



**STRATHAVEN ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL
(VIRTUAL) MEETING OF 12 MAY 2020
MINUTES**

WELCOME & APOLOGIES

In attendance: Kay Maxwell (Secretary), Jack Campbell (Chair), Ali Moon, Simon Jardine, Kevin Boyd (Headteacher), Jillian Kane (Depute Head Teacher)

Apologies: None

Jack welcomed all in attendance to the meeting. This was the first 'virtual' meeting of the Parent Council convened digitally due to the closure of the school building and the requirements of social distancing imposed under Covid-19 restrictions. Numbers attending this meeting were restricted to make digital conduct of business manageable.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting on 4 February 2020 were approved.

MENTORING UPDATE

Ali reported that mentoring had stopped meantime because of the restrictions. When possible, she would email mentors and school staff to resume the programme.

PARENT COUNCIL FACEBOOK PAGE

Simon reported that analytics show there are 2 or 3 new views of the PC Facebook page every day. There had been a meeting of Simon, Kay, Carlyne and Jo in February to discuss ongoing and improved communication with the Parent Body. It was decided this would be discussed in another virtual meeting preferably before 22 May with Carlyne, Jo, Simon, Mrs. Kane & others.

HEADTEACHER'S REPORT

The Headteacher's Report can be found here:



4 HT Report May
2020.docx

Mr. Boyd thanked Simon for organizing the meeting; all who provided feedback on the Home Learning Document; the young people, parents and carers for trying to deal with Home Learning; all staff for supporting children's learning and staff working in SLC hubs. Resilience is being tested and Health & Wellbeing is of the utmost importance. On continuity of learning, the Home Learning document is to provide guidance for the summer term and additional feedback is important.

The National Covid -19 Education Recovery Group meets twice a week. Its 10 work streams are:

1. Term 4 Learning
2. Preparing for the next academic year
3. Curriculum and Assessment
4. Supporting learners from disadvantaged backgrounds
5. Pastoral care
6. Workforce support
7. Workforce planning
8. School improvement in a new context
9. Critical childcare
10. Early education and childcare

Next week the Group will produce a strategic framework for the opening of schools, early learning and childcare provision. At SLC level, Mr. Boyd is a member of a Secondary Schools recovery group which liaises with the Primary recovery group and will keep the PC informed of the Government and SLC plans for the likely phased return to school.

SQA Arrangements for Estimates of Learners' Results (Grades, Bands and Rank Order).

This is also covered in the HT Report above.

DHT Mr. Fleming as SQA coordinator was thanked by Mr. Boyd for all his help.

SQA arrangements briefly are:

- online CPD course for staff involved in estimating grades
- all entries per faculty to be submitted
- spreadsheet to go to Faculty heads
- SQA provided school with Estimates and Awards of its students for last 3 years.
- Guidance issued on how to use this info to support grading
- all young people to be entered for correct courses
- new service for staff- SQA Connect to support school with submission of estimates
- from the Grades and Bands the school would normally predict, schools are to progress to 'refined bands' per information provided by SQA.

- Schools also need to provide a 'rank order' for each candidate within each refined band. Faculty heads will work on the rank order and this will be submitted to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).
- SLT will discuss the spreadsheets with Faculty Heads. The data will be considered in comparison with the previous 3 years predictions and results.
- Other qualifications where there was to be no external exam will also be considered.
- All information is to be submitted to SQA by 29 May
- Results Day will be 4 August as usual.

Detailed information on all of the above is on the SQA website.

Ali queried how children will fair who perhaps did not work for prelims or throughout year but who would have had assistance from tutors/parents for exams or would have worked hard for the actual exams. Kevin responded that school estimates are not based solely on prelims. There is 'inferred attainment'-estimates are based on teachers' professional judgement.

Simon asked about the Appeal process. Kevin responded that this year there will be a school appeal process without cost but that the school ideally wants a best set of results without appeals.

Kay asked about moderation. Kevin responded that faculty teams are meeting to discuss subjects and pupils. SLT will moderate, as can the HT. The Academy data for the last 3 years is strong which puts the candidates in a good position. SLC have asked Headteachers to provide quality assurance. SQA will moderate at their own level based on previous attainment data. SQA may do sampling.

Mrs. Kane advised that with Additional Support Needs children, if coursework has dipped due to some cause, then consideration can be given based on teacher's professional judgement.

Transition from P7 to S1

DHT Mrs. Kane reported that 178 first year pupils are due to join although the number may vary as placing requests are not finalised.

Primary Heads have provided information on all pupils and detailed information on children with Additional Support Needs.

School hosted several actual transition events before school closure so many children have been in Academy building.

SWAY newsletters have circulated with Q&As. The new s6 pupils should be involved in welcoming S1 pupils

Academy Support for Learning staff may need additional support to deal with new intake.

FEEDBACK ON HOME LEARNING

Jack commented on the encouraging quantity of feedback on Home Learning and has thanked everyone who contributed. An 8-point summary of feedback was sent to Kevin.

1. Classroom Leadership

Jack - Pupils miss the teacher guiding the class and responding to questions. Virtual lessons seem desirable.

Kevin -The Home Learning document on the website is aligned to the SLC document on Continuity of Learning. I understand the frustrations and expectations of parents and carers. The Education Recovery Group is working on producing a document for a 'blended approach' to learning and this may be available next week. Presently SLC Education's approach is that online interaction between pupils and teachers is not to be undertaken. Presently we can pre-record lessons and some teachers are doing this but one-to-one online interaction is not permitted.

Simon -documents are hard to follow if not being taught.

Ali - all departments need to be consistent e.g. all doing pre-recorded lessons.

DHT Mrs. Kane responded that teaching is interactive these days, it's not just lecture style.

Kay - are Teaching Unions preventing virtual lessons?

Mr. Boyd responded that the professional associations are working with Local Education Authorities and there will be a national steer going forward and support at local and national level. There are privacy and data protection issues to consider which are being worked on.

Simon commented on the general lack of communication from school about what was happening. Mrs. Kane responded that an update was sent to parents on Twitter/ school website and by email to the email address which the school holds for ParentPay. An update was issued on the School App on 29 April. Parents should ensure the school holds current email addresses for them and parents should consider downloading the School App for communication.

Mrs. Kane advised that S1-3 pupils were sent Google Classroom codes via Show My Homework. S4-6 pupils normally would have been on exam leave currently so may have been less engaged with school communication. Guidance staff have been contacting S1/2 pupils to see how they're managing and will continue to contact senior pupils. The school can see which parents have been accessing Show My Homework. Mrs. Kane stated that staff have limited access to specialised ICT equipment and that flexible hours are necessary for some teachers due to family circumstances.

Simon felt that the communication from school could be improved and it was agreed that he would put a 'shout out' on the PC Facebook page for parents to ensure email

addresses were up to date and encourage parents to use school App. Mrs. Kane will do the same on the Twitter feed.

Kevin agreed the school should pursue all communication channels and see if the office can put 'read receipts' on emails to parents.

Jack returned to classroom leadership. Kevin reported that he's facilitating discussion for Education Scotland on the wishes and wants of professionals and parents. Strathaven is working collaboratively with 3 East Kilbride schools. There is a need and a want for a virtual online academy nationally.

Mrs. Kane said that the Academy was not expecting the school day to be replicated at home. Pupils can learn in other ways which contribute to their education such as outdoor learning as not all pupils have access to ICT.

Ali commented that the feedback on work submitted by email /text online has to be thought through. The tone is important so the pupil gets the right message. Kevin said the school was conscious of tone in the preparation of the Home Learning document-an encouraging tone is important.

Jack said the explanations being given by Kevin and Mrs. Kane are all very well but a lot of parents are disappointed by what the school is providing. Parents are clamouring for something more. The school's desire to do something well is laudable but families need more: the school needs to demonstrate what it's been doing and its communication with parents needs to be more visible.

Kevin said the staff have stepped up to the challenges and he's happy to ask SLC when we can explore the appropriate use of other media. Live interaction with children by video should not be undertaken at the moment.

Jack said the teachers need to be seen to have stepped up and communication of what the teachers are doing needs to be broadcast to the parents.

Simon said its good PR for the school if parents are aware of all the work teachers are doing behind the scenes.

Ali said the school's work needs to be promoted.

Kevin and Mrs. Kane said more information was likely to be forthcoming soon from the Scottish Government.

Simon suggested that we have the summer holidays now, allowing authorities to make full preparation for education when kids return. Kevin said some schools may be open over the summer for key workers' children.

2. Feedback for pupils

Jack said clarity, direction and consistency was required when home learning tasks are being set and that there appeared to be some lack of marking and feedback for tasks submitted by pupils. Kevin commented that feedback should be provided by staff. Feedback can be requested by (1) emailing the school office to be forwarded to staff (2) emailing Guidance Staff (3) pupils emailing teacher through Google Classroom. Kevin advised that constructive and formative feedback should be given as it moves a child forward in their education. The school will act on this.

Jack said more direction is needed from staff. i.e. if work is prescribed, when it's to be completed and to what standard.

3. Better coordination of tasks

Jack said, for example, in science, less work was being set compared to other subjects or if the class has 2 teachers, they need to coordinate work to avoid overload. Kevin said the Home Learning document clarifies this: work should be set on a Monday for the week. All teachers were now only using Google Classroom to avoid work being set on different online platforms and this issue should soon settle.

Ali asked if there were any better ways to engage boys with English as it would appear from parental feedback they are struggling with it more than the girls. Mrs. Kane acknowledged this difficulty.

4. Help for Additional Support for Learning Pupils

Jack suggested a focus group of parents to engage with the school. Ms. Jackson is principal teacher of Support for Learning and she has been liaising with relevant parents. Kevin said the school is happy to look at ways of supporting ASN children but a focus group would not be compatible with confidentiality. Individual parents with concerns should contact Mrs. Kane via the school office.

5. Poor internet connection / insufficient digital access

Jack asked if pupils can be accommodated with digital access. Kevin said there was national support coming which might be tiered, possibly depending on school meal provision. Help might also come from SLC and school may be able to broaden the support from Pupil Equity. The National Strategy will include provision of digital access as the equity gap is an issue in home school education. It is also important that non-IT tasks are encouraged too. Mrs. Kane and other key staff have delivered Chromebooks to some pupils and PT Equity staff are looking at creating learning packs for those without IT.

6. Additional measures to support Mental Wellbeing

Mrs. Kane confirmed that health and wellbeing is part of the S1/2 lockdown requirements along with literacy and numeracy.

www.bigwhitewall.com is for 16+ years and this information will be posted on school Twitter and website.

Twitter feed will also include Young Scot information.
Guidance staff can also be contacted via school.

Kevin asked that the above information be put on PC Facebook page.
When school returns, work will be done to reintegrate ASN children who may in fact be thriving outside school environment.

7. Best Practice Sharing

Jack noted that there had been a number of comments from pupils who had expressed their appreciation of the efforts of some particular teachers. He suggested that this good practice be shared and replicated.

Kevin said some of the Academy's work has been celebrated by SLC as example of good practice and school needs to promote that. Mrs. Kane shared that Pupil Support staff have been contacting families to resolve learning issues as well as health and wellbeing check-in. Vulnerable pupils are being contacted on a regular basis.

8. Are more subgroups or meetings needed to convey messages to parents?

It was decided that improved communication with the parent body should be prioritized rather than more groups.

CURRICULUM RATIONALE

Kevin had circulated some work that Ms Huq had been working on for some time and had asked for feedback from the PC members. This work was started prior to the Covid-19 pandemic and is focused on arrangements when lockdown restrictions no longer apply. Due to time constraints it was decided that these documents would be sent out to PC members next week for feedback and discussion at a later meeting.

A copy of the Minutes will available on the school website as usual. Please also check the Parent Council Facebook Page.

The next meeting will be in around 4 weeks time depending on next steps with return to education.