



Biggar High School Parent Council- August 24th, 2020

Present: Robert Stewart (Head Teacher), Kirsty Campbell (Vice Chair) Julie Forrest (Secretary), Rosslyn Thomson, Clare Waters, Wendy Johnstone, Chrissy Wild, Sue Hope, Councillor Ian McAllan

Apologies : Kate Allister, Flora Neville (Chair)

ITEM	DETAIL	ACTION
1) Welcome	Kirsty welcomed everyone.	
2) Headteachers Update	<p>Recovery Programme – Robert complemented everyone in the school on the way in which they had settled and followed the safety procedures put in place.</p> <p>There have been some small adjustments – staggering welcome and departure times based on week one experience.</p> <p>Almost all children are hand sanitising without having to be reminded.</p>	

	<p>Robert stated that they had done away with between period bells as there had been too many and they were proving a distraction. There is now a “soft” exit from classes.</p> <p>Pupils in general have been maintaining social distancing and sticking to the guidelines.</p> <p>Some staff & pupils are wearing masks, but this may change with further guidance at the end of the week. (The rules were subsequently changed to masks in communal areas – buses, corridors etc).</p> <p>Protocols for children with Covid-19 like symptoms are in place. Approx. 6/7 today either sent home or parents informing school not sending pupil to school because of ‘covid’ like symptoms.</p> <p>PE – outdoor contact this week and indoor non-contact will start next week (31/8)</p> <p>SQA has given guidance re. coursework (recommended changes for each subject/ level have been issued for comment). If we go back into blending learning mode the planned reduction in course content/ assessment should lead to less pressure on staff and pupils overall. These changes will be explained in detail to pupils/ parents if this happens.</p> <p>School deep cleaned daily. Everything is being done to mitigate Covid-19 as much as possible, Janitors/cleaners are working extremely hard to ensure that high contact areas are cleaned regularly.</p>	
--	--	--

	<p>A few 'anxiety' issues, but generally children are happy to be back and engaging wherever they can. Pupils absent through COVID related concerns are being supported through direct link with one member of our Pupil Support team.</p> <p>Classroom assistants – this week they are going into classes and they are developing 'bespoke' systems/ approaches in each class to give support and stay safe.</p> <p>School will convey advice and support information with parents and pupils re. keeping masks clean and other issues regarding masks and discussing this with the pupils once this government advice comes into effect.</p> <p>There seems to be no “choke” points at start and finish of the day at present. SMT will monitor this. Staff questionnaire very positive about the systems put in place and the positive engagement of our pupils in implementing and following agreed advice.</p> <p>Questions –</p> <p>Are children able to access space inside the school? RS noted that because present rules advise no gathering of over 50 people, if weather is poor – zones for each year groups are being set up. There will be a space within the school for year groups to go and socialise. Robert will put a bulletin out regarding this for parents.</p> <p>Sanitizers initially installed have not been great, but there will be new battery operated sanitisers installed for Monday 31st.</p>	<p><i>RS already posted information to parents and website</i></p>
--	--	--

	<p>Attendance in the first couple of weeks has been high. Very small number of children not returning (usually because of specific issues). Absenteeism rising as week has progressed based on COVID related issues and parental caution.</p> <p>Ian has had a few phone calls re. transport especially from more rural areas (Crawfordjohn). There is an issue with bus capacity (at the start).</p> <p>In general terms, advice is that buses should have a seating plan, Robert has not pushed for this as yet as there is no way that the school could enforce this, however children tend to sit in the same seat daily and they have been recommended to sit in same seats in friendship 'bubbles' wherever possible.</p> <p>Robert has asked all bus operators if there are any issues to let the school know. As of today, there has not been any issues reported. Wendy reported that the Crawfordjohn bus issue is ongoing and correspondence s being shared with SLC and SPT</p> <p>Sue – if masks are coming into schools, would they introduce these in buses. There was some discussion and was agreed that this seems to be a good idea but policing this could be challenging. Robert noted that face mask advice applied to buses and social areas within school. Robert said that staff are observing and enforcing the hand sanitizing as they come into school and the vast majority are complying with the guidance and getting into a routine with this.</p> <p>Social distancing across the school is challenging, especially in practical classes and staff are working at various ways of ensuring adequate staff/ pupil distancing depending on individual</p>	
--	--	--

	<p>circumstances (e.g. school has purchased new visualisers to aid with teacher demonstrations in class)</p> <p>Is the library open? The Librarian is visiting the classes to discuss taking books out etc. Hopefully, the library will be open next week. Risk assessment has been discussed and books returned will be 'quarantined'.</p> <p>Is there any pupils or staff that cannot wear masks for health reasons? RS noted that very few pupils have asked for exemptions, but a 'badge' system will operate where pupils who have a valid reason for not wearing a mask will not be challenged for not doing so.</p> <p>RS noted that the main issues relating to masks were to do with their hygienic use and care (changing these, wearing them all day). Pupils will be given information to keep about how to ensure masks are used safely.</p> <p>SQA grades – as with all schools across Scotland, there was some confusion re, projected/expected grades and next step grades, but these have all been discussed with parents who have questioned this.</p> <p>Clare asked how long before the guidelines will be issued for next year's exams? As noted previously, draft guidelines are out and being reviewed and there may be some changes- but this will not be obvious for children sitting for the first time- but more for staff. Teachers are more aware than ever that gathering of evidence is important and pupils should/ will be made aware of this without the message being too heavy-handed.</p>	<p><i>RS to issue information to pupils and publicise on website</i></p>
--	--	--

	<p>Wendy would like to set up an ASN group Zoom catch up to review where things are working well and identified next steps. Wendy will get together a few dates. Robert suggests contacting Sharon to issue to email to pick up anyone who is interested.</p> <p>Are there enough Chrome books? 60 new Chrome books are now in the process of being set up: all will be configured by the end of this week. Robert has various small pots of money for use of additional IT if it is required and equity pupils whose parents have requested IT will have their names put forward for the IT distribution from the Scottish Government scheme.</p> <p>Chrissy was positive about the process of returning for school. Chrissy asked how the school decides between covid symptoms and a head cold? . . . and how would or could this be communicated to parents.</p> <p>RS noted that If any pupil has any cold like/covid like symptoms when in school they will be isolated and parents(s) contacted immediately. It is then the parents' responsibility to decide how to proceed but the school would always suggest period of self-isolation and getting tested if symptoms remained or increased. The school cannot provide any information re. cases as it will not be aware of these- this is a health issue and NHS and Test and Protect protocols and procedures would kick in if any pupils were to be tested positive.</p> <p>If this were to be the case the school and local authority would be contacted and advised as to next steps. Cllr McAllan noted that the recent case in a Hamilton primary school and the effective way this had been dealt with gave him re-assurance in the procedures now in place</p>	<p><i>WJ to arrange/ liaise with SA</i></p>
--	---	---

	<p>RS noted that he hoped that local authority guidance on this would be issued shortly to inform and re-assure parents.</p> <p>RS noted that specific contact would be made with parents of pupils who had previously been shielding and/or who have specific medical issues and invite them to check our risk assessment and identify any additional supports we can put in place to further mitigate risk.</p> <p>Robert noted that school keeps track of everyone who goes home with 'Covid like' symptoms and requests that parents inform the school of results. SLC is fully on board and following all guidance.</p> <p>RS also noted that guidance had already gone out to parents requesting that if pupils were unwell they should not be sent to school and it is important to test if COVID like symptoms exist/persist. It is about mitigating as much as possible and limiting the spread of the virus.</p> <p>RS noted that it was likely that the vast majority of coughs and sneezing symptoms would most likely be colds (especially as pupils are now together as a groups for the first time of months) but that in present circumstances it was always better to err on the side of caution.</p> <p>Sue asked : If the cases rise this could cause an issue re staffing? If staff are awaiting test results they will be paid and if staff are off the school will have to cover internally if possible or get cover if this is possible. If staff have children of their own who have coughs/ sneezes, the likelihood is that until the child is tested parents will have to self-isolate and be tested themselves.</p>	
--	--	--

	<p>Maximum numbers 30 for S3+ and 32 S1-3. RS hoped that school could cover any scenario but there may be occasions where classes had to be pooled/ collapsed.</p>	
<p>3) AOCB</p>	<p>Sue brought up the impact of what happens after Covid with family finances etc. Robert stated in the next 4-6 weeks with the ending of furlough payments that may/ will become more of an issue.</p> <p>The Local Authority is providing everything the school requires re cleaning supplies etc. RS noted that school would have to rely on parents being honest if they are struggling and then asking for support where the school could step in.</p> <p>Sue stated that new funds are opening regularly, and she is happy to keep an eye on these grants and possibly apply for individuals and/or small groups of children. Agreed to revisit this.</p> <p>Residential money – Paris trip will be refunded this week. Lochgilphead – in negotiation re the refund/discussion re full refunds. Himalaya trip is the same.</p> <p>Ski-ing trip – this money will be refunded shortly as SLC has stated that there will be no more trips over the next year.</p> <p>New S1 (P7) visits – the rules just now are that there will be no visits to the High School. Possibly put together a video to parents or a zoom meeting re. initial welcome/ induction?</p>	<p>Agenda item for next meeting . . .</p>

4) Next meeting	<p>Monday 21st September 7pm: (Zoom Meeting) – suggest if anyone wishes to come along to the meeting to email the school and Sue can invite.</p> <p>This will be the AGM so there needs to be a formal agenda with a report from Flora and Gemma.</p> <p>ASN Group 7th of September. Zoom Meeting 7pm</p>	<p>FN/ GM to provide reports.</p>
------------------------	---	-----------------------------------