



Strathaven Academy Parent Council
Tuesday 4th June 2024 @ 7.00pm

Attendance: Jack Campbell (Chair), Jo Tunney (Vice Chair), Waheeda Huq (Head Teacher), Iain Fleming (Depute Head Teacher), Matt Brown (Head of Faculty for Science), Paula Hamilton (Acting Depute Head Teacher), Catriona Webber, Amanda Minns, Cheryl McMorris Aqsa Ghani, Becky Howie, Kirstin Kinniburgh, Lyndsay Rae, Yvonne Vance.

Apologies: Ray McLean, Carolyne Mitchell, Christine Hall,

1 Minutes of Meeting 19th March 2024

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

2 Matters Arising not Covered as Agenda Items.

1 School Travel Plan

Park and stride introduction planned for term 1 of academic year 2024-25.

Mrs Greenan continuing to work with SLC representatives on traffic management strategies. K Kinniburgh suggested a zebra crossing at Townhead Street given how busy the road can become and if pupils are being encouraged to cross the road. Miss Hamilton will consult with SLC.

2 Equalities

Mr Brown gave an update on Equalities.✚

- A one-page summary of the anti-bullying policy has been produced and will be publicised in August 2024. This policy will stand alongside the anti-racist policy.
- On 10 June, LGBTQ+ Charter Scotland representatives will be in school to sign off Silver charter status. Thanks were extended to Miss McMenemy for her work pulling together the charter evidence.
- Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) will be trained during session 2024-25. J McMenemy will be the school representative. This programme aims to tackle gender-based violence.
- Equalities vision statement - S5 pupils will take part in a consultation on Thursday 6 June

- UNCRC - Focus for next session. The school will not be aiming to achieve the award as this has an ongoing cost implication of £2000 per annum to maintain, however, the school will work through the modules within the award. A school UNCRC Champion will be in place for next session.
- Green flag award - Mrs Greenan has worked towards a submission for the Green flag award. This should be achieved by next session.

3 Easter School

Healthy turnout at Easter school.

- Over 100 for days 1 and 2
- 50 for day 3
- 24 for day 4

Timetable was heavier at the start of the week.

Thanks were extended to the PTA for providing lunch and Easter eggs for staff, which were very much appreciated.

4 Learning and Teaching

P Hamilton updated on focus for Learning and Teaching next session.

- Focus groups have been conducted with the PC, PTA, wider parent body, pupils and the Staff Learning and Teaching Collaborative.
- The focus will be on the first half of the lesson and in particular, rigour, routine and consistency of approach to a lesson across the school. Teachers will be asked to concentrate on key elements for example, meet and greet, lesson starter and consolidation.
- Professional learning for staff and learning visits will focus on this part of the lesson throughout the session.
- The aim is to ensure this lesson structure is embedded by the end of the session.

3 Headteacher's Report

Staffing

Since our last meeting we have received positive news, and our staffing allocation now stands at 72 full-time equivalent (FTE), a much healthier picture compared to the previous number of 69.8 FTE.

After 35 years in Strathaven Academy, Mr McGibbon (Science Technician) will be leaving us today. Mr McGibbon starts his new post as Team Leader Holy Cross High School on Monday, 10 June. Mr McGibbon will be dearly missed, and we wish him all the best.

Ms Noble (Science Technician) was successful at recent interviews and will remain with us as full-time technician.

Mrs Breddy has started her post as Principal Teacher Pupil Support (PTPS) Loudoun House whilst continuing with her commitments to Drama.

Official notification from SLC with regards to Mrs James (DHT) and Ms Hamilton (Teacher of History), both of whom have had their secondments extended until June 2025.

Mrs McIntyre (Chemistry) has also been in touch with an update on her secondment working with care-experienced young people. Mrs McIntyre will also continue with her secondment.

Miss Hamilton (acting DHT) and Miss McCleery (acting PT PE) will continue in their current posts.

Mrs Murphy (Biology) will be leaving us at the end of June to take up post in Uddingston Grammar and Dr Khan (Biology) will join us on a permanent basis in August.

Mrs Kincaid (PE) started her maternity leave this week.

As part of her phased retirement plan, Ms Barr (DHT) will be working three days from August 2024.

Quality Assurance

As part of our Quality Assurance process, the maths department has been involved in Validated Self-Evaluation, which involves self-evaluation, class visits and pupil/staff focus groups. Findings will be shared with the department this week.

P7 Information Evening

We had a huge turnout this year for P7 information evening. The transition days and racial literacy project this year involved Modern Languages and PE. We also had the enhanced transition programme to ensure all young people starting Strathaven Academy have a positive experience when joining us in August.

Volleyball and netball

Mr McMillan in PE organised two successful staff v pupil volleyball and netball events. This was a great way to build strong links with our pupils.

S4/5/6 leavers

Ms Harvey and Miss Grant, along with many other staff members, contributed to a wonderful S6 leavers' event. Other than the minor issue (!) of the fire alarm going off as soon as the main ceremony finished, all went well. The

hospitality, balloon arch, hoodies, and yearbooks all created a day to remember. All in all, a good day!

S4/5 leavers had a lovely event in the library, where they were issued with certificates and had a chance to sample the lovely SA cupcakes and a barista coffee.

Scottish Schools' Young Writer of the Year 2023/24

Ava (S4) and Eva (S5) were Highly Commended in this year's Scottish Schools' Young Writer of the Year competition. It is a prestigious and competitive event, and they received certificates and book tokens, as well as having their pieces published in the book of the top pieces of writing.

Scottish Parliament Visit

On Friday, 17 May 2024, we were delighted to welcome the local MSP for Strathaven/Scottish Government Minister Màiri McAllan to our school. Ms McAllan spoke to our young people about her journey from school to politics, and what the role of an MSP entails. Ms McAllan was incredibly impressed by our pupils, who were eager to ask a wide range of intriguing and challenging questions. Pupils were particularly interested in issues within their local community and even raised some issues over the challenges faced within education.

Events

Recently we have had Reading Week, the Youth Climate Forum, the Blackpool trips, netball and rugby matches, the Tinto Hill Climb, QTS, P7 transitions and the trip to Collisdene Care Centre (to name but a few).

There are a number of key events in the diary for June, including the prom, a Ben Nevis trip, the mental health pupil group trip to Hamilton, a Glasgow Science Centre trip and the school show.

Church of Scotland - Moderator

Reverend Shaw Paterson has officially taken up post as the Moderator for the Church of Scotland. The learning community head teachers were invited to join the proceedings. It was an honour and a privilege to have been part of such a prestigious ceremony and we wish Reverend Paterson all the best for the year ahead.

Mobile Phones

Carole McKenzie (Executive Director of Education) is planning to take forward a focused piece of work that looks at how we manage the issue of mobile phones in schools and how she can support pupils & parent/carers in moving to a stronger position about the use of them in the school building across the

school day to encourage optimum learning environments. This will take place early in the new session.

Cost of School Day (CoSD)

Our draft CoSD policy has, in the first instance, been discussed with Mr Campbell (chair PC) and has been emailed to PC/PTA for consultation. This has been developed in conjunction with SLC guidelines and requires centres to make decisions that involve a financial request through the lens of genuine empathy. Ms Harvey (PT Equity) has worked very closely with SLT and SLC to ensure we have a policy fit for purpose and one that does not disadvantage our young people and families.

School Trips

Miss Hamilton (DHT), Miss Smith (Chemistry) and I met with a group of parents/carers from our new S5 who felt their children had been disadvantaged by the lack of opportunities for foreign trips.

As a result of parental feedback, we are exploring cost-effective options for trips abroad for June 2025.

P Hamilton explained that the following SLC guidelines should be applied to trips:

- Trips should have a maximum cost of £800 with at least 18 months' notice to pay towards the trip.
- Trips should be open to a year group and not only to pupils who take specific subjects.
- The school should be in a position to support a young person if they would like to take part in a trip but cannot financially.

Paperwork has been submitted to the council for a trip to Berlin for the new S5/6 pupils. This would be for a maximum of 40 pupils.

There was shared concern amongst the group that these guidelines were unfair and that trips should be available to a larger number of pupils. P Hamilton explained that there is also the possibility of a trip to London for another group of young people in these year groups. This would be open to a further 40 pupils. There remained concern that not all pupils would be able to go on these trips.

PC suggested helping organise, attend trips. P Hamilton explained the logistics and responsibility of organising and being in charge of large numbers of pupils on trips. It was suggested that trips should be UK based for larger numbers until staff confidence had grown.

A Minns did not feel trips should be open to whole year groups and that trips for specific subjects should be allowed and only open to pupils taking these subjects. She asked for this to be shared with SLC.

K Kinniburgh suggested making enquiries with “FEEs Fund” which subsidises the cost of trips for young people.

K Kinniburgh asked why there had been no school discos. P Hamilton will consult with house council and see if there is a desire for this.

Thrive remodel

W Huq discussed the proposed change of use of space in the library and Thrive rooms. The library will be used as a learning zone with areas for young people; Mrs Gallagher and the Support for Learning (SfL) staff will be based in the library. Mrs Minns was disappointed that the library is being locked at lunchtimes. W Huq explained that this is always the case when the librarian is not in school due to vandalism and misuse of resources. Mrs Minns was unhappy that this took an opportunity away from young people to read for pleasure in their own time and not just during English reading periods.

Fundraising

We would like the work of PC/PTA to focus on strategic funding opportunities through funding streams, sponsors, and Strathaven alumni. This would help us as a school, to provide opportunities to help ensure no young person is disadvantaged.

We are also looking to support our ICT infrastructure since more and more subjects require the use of software packages to deliver the curriculum (approximate cost of 20 laptops is £12500).

PC was asked to help apply for funding to help build resources in the new space.

- Jo Tunney will investigate IT grants
- Becky Howie/Lyndsey Rae- Neurodiversity charities
- Kristen Kinniburgh - Windfarm Funding
- Yvonne Vance - Round table Strathaven

4. Communications

Mr Fleming gave an update on communications.

- School app will continue at the moment - 2268 downloads, however there is no way of knowing if this is current or former parents/pupils. The plan is to stop using the school app.
- 63% of parents are signed up for Parentsportal. Parentsportal will be overseen by Mrs Kane next session with a focus on attendance.
- School Cloud will not be used next session as a directive from SLC. An alternative platform will be made available.

- Satchel 1 - Education Scotland trial has been a success and will continue
- Website - Updated regularly
- Suggestion from J Campbell for pupils to be awarded house points for getting their parents to sign up to Parentsportal.

5. Election of Office Bearers

Election of Chairperson

Jo Tunney

Election of Vice Chairperson

Becky Howie

Election of Secretary

Catriona Webber

6 AOCB

Engraving of trophies

J Campbell asked if trophies could be engraved in advanced of the awards ceremony. I Fleming explained this is a timing issue, however will see if it is possible next session.

Thank you and good luck

W Huq extended her thanks to J Campbell for all the work he has done with the Parent Council and school.

7 Dates of next meeting:

TBC Academic session 2024-25