

Bucksburn Academy Parent Council Meeting Thursday 10th January 2019

Present: David Cameron (ACC), Susan Greig, Sarah Christie, Adele Ashton, Mike Paul, Katerina Murray, Russell Ritchie, Denise Poole, Malcolm Mackay, Lynn Murray, Steph Jackman, Louisa Davies, Sarah Gray, Jenny Evans

Apologies: No apologies

Sarah welcomed everyone to the meeting, and thanked them for attending.

Minutes of Previous Meeting: These were approved by Steph Jackman and seconded by Russell Ritchie.

Head Teacher Report:

Fire Alarms: There have been a number of fire alarms that have been malicious over the course of the last term (& one this term) - this has resulted in a reduced timetable for one pupil but it continues to disrupt learning and teaching and the wellbeing of many young people, let alone the impact it has on the fire service itself. The school are continuing to look at ways to address this issue; this includes the possible use of UV gel among other options.

Strike Action : No further forward at the moment - another offer is on the table and another meeting will be on Saturday 12th in Edinburgh. Mike will be attending and will update the Parent Council at a later date. No ballot has been done yet and looks like being some time off.

Staffing: Staffing remains constant just now; however unfortunately the appointment of Design & Technology teacher fell through again and a further S3 class has had to be disestablished. The post is to be advertised yet again w/c 14th January but if nobody is appointed the subject will no longer be able to be offered as part of the Curriculum. This appears to be a city-wide issue.

School Newspaper: The Newspaper that was started and driven by one particular pupil but was written largely by many pupils was published in December - it is a fabulous example of the resilience and perseverance that some young people have in the school - and testimony to their persuasive skills to get staff to do things for them. A big thank you to Ms Dinan for her efforts in pulling this together.

School roll - there is pressure to increase the roll of the school as the numbers of in-zone pupils exceeds our historic capping (120 per year group at the moment). We have been advised that our capacity is larger than previously stated, but any continued increase in roll would mean that an expansion of the building would be required.

Mike will be meeting with the authority and Robertsons this term regarding the future 'roll cap' for the school and any possible expansion plans. Currently the next P7-S1 intake is 150 for 2019 in zone. The school could potentially accommodate this number but would be a struggle.

ASN pupils also make use of some of the mainstream classes and facilities so this will also impact the number of pupils accessing classroom space.

It is forecast that the school roll may be approximately 630 pupils by 2020 but the current capacity is 600.

Discussions ongoing with Robertsons and Aberdeen City Council regarding this issue and the impact of future housing developments within the catchment zone.

The admissions process for schools has now changed to an on-line system and we will be working with this for the first time this year. For those in-zone the process is automatic, but for those applying outside the catchment area this new process must be followed. There are 17 spaces available within the ASN Wing for this year's intake.

The admissions process for places in the ASN Wing is also underway with this process due to be completed next week. The authority is working closely with specialist provisions and schools to ensure the needs of all pupils looking for assistance are met, particularly those that are unfortunately unsuccessful in gaining a place.

Christmas Fair: The Christmas Fair was a huge success, raising over £6000 for the school. There was good pupil involvement and was well attended.

Pupils enjoyed a variety of performances before Christmas - the ASN pupils staged their own show with their take on many a Christmas movie with music interspersed. At the end of term all pupils were entertained by a variety of acts from pupils and staff - this seemed like an excellent way to end a very busy term.

Course Choice Process: This term will also be busy. We have the beginning of the course choice process next week for S2, involving assemblies and a parent information evening. This will then be rolled out to S3 and S4/5 later in the term.

General: Around 100 S2 pupils will be visiting the Outward Bound Centre at Loch Eil later in the month for activities to boost self confidence and leadership.

The Assessment Weeks start for S4-6 at the end of the month with all National exams spread over 2 weeks following pupil voice comments last year. This has impacted on Higher exams but those that can be are being accommodated in class during class time. There is no study leave this year - it is a frightening 60 school days before SQA exams begin!

In March our largest contingent of pupils from the ASN Wing will compete in the Fraserburgh Gala and we wish them all every success.

In February two members of staff in the ASN Wing will visit Nepal in a 'Connecting Classroom' venture after successfully bidding for funds. They will work on a joint project around, Zero Hunger, that will then be rolled out throughout the school.

Finally, the school are continuing to focus on our improvement priorities - our in-service days in February will have a strong focus on learning, teaching and assessment; our closing the gap agenda continues with more groups running to support some of our most vulnerable young people; we are continuing to develop our mental health strategy for young people (including having a speaker in next week to talk about exam stress); and we are continuing to build links with employers to promote employability skills.

ASN Update: Mr Thomson was unable to attend so we look forward to having the ASN update at the next meeting. Mike now wishes for the ASN update to be part of the school update rather than it being separate

Careers Fair Update: Russell advised the meeting that, due to various reasons, previous meetings which were planned weren't attended by all the sub-committee, but a meeting is to be organised in the very near future to progress matters. A list of 75 companies has been compiled with various job sectors, and the types of employment available within them. Responses from others still being sought.

More companies have still to be identified and approached for their input/assistance etc. A date has yet to be set for the fair, but it is anticipated it will be held in March 2019.

Templates will hopefully available to help with career planning at this event.

Russell mentioned the level of work and input that had previously been done by Dave was very high and is a standard the new group is striving to continue.

Jenny, Louisa and Sarah have volunteered to join the CF group to assist wherever needed.

Funraisers Update: No additional information except more attendance at the planning and event in December last year was advised.

Treasurers Report: Denise advised that the bank balance was sitting at £440.94 just now - for y/e 31/03/19 so needs to be used by then - is planned already.

A grant of £374.10 from ACC was received for next year.

AOCB

Secondary School App: The school is still trying to increase the uptake of the app, which has proved a successful tool to date as this is to be the main form of communication to parents and carers from the school.

Parental Engagement: It is a continuous drive to engage more parents with the school, however Mike has various ideas on how to do this and has positive ideas from one or two parental sources to date. It was suggested that the pupils could be more involved with this process at events etc.

PC believe it would be a positive step in building relationships with parents to have a representative at the P7 transition events from the ASG feeder schools. This is a good time to engage with parents as the majority of parents attend these meetings. Our intention is to highlight the importance of the role of the PC as well as engagement with the Parent Body to drive to school forward and in supporting the learning of our children.

Questionnaires will be sent out in Year Groups to parents and carers to source any thoughts and ideas how the engagement can be improved, and get feedback.

Dates of Future Meetings:

18th February