

Biggar High School Parent Council Meeting

17th January 2022

Attendees: Christina Wild, Flora Neville, Sue Hope, Wendy Johnson, Robert Stewart, Katie Mellanby, Kirsty, Karen Lawrie.

Apologies: Kate Allister, Rosslyn Thomson, Councillor McAllan,

Minutes:

Staffing:

- 2 weeks before Christmas were difficult to cover staff wise.
- After Christmas we've been less affected by staff shortages.
- Pupil attendance is much stronger following the change to the rules.
- 2 new Home Economics teachers and 1 Chemistry teacher have started in January.
- Additional cleaning staff have come on so we have improved level of hygiene. Work being done on some gaps in communication to further improve.
- Attendance for prelims has been strong; social distance measures adhered to and pupils have fully complied with assessment rules in relation to exam etiquette.
- One day lost on prelims to snow and this is to be slotted back in at end of existing schedule this week.
- SQA Guidance is that, unless there is another full lockdown, the exam diet will run as planned.
- The below measures are being discussed as possible mitigations:
 - Potential measure that number of options within each subject to be studied for any final exam will be narrowed.
 - A more traditional 'Appeals' process may be introduced to allow schools to make representation if pupils 'underachieve' in the exam.
- P7 transition work starts tomorrow with taster sessions and virtual tours.

Health and Well Being & Charity

- £3000 sent to Alzheimer's Scotland.
- Defibrillator purchased for the school and staff will be trained.

ASN

- Feedback from last PC meeting was that the ASN kids were being looked over for Merit / Award system. The support staff now recommended a minimum of one pupil per year group for merit letter and report feedback congratulations.

Parent Feedback on Exams:

- Feedback from the parent forum that 4th year kids are really feeling the pressure and are anxious as a result. Some pupils displaying physical symptoms of stress.
 - Concern that 5th and 6th year will be similar.
 - RS noted that general support is offered to the pupils to help them get through the exam period and individual support where required.
 - Consultation with pupils will take place at the end of the prelims to understand their experience and to give them a voice as to what other supports could be offered in advance of the full exam diet later on in the year.

- Feedback around coaching and tutoring was that there appear to be several gaps in learning for some kids in some subjects. RS noted that prelims were designed as a way of checking on mastery of skills/ knowledge in courses to date and then to identify strengths and next steps in individual performance and support accordingly in the months ahead. School fully aware that continuity of learning for many has been disrupted and prelim performance will guide future planning in each course/ subject

Options Process

- Option forms will be given out week beginning 24th January in PSE classes.
- Sessions in PSE will help pupils talk through what they want to do.
- Options forms will go back for discussion between pupils and parents.
- Option form will need to be signed by teachers, parent and pupil when submitted.
- End Feb / Early March option submissions finalised so the school can assess the logistics of timetabling classes/ courses.
- Briefing will go out to parents over the next 2 weeks along with a video summarising the options process (week beginning February 2nd . . .)

Parent forum discussion

- Post on Biggar Community page over early morning incident at front of school was dealt with immediately by the school by 9am on the day of the event. The parent council responded to the Facebook post to confirm appropriate action had been taken.
- Clerk role description:
 - Kirsty will respond with detail. **KC to action.**
 - Clerk needed to be able to progress with the charitable status action.
 - Kirsty shared the template on the role description and we agreed that it was fine to use.
- Funding cuts over the last 5 years have reduced the holistic support profile that the school is able to offer i.e. attendance officer for example. Council priority is to staff the classrooms and over the years some additional nurture and support roles have been depleted. Concern that the demand has increased, and these needs cannot be fully met.
- Discussion around how the parent forum could help the school support the pupils and how that could be organised.
- Feedback that the range of online resources have really helped support pupil learning – particularly the bite sized chunks that have allowed people to engage more easily.
- Feedback that the Pupil Support facility that we have is a valuable resource that is there to support parents and pupils. Please reach out if support is needed.
 - Could we pick out some issues that we could pick as a case study / example and feed that into the newsletters or other areas?
 - **Action – parent council members to email some examples of the type of intervention that has helped them.**
- Community Council have asked us for representation at their meeting. More detail needed on what's required. CC minutes can be circulated through school platforms. **FN to action.**
- Biggar Youth Project – Volunteers needed. Please make yourself known if you are able to volunteer. Kirsty will put on the Facebook page.
- Spike Aware – expectation is they'll come into school March / April time to do some work with the 6th years.
- Mental Health Recovery Stream – Robert and Sue to meet before the next meeting to discuss what would be of most use.
 - Sue has some ideas around some options and needs some guidance on what can be progressed.
 - Some of the restrictions are around time as a teacher would need to be off classroom to support.

- Charitable status – work started but we need some support on how to use survey monkey or similar.
 - **Action on Sue to link Flora up with someone who can help.**
 - Google forms are also an option and some of the school staff may be able to help.
 - Questions we need to ask should demonstrate whether the parent forum support going for charitable status. Information on why and what the benefits are and then a yes or no question.
 - Charitable status would be separate from the Parent Council to allow both to work independently? Robert is going to ask SLC if there are schools we could approach where the parent council has charitable status.
 - Sue suggested that we get a rep from Oscar to attend one of our meetings to answer questions. Action? Sue to see if someone would be able to attend once we have spoken to a school who has been through this before.
 - Alternative to charitable status is that we have a fundraising strategy that we could follow.
 - Wendy expressed concerns over our ability to commit to the governance of charitable status. We may consider putting more effort into strengthening our parent council first and then consider moving to charitable status.
 - Questionnaire could be put out on the email.
 - Action on parent council team for the next meeting is to 'bottom this out' and try and get to a decision.
- **Action Chrissy / Flora / Kirsty to commit to aligning clerical work to give us access on the back account.**
- Bikeability – **Action to be rolled over to next month. Robert.**
- Next Parent council meeting is 21st February and will be on Zoom. Link to be confirmed a week in advance so it can be included in the newsletter. Already published in the app.