

Biggar High School Parent Council Meeting

28th March 2022

Attendees: Christina Wild, Flora Neville, Nicki Whitehouse, Jan Davies, Wendy Johnson, Robert Stewart, Kate Alistair, Kirsty Campbell, Claire Dunbar, Stuart Dunbar, Janet Moxley,

Apologies: Rosslyn Thomson, Karen Lawrie, Sue Hope, Katie Mellanby

Next meeting is Monday 25th April. It will be in person but Zoom link will also be available.

Minutes:

Covid update

- Masks wearing will reduce post Easter and the issuing of tests will also stop- school will deploy remaining stocks appropriately after this date and pupils/ parents will be informed of how this will operate.
- Schools will not receive any more tests after the next batch and all tests are expected to be used by 17th April (see above)
- All stock of tests will be issued to staff/pupils but the latest (March) batch of tests are the last that we can order.
- CO2 monitors are placed in every classroom. There have only been 2 or 3 occasions where the rate has gone up to the point where ventilation has to be increased or class sizes need to be reduced.
- Last couple of weeks major outbreak of covid amongst staff with 14 staff off last week. Teaching coverage has been difficult this week in terms of continuity of learning. Pupil numbers relatively low.
- Circumstances following Spring break are a bit unknown as we won't be able to test and there is uncertainty as to what will happen after the holidays- staff, parents and pupils will be encouraged to identify covid symptoms and make decisions about attendance accordingly. Pupils will still be encouraged to wear masks if this makes them feel less anxious about their own situations and the situations of others. Awaiting advice about school specific guidance re. mask wearing.
- Question was asked about how do we protect our vulnerable staff and pupils – expectation is that some advice will be published over Easter as the only advice at present is to review existing risk assessment- this is not fully practical as risks cannot be mitigated as strongly without some form of testing process.

Curriculum/ Other

- Study leave will start in April (from 26th).
- Staff need to pull together estimates based on attainment of pupil work completed/conducted under controlled conditions- pupils will be given estimate information on week back (after 19th of April).
- Study leave plans to include the Youth Project as a place to go when exams are on.
- N3 & N4 pupils who do not have exam programmes will have a plan in place to support them, ensure outstanding course work is complete and have materials available to forward plan for session 22/23 if returning.
- Local authority will renew subscription to School Cloud to host remote parents' evenings for at least the next year. Some points need to be reviewed, e.g. follow ups with wi-fi connections
- Transport – concerns raised over the connections between Crawfordjohn and Abington, along with the connection between Abington and Symington. Some staffing issues with the transport

provider; formal complaint been put in about Stuarts in relation to their failure to comply with aspects of their contract. School is continuing to push for a solution.

- **Action: Councillors Eric Holford, Ian Macallan, Alex Allison – please support and follow up on the transport issues.**
- Only 2 pupils who left school last year did not end up in a positive destination. Highest rate in South Lanarkshire for engagement with Skills Development Scotland. 13th overall in Scotland. Thanks extended to Phyllis McCann.
- Defibrillator – now in school and waiting for a cabinet. Training requirements being understood. Rolling out of training expected from after Spring Break. It will be sited in the Foyer.
- All options are now in and we are now in a position to review staffing for session 22/23..
- Staff movement is significant- losing a few teachers to new opportunities / better work life balance re. travel. School actively working with SLC re. recruitment for next session
- Farewell and thanks to Jan Telfor who after 30 years + will be retiring. Our School library will be named after her as she is known for her love of reading 😊
- Well being – some excursions and days being organised in May for S1-S3. Charity fund raising events planned this week for Red Cross.
- Parent Council supported school awareness P7 transition evening – keen to run an activity in May / June (before or after the 3 day visit) to allow some of the P7s about to move into S1 to come and discover the school in an interesting way. **To be discussed at next meeting.**
- Facebook pages – News on 'bullying' – a lot is happening out in the local community particularly at weekends / after school or after 4pm on a Friday so what can be done by the school is limited. The school does follow up on any information received as appropriate.
- Statement read by Head Teacher Robert Stewart:

"It may well be the unfortunate impression that our school is not pro-active in challenging unacceptable behaviours in the community, however I would argue that this is very far from the reality.

In general, the vast majority of issues in relation to aggression and bullying (especially via social media) take place out-with school hours and then subsequently impact on school life when the general school environment is usually the only place where certain groups or individuals meet together face to face. In school there is very rarely any direct conflict and the pupils who we are aware of who give cause for concern in the community rarely do so in a classroom environment, but rather at lunchtimes/ after school/ at weekends when they are out in the community.

When we are made aware of weekend and after school activities where young people's behaviours give cause for concern we do intervene as appropriate in relation to parental contact, mediation etc. There is a lot of work done on a daily basis 'hidden' to the wider school community where Pupil Support staff, Year Heads and myself do network/ intervene/ engage to take the heat out of a range of conflicts. Much of this work by its nature remains confidential and private within identified families and rightly so.

*I can give you an assurance that **any** issue of conflict or bullying we are made aware of is acted upon, initially in a restorative manner where appropriate and then in relation to sanctions if guidance and advice is not heeded. However, I am not naive enough to think that all concerned are satisfied with the advice we offer/ actions we take as there are usually two sides to every scenario and pleasing both is not always possible.*

*In every case of physical intimidation/ violence or serious social media bullying we involve the parent(s) and encourage them to take the matter to the police as we do not have the right to act ourselves if it is an issue that takes place outside of school. It is a reality that in many cases, pupils do not report the bullying quickly enough **or** initially retaliate online and react rather than report **or** after advice to contact the police is given by us sometimes parents, for a variety of reasons, do not then follow through.*

On occasions where matters have been referred to the police by parents we are not always made aware of the follow up actions both in terms of timescale of resolution and of consequence.

As has always been the case if there is an issue involving our pupils in the school community where we can play some role in discouraging anti-social behaviour and reinforce positive relationships and mutual

respect we are more than happy to do so. Contact the school 01899 222050 or e-mail me directly gw11stewartrobert2@glow.sch.uk

The Parent Council are also happy to act as a link between the school and the community and raise any concerns at monthly meetings."

Parental Consultation- School Cloud

- General feedback was that it was good- engaging/ time 'efficient' . . .
- General feedback was that 5 minutes was a bit short for certain year groups.
- Staff feedback – some issue to be fine tuned. They noted it would be good to have the opportunity to show the work and the remote platform is not as good as face to face to show this.

Charitable Status

- Questionnaire was reviewed and the answers discussed.
- 82 responses to the question on whether they would agree with the proposed plans for the parent council to apply for charitable status to take advantage of additional fundraising powers – 79 people said yes, 3 people said no.
- Claire Dunbar came to share her experience on becoming a charitable status. We discussed a variety of topics around managing the admin, the legacy, the reason for becoming a charity.
- We discussed the responsibility of auditing the accounts – we operate receipts and payments and could provide an annual report to Oscar. There are thresholds for reporting dictates the responsibility of what needs to be provided. The annual report includes the short text of what you've used the money for.
- Timeframe for set up was around a couple of months but it's taking a bit longer now due to processing backlog.
- Our aim would be to have this set up by August so it was set up for the new school year.
- So based on the feedback from the questionnaire where 79 of the 82 people responded in favour of the parent council proceeding with the proposed application for Charitable status, the Parent Council voted in favour to proceeding with the application for charitable status.

Just Giving Crowdfunding

- Text will be shared before the next meeting and then published on the Just Giving page.

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Details of link to follow