



Strathaven Academy Parent Council
Tuesday 6th February 2024 @ 7.00pm (Virtual)

Attendance: Jack Campbell (Chair), Jo Tunney (Vice Chair), Cheryl McMorris, Elise Frame (Councillor), Waheeda Huq (Head Teacher), Kirstin Kinniburgh, Gillian Baker, Lyndsay Rae, Mrs Leck (Teacher), Mr Brown (Head of Faculty for Science), Paula Hamilton (Acting Depute Head Teacher), Catriona Webber, Julie Le blanc Smith, Kathryn Cain, Emma Hall, Yvonne Vance, Giovanna McKenna.

Apologies: Iain Fleming (Depute Head Teacher), Carolyne Mitchell, Amanda Minns, Becky Howie, Christine Hall.

1. **Minutes of meeting Tuesday 28 November** – Accepted.
2. **Matters Arising**

Email communication concerns.

Concerns were raised regarding emails which have been sent to the school office by parents and are not always reaching the desired person.

W Huq discussed the current challenges regarding staffing in the school office. The school office does not have a full complement of office staff and the workload has increased. One of the classroom assistants is helping two afternoons per week to support with operational duties.

It was suggested that a direct link email address for each year group could be provided.

W Huq explained that the system in place ensures in the event of staff absence the email is directed to the correct person.

3. **Headteacher's Report**

Staffing

Mrs Mitchell (Music Teacher) joined Strathaven Academy in January 2024.

Mrs Ferguson (Maths Teacher) has returned to Strathaven Academy for part of the week and continues her Acting Principal Teacher post at Stonelaw High School.

Miss McCleery has joined us from Trinity High School as Acting Principal Teacher of Physical Education.

Mrs Neil (PTPS) and Mr Brown (Faculty Head Science) have taken on additional responsibilities as part of their leadership journey, and both will support the senior team.

Mrs Neil will focus on our vulnerable learners and Thrive provisions and Mr Brown will lead the wider equalities agenda across the school.

Mrs James (DHT) has joined the CQIS team based in SLC Headquarters on a secondment and, as a result, Miss Hamilton is now full-time Acting DHT.

Careers Evening

Our annual careers evening took place on Tuesday, 9th January 2024. This event was open to all parents/carers and pupils. There were 40 stalls to browse, including ones run by universities, colleges, Skills Development Scotland and apprenticeship providers, as well as other organisations. Staff and pupils were also available to discuss future subject choices and pathways in school.

Ms Barr, Mr Fleming and Mrs Kane also delivered information sessions.

Our options process has now started, with guidance interviews which will be followed by option choices.

Holocaust Memorial Event

The SLC Holocaust Memorial Event was held in Strathaven Academy on Tuesday, 30th January 2024. Young people across SLC came together and gave truly magnificent performances.

Cabinet Secretary Visit

Also on Tuesday, 30th January, we welcomed the Scottish Government Education Secretary, Jenny Gilruth, to the school. The purpose of the visit was to see a Gold Reading School in action.

Video Analysis

A number of staff have completed the video analysis exercise as a self-evaluation tool. Staff will share their reflections with colleagues at our next inset day to drive forward improvements in Learning & Teaching.

School Show - *Matilda Jnr!*

School Show rehearsals are well underway, and the confirmed dates for the performance are the 19th and 20th of June 2024.

School Travel Plan

The action plan was submitted to the Local Authority in December and has been approved with no amendments.

Speed traffic survey will take place on Thursday 29th February. Pupils from the Eco Committee will be involved in gathering data for the survey.

S5/6 Assessments (Prelims)

Pupils in S5/6 finished preliminary assessments on Friday, 26th January 2024.

Focus for S4-6 is now examination preparation and Ms Barr is working closely with the numeracy ambassadors to provide opportunities for study.

Easter School will take place over the spring break with face-to-face teaching during the first week and virtual teaching during the second week.

Eco-Schools

Strathaven Academy is one of the schools taking part in a 6-month pilot of South Lanarkshire Council's *Save Our World* app. The app has been designed in part by two of our S5 pupils, Faith and Izzy. The app aims to encourage climate-saving actions by getting users to log their green activities and find out about new ones they can try. As they log their activities, they earn points and have opportunities to win prizes.

The annual COS2 event will be taking place on the 28th and 29th of February 2024 in the Hamilton Palace Sports Grounds. In preparation for the event, some of the youth forum members are working with their fellow pupils to produce artwork to showcase the sorts of activities that are happening in school or the wider community.

Satchel One – Homework App

331 pupils and 214 parents/carers have logged in to their *Satchel One* account since it was launched. It should be noted that, as some of these parent/carers have multiple children at the school, there are now 261 pupils at the school with a parent/carer login assigned to them.

House Council

Pupils engaged in a general discussion regarding the proposed changes to transport provision for SLC young people. Pupils were given time to discuss how they felt about the proposed changes and were keen to know if any pupils in the Strathaven Learning Community would be affected. Pupils were encouraged to go back to their tutor classes and ask their peers to complete the survey, which is available on all year group Google Classrooms.

S4 pupils discussed the winter assessment diet. They reflected on how they found the timings and structure of their first experience of formal assessments. They decided to create a survey to be shared with the year group to gather wider views. Feedback given was extremely positive, apart from two points they would like raised with SLT:

- S4 pupils would like study leave and would like to know why they currently do not have it
- pupils asked if the assessment diet could be slightly extended, as some pupils ended up with two lengthy exams on the one day and felt they were not able to demonstrate their full ability in the afternoon assessment due to being too tired.

S1 pupils worked with Miss Hamilton reviewing their P7 transition. They discussed and fed back to Miss Hamilton about what they found helpful, what they felt was missing and what was needed for a successful transition from primary school to Strathaven Academy.

S2/3 pupils worked with Mrs Neil on the Young Leaders of Learning programme. Mrs Neil presented a proposal to the group, which involves S2 pupils, supported by the S3 Junior Captains, working with different schools within South Lanarkshire, looking at Learning and Teaching. The plan is for Strathaven Academy to host Duncanrig and Larkhall pupils in May. S2 pupils will give a presentation to the pupils about Strathaven Academy and take the pupils on a tour of the school. Pupils will also experience an example of an excellent lesson at Strathaven Academy. The S2 pupils will organise and lead a question-and-answer session with focus groups of pupils and staff. This will be reciprocated when Strathaven Academy pupils visit both Duncanrig and Larkhall. S2 House Council members will then feed back to SLT about their findings from the experience.

S2 pupils attended the Young Leaders of Learning pupil training at SLC headquarters on Wednesday, 24th January. They made initial contact with their partner schools and had the opportunity to gather some initial information. They reflected on the skills and qualities needed to be a Young Leader of Learning.

5. Mentoring 2023-24

On going.

Focus currently on S1 pupils who are having difficulty with transition.

6. Communications

Satchel 1

Satchel 1 now launched with pupils and parents/carers. Over 30% of pupils have registered.

Some initial glitches reported by parents on the platform, for example, pupils being added to incorrect classes. Many parents have also found the email with joining instructions went to junk mail.

P Hamilton will inform I Fleming.

P Hamilton explained that the system is a pilot with Google Classroom and Satchel 1 and there may be some initial teething problems. For information, the two platforms synchronise overnight so homework may not appear instantly.

Parents portal

60% of families registered. This will become a very important tool for school communication.

W Huq will consult the office on a further push to sign up parents/carers in the summer term.

7. Community Football pitches

P Hamilton has been liaising with J Campbell and J Tunney with regard pitch costs. Contact has been made with Councillor Cooper and the rugby club. Discussions will take place between both parties.

8. AOCB

Transport – School Transport Consultation.

Councillor Frame discussed the recently published School Transport Consultation.

Concerns include:

- The distance young people would have to walk to school over the week.
- Pupils arriving at school wet with nowhere to dry wet clothes.
- Safe alternative routes
- Ecological impact on the environment if there was an increase of cars on the road.

Councillor Frame asked that the Consultation is circulated within the school community and encouraged individuals to respond.

P Hamilton mentioned that the consultation has been shared with all pupils and discussed at the House Council. In addition, the link to the consultation has been shared on the school app and Satchel 1.

Winter Assessment diet

Concerns raised about the variation in time it takes for exam results to be issued to pupils between departments.

M Brown explained that quality assurance processes take place in the time between pupils sitting exams and results being shared. This ensures consistency and high-quality feedback for pupils.

P Hamilton also explained that the timing of exams in each faculty varied which impacts on the time available for marking before pupils return.

It was agreed that supported study should be promoted more often across the school communication platforms to encourage pupils to attend.

S1/S3 Jotters unmarked.

Concerns raised regarding pupils' jotters being unmarked.

P Hamilton will follow up.

9. Dates of next meetings:

Tuesday 19th March 2024 @ 7pm

Tuesday 4th June 2024 @ 7pm