were various means through warnings and confiscation etc.

Linda asked Peter what guidelines were given and how other schools dealt with this. Peter Haviland said that there was no central policy outside the basic S.I.C. guidelines. All schools were empowered individually - not just head-teachers, but the whole school community - and that all voices should be heard. Gordon said that the level of IT involvement in all areas of life meant that the use of sophisticated equipment to assist with education was a real advantage, especially with

Facebook poll to be issued to gauge support.

All members to look at the menu and the options available.

restricted levels of access to laptops etc. Hilary reminded everyone that policies can be amended in the light of feedback after implementation. Peter Wood advised that he has had very positive experiences with technology and that kids embrace it and take real advantage. Linda expressed concern about child protection issues. Peter referred to Class Dojo as an example where data protection issues have been highlighted. He stressed that it has not currently been banned. Gordon clarified that the issues surrounding Class Dojo were to do with technical rules on where data was stored, rather than any specific concerns about data protection breaches.

George Smith said that the Education Scotland report on the school inspection is due to be officially presented in two weeks' time, which may spark more media interest. The release of the report missed the last Education and Families committee meeting by one day. George said that his focus would be on keeping things moving forward.

Parental involvement - Stuart still to meet with Claire to formulate this. Action to Stuart to meet with Claire. Karen said that the experience of other volunteers had been mixed and they had felt a little unsupported. Linda stated that volunteers should never be left with children unsupervised. Peter Haviland agreed and said that there were procedures that should be followed. Sian said that volunteers could be a mixed blessing because their energy was hard to harness within the operation of the system.

Stuart to meet with Claire about parent volunteers.

4. Financial Report

Debbie said that accounts £3236 with more to come in.

5. Head-Teacher's Report

See attached report - Stuart suggested that he may do another update to this report in December.

Queries - Hilary asked about communication of reporting. Stuart advised that the information was provided by 3 interim reports and one full-year report. The first round of information will be uploaded on 25th November. The Interim report utilises professional judgement. Stuart to provide more information to parents about how the reporting system works and what is being signified.

Stuart to give parents more information on reporting systems.

Emily reflected that - in the interim report - that the numbers did not accurately reflect the conversations that had been held with teachers over attainment. Gordon reported that wider achievement was being linked to accredited awards that would look good on CVs and provide skills that would be useful in an employability context. The Positive Behaviour Policy being developed - Hilary asked what timescale for implementation - Stuart advised that he would be able to give more information by mid-January.

Alice Adamson reported that progression pathways in literacy and numeracy are in place. Debbie asked Alice about how progression will be reported. Carolyn highlighted how important it was to have clear lines of communication for reporting.

Learning and Teaching – Vision, Value and Aims - Pace and Challenge - observations have been carried out on every teacher observed once. An overall report has been written, and reports on each individual staff member. When asked how frequently these observations would take place, Stuart acknowledged that it would depend on how effective they were deemed to be. The school was committed to these observations because of the inspection. There may not be formal observations in the future on a school-wide basis, but this is under review.

Karen Hall asked how this process related to individual students. Stuart argued that the process was designed to measure something different, and was not geared to looking at individual pupils. Hilary asked how the parents of an individual could get more challenge for their child. Stuart advised that they should consult pupil support. Stuart wanted to encourage a more natural approach to classroom observation. Stuart advised that observations had previously been done by line management. He admitted that they had not been a strength, but that he was hopeful the process would become more rigorous.

Emergency Communication – Stuart empathised with the frustration surrounding communication of shut-downs and closures. He has been working on establishing clear lines of communication for potential winter closures. Debbie added that there were so many ways that information was disseminated, but never with any consistency. Email seems to be the most popular medium. Alice asked what things parents would like from an email. Carolyn said that sufficient notice was imperative. Emily said it would also be helpful for the email titles to reflect the urgency of the message. Debbie said that practical issues need notice. Karen Wood suggested that appropriate email aliases might help. Stuart said that they have long argued for access to emergency dissemination systems, but have been blocked.

Linda asked about school improvement plan items that had lapsed dates but were still not complete. She asked whether the plan was realistic. Stuart said that he felt the plan was on track, that many of the items had work completed but were awaiting formal implementation of certain key sections. Linda said that she was still concerned that key issues were not being addressed. Carolyn suggested that perhaps an indication on the plan as to why the item was delayed would help with understanding. Alice stressed how hard people were working in the school to make improvements. Linda apologised if she was perceived as being negative. Hilary stressed that everyone was working for the benefit of the children. Stuart to add extra information for delayed items.

Carolyn to email Michael Manson with respect to updating school website with information for parents.

Stuart to add extra information to delayed items on the school improvement plan.

Peter Haviland said that every school improvement plan was a work in progress and, by nature was flexible. He said that Sandwick's plan was well ahead of typical progress levels, and that it was being updated much more frequently. He also commended the staff for their levels of effort. Hilary stressed that Parents that were on the side of the staff.

6. After School Club

Stuart advised that club is still being run by two members of staff. One will soon be leaving, but Stuart is confident of finding a replacement. He advised that it had been challenging to keep it running, but is a real service to the community.

7. Water Fountain

See funding projects.

8. Funding Projects

Water fountain – cost £350-£400. Hilary asked Peter Haviland if the Shetland Islands Council would consider covering the cost. Peter to establish if there is a central fund. Karen suggested approaching Scottish Water. Item approved if there is no central fund to cover the work.

S4 Record of Achievement Folders – cost £600 - Hilary suspected these had already been dealt with. Debbie to check.

Guitars – Cost £240. Approved.

Microscopes – Cost £300. Approved.

Peter Haviland advised that if additional items are donated, particularly regarding computing, they will not be maintained by central ICT. Peter to check that policy.

Hilary asked if Stuart had thought of a system through which teachers could apply to the parent council for funding. He said no. Sian suggested informing staff of the availability of funds at staff meetings. Hilary was keen to link fundraising to specific project targets. Funding projects and requests to be included as an agenda item.

9. Views from the Parent Forum

Linda referred to the mobile phone policy. See earlier discussion.

Peter to enquire about S.I.C. funding options for water fountain

Debbie to establish if folders already paid for

Hilary to email application form to Stuart, to go on the school website.

Gary to include agenda item for funding requests.

Peter to check policy regarding ICT repairs.

10. Christmas Fair

Hilary received email from Michael Manson advising that the event is to be held on 24th November. He is looking for volunteers to help with organising and bringing things together.

Volunteers for various roles to be arranged through Facebook.

Linda and Jenny to email Michael. Peter will advise regarding music.

Hilary to organise craft table through Facebook

11. AOCB

Debbie has put Michael's plea for junior footballers on Facebook.

Karen asked about the next beach clean. Hilary replied that nothing was yet confirmed.

Stuart thanked Peter Haviland for his service before he moves to Argyll and Bute in 2 weeks' time. He expressed a debt of gratitude for the help and challenge Peter had given him during his tenure. The committee joined in wishing Peter all the best for the future, and thanking him for his efforts.

12. Date of next meeting

Poll to be circulated nearer the time.

The meeting closed at 20:22