



Strathaven Academy Parent Council Meeting

Tuesday 21st March @ 7.00pm

Minutes

In Attendance: J Campbell (Chair), J Tunney (Vice Chair), C McMorris (Secretary), Y Vance, M White, Cllr Elise Frame, Ray Maclean, K Kinniburgh (virtual), EM Hall (virtual), Giovanna (virtual) J Smith (virtual)

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

Apologies: A Brennan, C Webber, A Khan, V Leck (Teacher)

2. Minutes of Meeting 31st January 2023 – approved

3. Matters arising not covered in Agenda

i) Abuse of Toilet Facilities – following the discussion from the last meeting, the school has completed a consultation with students about the best way forward. The senior students have been a driving force behind raising awareness about keeping the facilities clean and not abusing the facilities. In lesson time it has been agreed that students can utilise the accessible toilet facilities. Over the past week there has been a noted improvement. This will continue to be monitored by staff in collaboration with the students.

ii) Vaping in School Building- The health impact for students (both those who vape and those who are subject to others vaping) was discussed. Teachers are vigilant and continue to monitor key areas across the school with the different protocol levels for challenging vaping including talking to the student, contacting parents, confiscation of vapes and covering topics around substance misuse in PSE. Cllr Frame informed the meeting that she is submitting a motion to the council around vaping and will update following this, whether the motion is passed.

iii) Consultation on Curriculum: PC to engage directly with parents. It was stated that the parent council has no direct mechanism to reach out to the parent forum to encourage support for consultations or questionnaires. It was agreed by all that the parent council needs to continue to build on the links to the parent forum through various communication methods. This is being actively pursued by the Communications Group.

iv) Winter Assessment Diet: The winter diet assessment was considered to have been positive and in line with previous years. Data has been shared with all staff within the school. S Connelly (SLC) is developing a tracking tool for the winter assessment diet. It was queried about the changes to SQA examinations due to Covid mitigations and how long any of these changes may remain in place. Cllr Frame asked what mitigations were being put in place to limit the impact of lack of teaching on strike days. W Huq outlined the different study events that have been put into place including:

- supported study pre and post the school day,



- Easter School where teaching staff are voluntarily offering additional supported study in a combination of virtual and face to face study sessions. Over 129 pupils have signed up for at least 1 session of Easter School.
- Pre-recorded lessons.

It was acknowledged that some of these mitigations will work for some families and not for others with timings of sessions etc. Cllr Frame informed the meeting that this was the first school she had heard of doing Easter School and that she would pass this on to other areas. There was a note of thanks to all the teachers for their contributions in providing these additional offers of study sessions.

v) Learning Walks: Very Positive feedback.

vi) Sandford School Bus: There is a group of students in Sandford who do not qualify for free school bus transport. This has been an ongoing issue for many years and has been addressed again by a group of parents exploring ways forward. Cllr Frame has met with the parent group, roads department and a representative from MP, Lisa Cameron's office. A recent meeting was held with further representation from the Strathaven Academy parent council, Sandford Primary Parent Council and the Sandford and Upper Avondale Community Council. It was agreed at this meeting that the bus company was happy to put on a bigger bus to accommodate the additional students and the community council would support an application for funding to support this. J Tunney had kindly offered to submit the application for this funding. South Lanarkshire Council and the Education department were happy to support the plan. Discussion was had regarding remaining issues around the insurance requirements for the additional students and how the money would be received and provided to the bus company and whether this required a separate contract for the additional students. Further update to follow about remaining issues. Thanks from the Sandford parents were given to J Tunney and Cllr Frame for their continued help with this.

4. Headteacher's Report

Staffing Update

Ms Miller (Stonelaw High School) was our successful candidate for Teacher of Biology and will join us on 22nd May 2023.

Mrs Wellcoat (Teacher of PE) has left us on a temporary basis to work with care-experienced young people.

SQA Examinations

Staff and pupils are in the final stages of examination preparation. Due to the cancellation of S5/6 parents' evening, Year Heads and the Senior Team have been liaising closely with staff to ensure pupils are supported and on track to achieve. To date, we have had thirteen parental enquiries, of which only two were specifically about the parents' evening being cancelled.

As a school, we are doing everything we can to support pupils and families during what has been another challenging period in education. Mr Fleming (SQA



coordinator) has a busy time ahead of him in ensuring the operational aspects of examinations are in place for 24th April 2023, pupils are at the correct presentation levels, processes and procedures are adhered to and all stakeholders are kept informed.

We have our in-house supported study sessions, which are being offered across departments. Mr Fleming has been liaising with staff to ensure we have a full programme for Easter School, which includes in-person and virtual sessions. SLC is also running a series of virtual supported study sessions.

SQA has a parents/carers section on its website, which provides useful information to support learners. The Scottish Government's digital e-learning programme provides live and interactive online webinars.

Pupil Consultation

As the Hayward Review entered phase three of its consultation on the future of qualifications and assessment, there was a further opportunity for young people to have their say. The Independent Review of Qualifications and Assessment was established to ensure that all learners' achievements are fairly recognised, and they are given the opportunity to demonstrate the depth and relevance of their learning.

As part of this review, young people aged 25 and under were given the opportunity to share their views on 16th March 2023.

Pupil Council

The Pupil Council met with Mrs James (DHT) and Ms Neil (PTPS). Agenda items were:

The School's Visions and Values

Discussion took place in year groups about the visions and values – recorded on attached feedback sheet.

The Pupil Council Job Specification

Pupils discussed what they see as the role of the Pupil Council. The following ideas were suggested:

- lead assemblies and feedback minutes of meetings to registration classes
- gathering parents' views at parents' meetings
- gather feedback from students and take their ideas on board,
- suggestion box for pupils
- be involved in staff interviews,
- be more identifiable around school – badge/ braiding,
- out-of-school opportunities,
- S5 to lead council as S6 already have many leadership opportunities,
- keep track of school's needs and make it a better place to learn.



Pupils also had a discussion about other ideas/ issues they wanted to bring forward. The following items were suggested:

- allocated safe spaces to go at lunchtime,
- library rules,
- introduce first aid to the curriculum,
- pupil input on PSE curriculum.

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Improvement Collaborative - Mrs James, supported by six members of teaching staff, will complete Learning Walks this week with a focus on differentiation in S2. The purpose of this self-evaluation activity is to look at the strategies teaching staff use to support and challenge young people. This will inform our ongoing work to improve the quality and consistency of learning and teaching across the school.

End-of-Year Trips - Miss Hamilton is organising end-of-year trips, which will be offered to all year groups. Information will be going out this week to pupils and parents.

Years 1 – 3 will be offered a trip to Blackpool and years 4 – 5 will be offered a trip to Alton Towers. The trips will be subsidised and with support of the equity team, the school hope to make these accessible to all pupils with additional support if required.

Eco Schools - Mrs Greenan and Miss Hamilton are working to establish the Eco School committee. Projects include the elective, the orchard and growing fresh vegetables. The assistance of any parent/carers with expertise, would be greatly appreciated.

Alison Green Project: Michael Heald (South Lanarkshire Landscape Development Officer), Ian Poad and Willie Cooper (Strathaven Rotary) will be joining us on Thursday, 23rd March 2023, when they will present certificates to S3 Graphic Communication pupils in the library in recognition of their designs for the Alison Green Project.

Mrs McDivitt and Mr Connor (Technical Teachers) have been integral in supporting the recent project between Strathaven Rotary, South Lanarkshire Council and S3 Graphic Communication pupils. We look forward to seeing their designs in Alison Green in the near future.

Traffic Management Audit - Action points from the recent traffic management audit include:

- completing a school travel plan,
- involving school employees/pupils in school road safety campaigns,
- considering an assessment of the area to determine the requirement for additional signage,
- communicating to all staff, parents and carers, the importance of parking within designated parking bays.



All external safety issues should be referred separately to Education Resources.

Further discussion was had within the meeting around the access / egress into the school – single lane access, cars outside with engines idling, school bus access and parking – particularly at drop off / pick up times and the risk to students and other pedestrians using the route. Potential solutions included having pedestrian areas at dedicated times where the road is closed; examples of other schools having this were given. Cllr Elise Frame agreed to email roads and education department to request them to look into this further.

Reading Schools Gold tasks - The English Department is gathering evidence for our application for Reading Schools Gold. Evidence includes:

- reading recommendations/reviews for the local library newsletter,
- publicising World Poetry Day events,
- quotes from pupils who are good at recommending books to others about how they feel about reading and leading reading,
- S1 to S3 pupils will be completing a Reading for Pleasure survey.

World Poetry Day - WPD is today (Tuesday, 21st March 2023). My thanks to Mrs Reilly (English) and her S1 Reader Leaders for organising the Masked Poetry Reader competition.

Equalities - As one of the school improvement priorities, Miss Hamilton is leading work on the LGBTQ+ charter.

This area of work is being funded by SLC and, just last week, we received a notification of approval, and we are waiting for a charter manager to put in place staff training and to work with us to establish a charter.

Ms Huq, Ms Hamilton (Social Subjects) and Mrs Rodway (School Librarian) are presenting this week at the primary and secondary Head Teacher meetings on our learning community strategy on equalities with a focus on the transitions project.

Our pupils in S3 started a Ukrainian lunch time club to tell people about the country, its customs and culture. The club will run every Friday and pupils are keen on a bit of healthy competition with the Friday Games Club.

Equity - The Equity team, led by Mrs Kane, has launched our 'Be Ready to Thrive' station to support pupils and families affected by "Cost of Living" difficulties. This will enable pupils to collect materials they require such as:

- pencil cases, which include pens, pencils, a rubber and a ruler,
- pens, pencils, rubbers, rulers and highlighters,
- notepads,
- flashcards
- button folders
- folder dividers
- reusable water bottles
- toiletries and sanitary products



- tights and socks

This is open to all pupils, but there will be a particular emphasis on equity pupils ie pupils who have a free school meal entitlement. Ms Harvey, PT Equity, will be leading on this, and has done a fantastic job setting it up. The station will be located in Ms Harvey's classroom to ensure discretion.

Health & Wellbeing Update – Mrs Kane:

School Counselling Service - Due to a change in personnel, we are delighted to welcome two new school counsellors – Kerrie (three days) and Emma (two days). Kerrie focuses on CBT (Cognitive Behaviour Therapy). Emma uses CBT and therapeutic approaches. Increasing our provision to five full days enables more young people requiring support to access this in a timely manner. Referrals are currently through Pupil Support and there is a waiting list, but our aim is to open this to self-referrals through a QR code system.

DBI - Strathaven Academy is one of four schools in South Lanarkshire involved in DBI (Distress Brief Intervention) and all Pupil Support staff are trained in the referral process. This is operated by NHS in partnership with other agencies. DBI is a non-clinical intervention to help ease a person's distress and provide a compassionate response. Young people who agree to a referral are contacted by trained third sector staff (LAMH) by telephone within 24 hours. They provide community-based problem-solving support, wellness and distress management planning, as well as signposting to further support if required.

5. Communications Sub-group: Jo Tunney & Mr Fleming

Parent Portal - will be trialling this soon. Staff training to be provided and should make it easier for parents/carers to update contact details, complete forms/paperwork etc. Current SLC roll-out in Hamilton area - we are due next.

Show My Homework - will be reintroduced at change of timetable in May.

Parent Council section of website - updated with minutes for this session (pathway is our school-parent groups-parent council: <http://strathaven.s-lanark.sch.uk/welcome-to-strathaven-academy-parent-council/>)

Website focus has been on study support resources - page has been updated again with SQA exams coming up. Have tried to push the supports available on school website through App and Google Classroom

Website Face to a Name has been updated. Links on the website include:

SLT pathway: our school-general information-SLT <http://strathaven.s-lanark.sch.uk/senior-management-team/>

Pupil Support Pathway: supporting our pupils-pupil support <http://strathaven.s-lanark.sch.uk/pupil-support/>

All staff pathway: our school-general information-staff list <http://strathaven.s-lanark.sch.uk/staff-list/>



Improving parent/carer engagement - IF and WH scheduled to meet next week about how we can encourage parents/carers to be involved in school including, drop-in events and improved engagement. WH contacted Wester Overton to discuss Parent Council Facebook page.

School App - 2444 App downloads compared to 2405 in January and 2218 downloads in November (68% of those downloads on Apple). Public and open forum so no personal information is posted on the app - it is a place for the school calendar, whole school / whole year group messages and whole school news stories.

Google Classroom - Encourage young people to continue to check their Google Classroom including individual and year group. Job opportunities, apprenticeships, study support, pupil feedback etc are also included on this. Reminder 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.

SQA Exams – An SQA assembly for all S4/5/6 pupils will be held the week back after Easter break. It is important to remind all students to check the times of their individual timetables and ensure that they arrive on time.

P7 Wester Overton Parents Feedback – JT gave feedback from the P7 Wester Overton parents about the information they would like in preparation for transition to Strathaven Academy. Common themes included: uniform requirements and dates for uniform evenings, general information about the first day, what happens at lunch, “a typical day”, music tuition, equipment requirements, homework and who to liaise with at the school if required.

Discussion was had on how this will be presented to parents/carers on information evenings, thinking creatively of how the parents / carers are engaged with rather than just being presented too.

6. Mentoring Sub-group: Mentoring is ongoing and each student has had at least 2 mentor sessions. Further update at next meeting.

7. SIP Sub-group: Has not met since the last parent council meeting – update at meeting in June.

8. AOCB

Sports awards – Celebrating Success will be held on Tuesday 28th March 2023.



P7 transitions – Positive feedback was received in relation to teachers coming out from the Academy to the P7s and the P7 sports evenings and how beneficial all these sessions had been.

9. Date of next meeting: Tuesday 6 June 2023 @ 7pm