



ST MUNGO'S PARENT COUNCIL

CHAIRPERSON: MRS ANISAH IJAZ

Minutes of a meeting of St Mungo's Parent Council held by video conference on Thursday 11th February at 7pm.

PRESENT:

Parent Council Members: Anisah Ijaz, Merle Stevenson, Antoinette Cherubini-Donaldson, Louise Harland, Carolyn Tribble, Lesley Mann, Steve Feltbower, Florence Crozier.

Councillors: Pat Reid, James Kerr

In Attendance: Stephen Phee – Rector, Clare Marshall – Teacher Rep, Anne Hemfrey – Clerk

Apologies: Anne-Marie Gregory, Keliann Arthur

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Carolyn Tribble proposed the minutes and Merle Stevenson seconded them.

MATTERS ARISING

Racism and Bullying Policy – Stephen reported that no responses to the survey emailed to Parent Council members on 18th December had as yet been received. Anne to forward the email again to all members, Anisah urged everyone to respond asap. The deadline for feedback is 26th February. Anisah felt that, given the importance of this topic, views from the wider parent body should also be sought. Stephen proposed that the survey be sent to the parents of each year group but restricted to a particular House ie for S1 it would be sent to all the parents of Andrew House, for S2 Columba house and so on. This will give a representative body of feedback.

Stephen outlined the complaint process if a parent has a concern that their child is being bullied/the subject of racist attacks:

1. Parents should complain to the school, all such complaints go directly to Stephen.
2. Stephen will investigate the complaint and may involve the pastoral support team at this stage.
3. Stephen will report back to parents on his findings with an explanation of any action that is being taken, if bullying etc has taken place.

4. If the parent is not happy with the school's response, the complaint is passed to Falkirk Council – this is a Stage 1 complaint.
5. The complaint is passed back to the school for further investigation.
6. If the parent is still not happy it is passed back to Falkirk Council and is now a Stage 2 complaint. At this point Falkirk Council appoint an Investigating Officer.
7. If the parent does not accept the findings of the Investigating Officer, they can take the matter to the Ombudsman. However, the latter simply examines whether the correct procedure has been followed throughout the investigation.

Stephen stressed that the confidentiality of the complainant is always preserved. The only staff to be interviewed are those directly relevant to the complaint.

Those present suggested that there should be a link to the above procedure within the Bullying /Racism policy so that all parents can easily access it.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The balance is £563. There will shortly be another £590 from Falkirk Council, giving us a total of £1153. Merle is trying to set up online banking for the account, however this is not proving to be very straightforward!

Anisah was concerned that we still have to decide how to spend the above funds. Various ideas have been mooted in the past eg around developing the young workforce agenda, but none has been acted upon. Clare Marshall proposed an initiative based on selling some of the artwork produced by pupils. Clare to email Anne with details which she could then circulate to all members.

Anisah is keen that the funds provide a Parent Council “legacy” in a similar way to the music award currently sponsored by the PTA. Some of the funds could be spent for example on a memorial garden in memory of the pupils and teachers that have passed away. Planting trees would help the environment and climate change.

All to forward ideas to Anisah prior to the next meeting.

Pat Reid joined the meeting.

RECTOR'S REPORT

A copy of the Rector's report is attached. Key points to note:

HMI - The HMI have been selecting schools at random to assess how well they are working in lockdown and contacted Stephen last week. They were very impressed with the arrangements in place at St Mungo's and provided very good feedback.

Digital Training – all staff have now been trained and provided with resources eg webcams, iPads, digital pens. Devices have been issued to those pupils most in need. All staff have “on the button” access from home.

Pupil Support – teachers have lots of contact with pupils depending on their needs: social, emotional, IT, learning support. All pupils have a personal learning plan. A number of pupils have been made homeless since lockdown. The school is supporting vulnerable pupils on the child protection register.

Social media – Pastoral staff have signposted pupils to different support areas.

Parents' comments:

Anisah invited all those present to give their views on their experiences of their children's learning during lockdown, summarized below:

- Workload seems really high for some subjects, but not for others.
- Unrealistic expectations on the part of teachers in terms of workload.
- Pupils seem very reluctant to ask teachers questions and /or do not get responses from teachers which they need.
- Feedback from teachers is sometimes just “check your answers”
- Teachers' expectations are often not clear.
- Often pupils cannot speak directly to teachers, they have to email them, which they are reluctant to do.
- Pupils engage best with live lessons, but too many are simply power point presentations.
- In some cases, only 4 or 5 pupils turn up for live lessons, so there will be a significant amount of time required for “catch-up” when schools re-open.
- Some teachers simply put on a video and leave pupils to “get on with it”.
- Pupils are frequently asked to mark their own work – they upload a lesson and then mark it, so have no opportunity to get an explanation if they don't understand anything.
- Home learning is not for everyone – some children simply cannot engage with it.
- All agreed that the communications which are issued every week are very good.
- Overall, those parents with children lower down the school were happier with lock down learning than those in the upper years.

Stephen explained that since January, the deputies had all received an average of approx. 2500 emails each, and numerous telephone calls, some of which could take up to half an hour. Staff have, at all times, tried to emphasise the importance to pupils of engaging in school work.

IT Issues “On the button” (OtB) issues now resolved. Stephen is still looking into the possibility of online parents evenings - if the next trial works, he will look at holding them in early March. The initial focus will be on parents' evenings for the senior school.

Course Choice The process has started. Everything has been sent out to pupils electronically. S2 interviews are taking place.

A request was made for more information on the Tracking report – currently there is not enough detail to fully understand a pupil's performance. However, Stephen said it was not likely that this would be possible in the short term as he has to balance staff workloads. The latter are shortly due to increase considerably due to the return of some pupils on 22nd February. From that date, S4-S6 pupils will attend school for practical work relating to their SQA courses. At present it appears that 2m social distancing will need to be maintained, meaning that only 8% of pupils can be in school at any one time.

Falkirk Council have said that they will not increase the number of buses, so it will not be possible to have different cohorts of pupils attending in the mornings and afternoons. This means some pupils will have to have 6 periods of a single subject in the one day. If this goes ahead, the whole school timetable will be affected and will need a complete overhaul.

The current focus is on teaching and learning – assessment will have to take place at a later date, once pupils are back in school.

With regard to SQA assessments, no details have been given yet on appeals or exceptional circumstances.

STAFFING

The staffing exercise for next year has just started – there will be a meeting next week re staff vacancies. The school will be advertising for two music teachers; a PE teacher has just been appointed.

AOB

Clare Marshall suggested issuing the survey again to parents, students and staff,

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 25th March at 7pm by video link.