

## Newton Families Together Meeting

2<sup>nd</sup> February, 2021 (held virtually via Zoom)

**Present:** Nik Arrestis (Chair, NFT), Gillian Oldham (Vice Chair / Chair, NPSFG), Gisi Mehlstiebl (Treasurer), Lesley Clinkenbeard (Secretary, NPSFG), Linda Kane (Headteacher), Emma Alison (Deputy Headteacher), Lynsey-Anne Brown (Deputy Head Teacher), Glenda Carruthers, Emma O'Halloran, Emma Baldwin, Graham Simpson, Hannah Simpson, Kirsty Macfarlane, Liz Robertson, Lyndsey Hamilton, Maria Gray, Nic Russian, Ruth Banning, Serena House, Yvonne Wyroslawska

**Apologies:** Katrina Arrestis, Penny Williams

| Agenda Item                   |   | Action owner | Action by Date |
|-------------------------------|---|--------------|----------------|
| 1.Welcome                     | NA welcomed everyone to the meeting.  |              |                |
| 2. School Update (Linda Kane) | <p>The Head Teachers report was circulated to the group prior to the meeting.</p> <p><b>Parents Evening</b> – NA advised that the format of Parents Evening had been added as an agenda item at next week's Parent Council Network meeting (cross Stirling forum) – to ask Stirling Council for permission for online parents evening sessions, however LK advised that the SC Link Officer (?) Robertson had reported back to her (following a SC meeting last week) that the choice for parents evening format lies with the school itself – could be via an individual report, via phone call or via Google Meets. There is no longer a requirement for a 3<sup>rd</sup> party to be present at such meetings. At the time of the meeting this information had not yet been shared with the wider teaching body at NPS. LK has yet to discuss / decide with the teachers but thought they may prefer either a call or Google Meet. She noted that there is absolutely no obligation on the teachers to facilitate a Google Meet and that it would be up to the individual teachers to decide what works best for their own circumstances.</p> <p>Potential dates for parents evening was also discussed especially in light of the recent First Ministers guidance regarding return to school for P1-3. Should this be pushed back to late March?</p> <p>It was agreed that having an option to speak with the teachers via Google Meet would be extremely welcome &amp; would allow more than one parent to be involved in the discussion. The consensus of the group also appeared to support a push back of the dates (prior to Easter) as long as this was also the opinion of teaching staff.</p> <p>It was noted that once a final approach is agreed it might be beneficial for the school to communicate the reason for the approach chosen to avoid any misinterpretation among the parents.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> LK &amp; teaching team to agree way forward and feed back to parents accordingly</p> <p><b>Parental Survey Feedback</b></p> <p>LK advised that last week was spent feeding back to parents the findings of the survey regarding the Online Learning offering. Teachers have been overwhelmed by the positive and encouraging feedback on the changes introduced since the last lockdown. Feedback was issued by year group. Main themes highlighted included:-</p> | LK / EA /LAB |                |

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|                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Technical / Printer issues – this is really a personal choice and there should be no real need for any printing of resources</li> <li>- Editing docs – the weekly Newton Note is being used for provision of tips &amp; techniques on the use of Google Classroom. LK noted that teachers are also learning as they go and are still getting themselves comfortable with the use of Google Meets / expanding their offering as they feel able to. Additional information relating to alternative options for editing (i.e. via Microsoft suite of products) will be added to the next Newton Note once EA has clarified &amp; confirmed that these are feasible options.</li> <li>- Parents are recognising the improvements week by week, but it was noted that teachers are under immense scrutiny by both parents and senior teaching team and teachers are not in a position to issue work a week in advance.</li> <li>- Overall feedback was positive &amp; constructive and it was extremely useful to obtain this feedback early.</li> <li>- EA noted that children have also been on a huge learning curve in terms of using Google Classroom and acknowledged that Google Meets does not suit every child / class. Some classes are responding very differently, even within the same year group.</li> </ul> <p>NA thanked the leadership team for running the survey and feeding back findings to parents so swiftly.</p> <p>ACTION – EA to investigate alternative editing options and include in Newton Note accordingly</p> |           |         |
| 3. NFT Meeting Structure | <p>Discussions took place regarding the format of NFT meetings, how we communicate, how well we listen to parents. Items discussed: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● It was suggested that it might be beneficial to have a forum (either prior to usual NFT meeting / or in a separate call) to discuss items as a parent body without the teaching staff being present.</li> <li>● Would it be useful to prepare more in advance of calls – getting feedback from Class Reps about topics parents would like to be discussed / added to the agenda?</li> <li>● It was noted that it is very useful to have the teaching staff present at the NFT meeting to discuss / highlight / clarify issues.</li> <li>● Could there be a shared page of resources for parents to access information resulting from meetings &amp; where would be the best place for this?</li> </ul> <p>ACTION - GC &amp; EO'H to look at how best to address the various suggestions and incorporate for future meetings</p>  | EA        |         |
| 4. Parental Input        | <p><b>Class Reps</b></p> <p>It was agreed that having Class Reps was a huge step forward from where we were a year ago both in terms of participation at NFT meetings and ensuring that the views of the wider parent</p>   | GC / EO'H | Ongoing |

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|                             | <p>body are represented however it was noted that some classes still do not have Class Reps. NA admitted that this needs to be addressed to ensure that all classes are appropriately represented.</p> <p><b>ACTION - EA</b> to identify gaps in Class Reps &amp; issue a Parentmail to request volunteers for those relevant classes</p> <p><b>Ensuring all parents included</b></p> <p>Some classes / years have WhatsApp groups however these tend to be for mums and so some dads / carers might be missing. In addition, new families might be missed from these groups. It was agreed that URL links for each class WhatsApp group should be obtained from Class Reps and collated to be distributed via Parentmail to all parents.</p> <p><b>ACTION – Class Reps</b> to forward WhatsApp group URL links to EA or NR</p> <p><b>Feedback / input from parents</b> – it was agreed that WhatsApp groups appear to be a very effective way of communicating quickly with parents (e.g. re unexpected school closures) however need to consider the best way to communicate and obtain feedback / input from the wider parent body going forward. Options discussed included:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Links to a separate site housing relevant question(s) – this would take parents away from the WhatsApp group chat and hopefully prevent the lengthy discussions / opinions that can result</li> <li>- Asking parents how they would prefer to receive feedback / provide input</li> <li>- Publicise upcoming meetings better.</li> <li>- Highlight potential agenda items of upcoming meetings to parents in advance and request input – probably via Class Reps</li> <li>- Provide a short summary of discussion / action points to parents following any meeting (via Parentmail?)</li> <li>- Add agenda /minutes / supporting docs onto the school website</li> </ul> <p>To improve communication and transparency it was also agreed that, when NFT asks for opinions, a summary of the response should be shared back with the parent body. For example a message would go out saying “thankyou for your recent feedback. As a result of this feedback we will.....”</p> <p><b>ACTION – NR</b> to look at suggestions &amp; come up a plan to improve communications between Class Reps &amp; parents including expectations and acceptable behaviour in groups / online forums.</p> | EA | Class Reps             | ASAP |
| 5. Roles & Responsibilities | <p>It was noted that this was NA's final meeting as Chair of the group. After a unanimous show of hands (proposed by GO and seconded by NR) the new co-Chairs will be Glenda Carruthers &amp; Emma O'Halloran. Nic Russian will continue with Communications &amp; Yvonne Wyroslawska agreed to assume role of Secretary (supported by LR &amp; GM)</p>  |    |                        |      |
| 6. AOCB                     | <p>In the interest of time NA advised that any outstanding agenda items would be taken to the next meeting.</p> <p>A Class Rep only meeting was agreed for 18<sup>th</sup> March @7pm</p> <p>The next full NFT meeting is scheduled for Mon 26<sup>th</sup> April @ 7pm</p> <p>– Google Meet codes to be generated by GC</p> <p>NA thanked the group for a constructive meeting.</p>   | GC | Prior to next meetings |      |

LK expressed her huge thanks to both NA & GO for all their work establishing the NFT team and for the continued support they have shown over the past few years.