



Strathaven Academy Parent Council Meeting

Tuesday 31st January @ 7.00pm

Minutes

In Attendance: J Campbell (Chair), C McMorris (Secretary), J Frew, C Webber, K Kinniburgh, M White, A Khan, A Minns (via virtual link), E Richardson (via virtual link)

W Huq (Headteacher), I Fleming (Depute Head Teacher), P Hamilton (Principal Teacher PE/Acting Depute Head Teacher), V Leck (Teacher)

Apologies: C Mitchell, J Tunney, A Brennan, I Gilroy, C Webber, G McKenna, E Hall, J Smith, R MacLean

1. Minutes of Meeting 29th November 2022 – Approved

2. Matters arising not covered in Agenda

i) Abuse of Toilets: An update on the toilet abuse confirmed that this is still an issue within the school. Teaching staff are looking at another rota for supervision to try to address the toilet abuse issues. An assembly was held on 30th January to address these issues with the students. Staff are understandably reluctant to say no to pupils using the toilets out with break times. Discussion was around potential solutions as the abuse, required monitoring and clean-up is costing staff time, money and causing issues for those students who are wishing to just use the toilets.

ii) Vaping: Discussion was had around students vaping; previously this had been an issue within the toilets, but it is also reported to be taking place in changing rooms and in classrooms when teachers are not present. Ms Huq advised that the school has different protocol levels for challenging vaping including talking to the student, contacting parents, confiscation of vapes and covering topics around substance misuse in PSE. Suggestion of general correspondence to parents that vaping has become an issue and if a student is caught vaping, their parent/carer will receive a text message from the school to advise.

iii) Registration Period: There was an update on previous concerns raised around potential inconsistent provision of information from different registration periods. Ms Huq has shared the concerns raised with staff and they are being more vigilant and aware. Other parents in the meeting agreed that from their experience the information back from different registration periods was consistent.

iv) Pupil's Personal Info: being accessed by all teachers – An update on previous concerns that information such as short-term medical requirements or reasons for raised anxiety, were not always being taken account of. Ms Huq advised that the pupil support team ensure that a daily update is sent out and all staff are able to access this.

v) Consultation on Curriculum: Update – Miss Hamilton gave a report on the feedback from the parental survey completed recently. 52 responses from parents/carers received. The report is attached as an appendix for information. It was noted that a number of parent/carers who responded felt that not enough information was shared on subjects / choices. As a response to this the website has been updated



to include all the links to options booklets and the presentations from the careers event tonight and links were posted on the school app this morning.

3. Headteacher's Report – Ms Huq gave a full report about the following topics:

Staffing Update – Following recruitment processes:

Miss McMenemy was the successful candidate for the post of Teacher of History.
Miss McWilliams (Lanark Grammar) has been appointed Teacher of Mathematics and will join us after the February break.

Ms Allan was successful at interview on Monday for the post of Teacher of Modern Languages and ESOL.

Biology interviews will take place over two days, with the assessment centre on the 2nd of February and final interviews on the 7th of February – 32 applications have been received.

Career Planning - Over the next few weeks, pupils will be involved with career research/planning/discussion and will be supported in making appropriate subject choices for next session.

Thursday 26th January: all S1-4 pupils were involved in BBC *Share your Story* assemblies. The BBC hosted the event and brought a team of panellists to be interviewed about their careers.

Today (Tuesday 31st January): Over 30 organisations in attendance and available in the Street to talk to our pupils and parents.

Monday 30th January – Friday 3rd February: all S2 teachers will deliver lessons to pupils on careers linked to their subject – Ms Neil (PTPS) is leading this.

Monday 30th January – Friday 3rd February: Faculty Heads will deliver presentations to pupils in S4/5 outlining pathways within their subject(s) and links to careers.

Pupil interviews with PTPS are also taking place as part of the options process and career planning.

Pupil assemblies will be held to share key information with pupils.

S4/5/6 Winter Assessment Diet - The S4/5/6 assessment diet has now completed which, on the whole, was very positive. Staff are in the process of marking and reporting. Tracking reports will be distributed in early February and reporting and consultation evenings will be held virtually.

Learning Walks - In November 2022, SLT completed 52 observations during learning walks, observing 74% of our teaching staff.

In all lessons, positive relationships between staff and pupils were clearly evident and almost all learners were engaged and motivated in their learning.

The majority of lessons included opportunities for active learning and the development of skills, with learners participating in enjoyable and challenging learning experiences.

Learning intentions and success criteria were shared and embedded in the majority of lessons. These made clear to learners the purpose of their learning and how to achieve success.

Most lessons observed were well-planned and structured, with clear and purposeful explanations and instructions evident.



Teachers used appropriate feedback and interventions to support effective learning and help learners make progress in the majority of lessons observed during the learning walks.

Across all year groups, there was evidence of opportunities for learners to take responsibility for their learning in the majority of our observations.

Some subjects were able to provide opportunities for learners to have personalisation and choice within the lesson and use effective questioning and higher-order thinking skills to support and deepen pupil understanding.

Digital technology was used as a teaching tool across all curricular areas; however, it was only used to enhance and support learning and teaching, in some of the lessons observed.

Future learning walks will explore how to capture evidence of effective differentiation and learners leading learning.

Reading Schools – Starbooks Café: The next session will take place on Thursday, 2nd February 2023 (12.35-1.25pm). We have shared information about this on our communications channels and we have three parents interested in attending the next session.

Primary Transition - Primary/Secondary transition is well underway with the mathematics department going out to work with our associated primary schools.

As part of the SG initiative on anti-racist education, P7 class teachers will have read a book called 'Planet Omar' with pupils by mid-May.

On Tuesday 16th May, all primary 7 pupils from our six associated primary schools will come to the Academy for the day. They will be divided into two sections and will spend half the day in PE doing various sporting activities, and half the day completing literacy challenges relating to 'Planet Omar'.

Primary 7 pupils have been invited to attend the second block of the P7 PE transition club. This will take place on the first three Mondays in March. Pupils will have the opportunity to take part in a number of activities.

Behaviour in Scottish Schools - Scottish Centre for Social Research (on behalf of the Scottish Government) has asked Strathaven Academy to participate in research entitled 'Behaviour in Scottish Schools 2023'. The study was postponed from 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID outbreak but will now take place in this year. Ms Huq has questioned whether the school will be able to receive the individual results / feedback for their areas.

In relation to behaviours in school, (e.g., bullying, mental health issues, levels of self-harm), Jack queried about previous concerns raised in early 2022 by parents around a disconnect between what behaviours the school was recognising and what parents/ carers were reporting. The question was asked whether this was an



ongoing issue or a legacy issue. Discussion was had if these were behaviours & concerns that individual parents were reporting to the school now or if this was anecdotal or older information raised in informal discussions and potentially not based on accurate facts. It was acknowledged that the Vision and Values work and initiatives put in place over the last year were actioned due to these issues previously raised. Ms Huq described many of the completed and ongoing initiatives including:

- Staff training around bullying, mental health & self-harm
- Liaison and strong collaborative working with SLC Equality & Anti Bullying Team
- Recording of school figures in relation to bullying, discrimination (for all 7 protected characteristics) and racism
- Transitions support including addressing expectations of behaviours.
- Liaison and support from police including their attendance at assemblies about issues with social media
- Vision and Values work – in collaboration with students, parent / carers & staff
- Promoting Positive Behaviour
- Student Charter development

4. **Communications Sub-group:** Lead by Jo Tunney & Mr Fleming. Mr Fleming gave an update on the following:

Jo Tunney & Mr Fleming met to discuss future plans. Detailed discussion was had about encouraging parents to come into the school, the P7 information evening and information videos.

Action points from the meeting included:

IF to meet with WH about a parent/carer drop-in event.

IF/WH to contact Wester Overton to discuss Parent Council Facebook page.

JT to investigate software that can be used to make presentations more interactive.

JT will canvas P7 parents at Wester Overton about what information they would want to know about Strathaven Academy.

Parent Portal – the school will be trialling this soon. Staff training to be provided and once implemented this should make it easier for parents/carers to update contact details, complete required forms and paperwork etc.

Show My Homework -- now known as **Satchel One**. The school have been looking at repurchasing the software for this as it was acknowledged that the weekly email update from Google Classroom is not as effective/worthwhile as it could be. The school is investing almost £10K on the reintroduction of this app as both Google Classroom & Satchel One now work alongside each other and should give parents/carers, staff and pupils a better overview of homework. The intention is to reintroduce this at the change of timetable in May.

Website:

'Face to a name' - awaiting a copy of the professional photographs of staff group that were taken in late November - IF will ask the office staff to chase this up.



As a result of recent focus on making informed choices for pupils in S2 - S5, the year group information sections have been updated and in addition these updates have been sent through other communication channels (Google Classroom/ assembly for pupils and App for parents/carers)

The school is continuing to use the news function of website less for communication and use other channels for this - Twitter for sharing success and App for messages

App:

The group continues to promote the use of the school App as the main communication channel, using the news section of the App; historically only the calendar and messages service have been utilised.

There are now 2405 App downloads compared to 2218 downloads at our most recent meeting.

A recent issue with software was on the Apps side, leading to the app not working for a few days – this should be resolved now.

The App is a public and open forum, so no personal information is posted on it - it is a place for the school calendar, whole school / whole year group messages and whole school news stories

Google Classroom:

It was advised that Google Classroom should not be a direct communication tool between parents/carers and class teachers. Staff are asked not to message parents/carers directly and if a parent/carer has any concern/question then they should contact the school office by phone or email where their concern/question can be appropriately signposted.

5. **Vision and Values** - As part of the ongoing initiative, DHT Miss Hamilton led a discussion with those in attendance. There were a number of open-ended questions covered around learning and teaching & vision and values with input received from the members. The discussion points will be collated and taken account of as part of the ongoing consultation process with all stakeholders including the wider parent/carer groups, teachers and students.
6. **Mentoring Sub-group** – Update at next meeting.
7. **SIP Sub-group:** Update at next meeting due to time limitations.
8. **AOCB:**
 - i) **Sandford school transport / unsafe route** – Cheryl had been asked to raise this by a group of parents from Sandford. Due to time constraints of meeting, it was agreed that the information and request for support from the parent council would be emailed to the group by Cheryl. Email to follow.
9. **Date of next meetings:**
 - Tuesday 21 March 2023 @ 7pm
 - Tuesday 6 June 2023 @ 7pm

Attached as appendix – Curriculum Consultation Report