

Senior School Pupil Council Minutes, 2nd February 2018

Chair: Lewis McGarry



Agenda Item:	Discussion:
1. Feedback from last meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health & Wellbeing period: Mr Phee said that he had spoken to Mr McKay who is responsible for overseeing this. Mr McKay is willing to meet with junior and senior pupils to discuss this issue so that improvements can be made. Toilet & changing room facilities: Mr Phee explained that he had spoken to Mrs Smith, the School Resource Manager, who said that sinks and soaps are checked daily by the janitors, and the same amount of sinks and soaps are operational in each secondary school in Falkirk Council. There is no possibility that FES would fund new hairdryers, but the school could possibly fund them through a fundraising event, the book out system from PE could be introduced. Lunchtime queues: pupils said that while there is still heavy demand during the first 10 minutes, they felt that queues had improved and were happy to leave the matter there, accepting that the current system is probably better than any alternative.
2. School Scarf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In some houses there is a lack of support for the idea with some pupils feeling that they shouldn't have to spend money to buy a school scarf when they already own a perfectly suitable one. In other house there is more support depending on the design. Pupils were keen that if there was to be a scarf then the pupils themselves would be able to have a say on its colour and design, perhaps there being two or more colours/designs available to give pupils a choice e.g. black or green. There were also issues raised about the material and thickness which can affect people with certain allergies. One pupil said that their old school had scarfs and most people were happy with it there, arguing that while at first pupils may be sceptical, they will soon get used to it. Mr Phee said that while some pupils currently wear a scarf in school for practical purposes to keep warm, others wear one as an item of fashion. He said that it will be the pupils who get to design a scarf, and a meeting will be arranged with a mix of junior and senior pupils to look at designs and possibly meet with the supplier. Once a prototype has been produced it could go out for wider consultation from pupils. The view that pupils wear a scarf at present was refuted by some pupils who said that it was purely to keep warm, also pointing out that some of the rooms in the school were very cold, particularly the computer rooms. Mr Phee reassured pupils that room temperatures are monitored to check that they do not fall below the legal minimum.
3. Mental Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This issue was on the agenda as it has been raised under AOB at previous pupil council meetings. There is a widespread belief amongst pupils that something more needs to be done to support pupils' mental wellbeing and end the stigma attached to mental health issues. A view was expressed that while pastoral teachers provide valuable support to many pupils, some pupils find it difficult to approach pastoral staff, and that there should be greater primary support so that pupils know how to avoid feeling stressed or depressed and what they can do to support themselves if they do. Pupils feel they are often told to avoid stress by making a study plan, but some pupils found this actually made them more stressed. A suggestion was also made that teachers could co-ordinate the handing out of homework as some weeks there is no homework but on others there is an unmanageable amount and may fall on weeks where there is also a school football match or a school event. Senior pupils feel the main or only focus on mental health is related to exam stress but not on other causes of mental health issues. Many pupils feel they should be given more information in H&W – for all year groups – so that they have the knowledge and understanding to be able to support friends and family members. Mr Phee referred to his earlier point that Mr McKay is willing to meet with pupils to discuss improving H&W period. He also said that in addition to pastoral support, other support structures existed such as a school counsellor employed and being able to access outside agencies; however pupils perhaps need to be made more aware of these. Pupils present at the meeting seemed unaware that there is a school counsellor and agreed that we need to make the school community more aware of these support structures. It was also added that a lot of junior pupils don't know who their mentors are and how they can help – this doesn't seem to work as well as it did in the past.
4. House Identity & Competition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many pupils feel there is no longer the same house identity compared to previous years and that something needs to be done to address this. Ideas from house council included re-introducing inter-house sports competition, quizzes and a 'battle of the bands event' that could be tied in with fundraising. The Senior Pupil Leadership has put forward a set of proposals to introduce a 'house points scheme' with the aims increasing the value houses hold within the school, improve pupil morale, punctuality, behaviour, effort and quality of work. Mr Phee already has a copy of the proposals and said that he was impressed with their ideas. SLT are keen to meet with the House Captains to discuss this further.
5. A.O.B.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Senior Pupil Leadership Team are also keen to get the school the Green Flag Award via the Eco Schools Scotland programme, and have spoken to Miss Lobban who has been involved in this programme before. Mr Phee said he was supportive of the idea, but reminded pupils of the litter problem in the school that pupils are responsible for. It was suggested that putting litter in house bins could be linked to the new house points proposals. March's meeting will be chaired by Jack Cherrie, who was due to have chaired the cancelled December meeting.