

Online Parent Council Minutes 2nd December 2020

Present:

Parent Council Members:

Douglas Archibald, Neil Bennett, Jane Boyce, Lynn Bryce, Wanda-Jane Field, Claire Fitzgerald, James Heron, Pauline Heron, Katy Master, Morag Mazzoni, Emma McDevitt, Val Redpath, Helena Richards, Jane Taylor.

School:

Bruce Robertson

Apologies:

Diane Sinclair, Dougie Turner, Anna White.

1. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

Minutes approved from the last meeting in November.

Matters arising:

All matters arising covered in Rector's Report.

2. Treasurer's Report

The account currently stands at £4,363.48.

3. 200 Club

1st Prize - £56 Fiona Morris

2nd Prize - £28 Vivienne Archibald

3rd Prize - £16.80 Claire Beattie

4. Rector's Report

MATTERS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Praise Postcards arrived in school today (26th November). They look fantastic. Next steps are to launch these with students, staff and parents.

Duke of Edinburgh Awards have been issued to students who have left school. Duncan McArthur (Physics and Maths Teacher) will be leading Duke of Edinburgh this year. He is in the process of establishing groups and is in contact with national bodies about what students are, and aren't, allowed to do.

There has been a lot of back and forward with The Vine Trust about getting deposits returned. We continue to pursue this. I will give a further update at the meeting on Wednesday.

We plan for outdoor extracurricular activities to resume after the Christmas break. We are in the process of writing risk assessments for these. Local authority rules mean we are not allowed to resume indoor extracurricular activities at this time.

We have ordered 15 copies of The Curriculum at a discounted rate from John Catt Publishing. These are for members of the Parent Council who would like to read and discuss this.

STAFFING

Clare Farmery has joined our English department.

Jenny Boyle has joined our Support for Learning department.

Marina McMillan joined us as a technician in our Sciences faculty.

We are still trying to back-fill Derek Huffman and Sarah Hughes in the English department. We have advertised again on MyJobScotland and are also working with Time Plan. Beth Thomson, a qualified English Teacher, continues to provide cover.

Gail Scott continues to cover Moira Thompson in the Modern Languages department.

We have had a number of short-term absences in our Maths faculty. Where possible, classes are being covered by a new supply teacher, Lisa Lough, who is qualified in teaching secondary maths.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

As yet, we do not have a suitable alternative arrangement for Parents' Evenings. However, we continue to keep parents up-to-date with students' progress via Tracking Reports and Learning Logs. Should any parent wish to discuss their child's progress, they are welcome to contact their Guidance Teacher.

We have planned a virtual SQA information evening for parents on Tuesday 1st December.

There have been four updates to our new school website:

Information about the 200 Club has been added

A 'Reporting Absence' section has been added

A 'Letters Home' section has been added

A 'Pedagogy Channel' area has been added to the 'Professional Learning' section (this may be of interest to some parents)

COVID-19 RELATED MATTERS

As of next week, our expectations for wearing facemasks will change. As well as wearing masks at transitions, students and staff should wear masks:

Whenever they are in corridors

When in the canteen and small canteen

When in studying in social areas (including the canteen and small canteen)

When in the library

Masks are not required outdoors and can be removed in the canteen to eat and drink.

DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHING PRACTICE

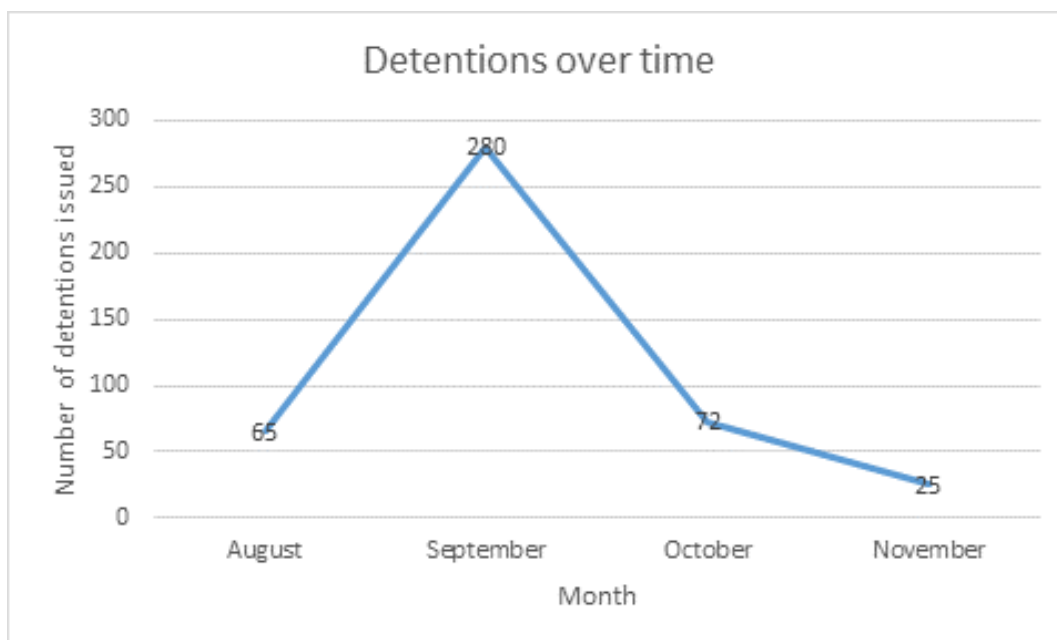
Since the last Parent Council meeting, there has been a Faculty Review in Expressive Arts. Next week, there will be a review in Health & Wellbeing.

We continue to have weekly 'Trio Observations', with the Rector, a Depute Rector and a Principal Teacher observing the same lesson together, then meeting to discuss this. These are helping to develop our shared understanding of what high-quality teaching looks like.

Staff participation in voluntary professional learning activities, such as our Professional Reading Group, continues to be very good.

STUDENT BEHAVIOUR

The school continues to feel calm and orderly. Whole-school systems, such as the detention system we put in place in August, are functioning as an effective deterrent to poor behaviour. The following graph helps evidence this:



To support teachers develop their behaviour management skills, we are in the process of developing a professional learning programme focusing on this. This will be led by Rob Harvey (PT Health & Wellbeing) and Sue Barker (Biology Teacher). It will involve workshops, shared reading and discussion, lesson observations and feedback conversations.

Following a complaint from a member of the public about litter on the boardwalk, we have acquired ten 'litter pickers'. We plan to establish a rota of student volunteers to help address this issue.

NEWSPAPER SUBSCRIPTION IDEA

Our librarian, Ian Bain, has looked into this for us. Quotes are as follows:

Newspaper	Subscription Arrangements	Total Cost
The Guardian	Subscription card through local newsagent 6 days a week (pause for 4 weeks) £44.99 a month or arrange delivery daily.	£495.00
	Including The Observer	£529.00
The Times/Sunday Times.	Monthly - £34.67 including digital 7-days. Local delivery via The Times voucher system.	£346.70 (10 months)
Delivery charge for both papers from Nairn's, Duns £2.60 per week	£101.40 (39 weeks)	
Subtotal for these two newspapers	£943.10	
Subtotal plus Observer	£977.10	
Additional Options		
The Spectator	52 weeks per year (can be paused). Single payment	£111.00
New Statesman	£158 per annum by Royal Mail, paid in one payment	£158

OTHER

We have received an incredibly generous donation of physics equipment from a parent who works as a science technician in another school. I will discuss this further at next week's meeting.

5. Matters Raised from Rector's Report

The newspaper subscription was discussed and agreed that newspapers would only be required Monday through to Thursday and alternating between The Guardian and The Times was suggested. A new quote would be requested but this was agreed in principle. In addition, Helena (New Scientist) and Katie (New Statesman) both offered to donate copies of their magazine subscriptions once read.

Having discussed low level indiscipline and the requirement to **supply** litter-pickers, could misbehaving pupils be utilised for this job along with any student volunteers? The Rector will look into this.

Many Parent Council members have requested a copy of The Curriculum book, they will be informed when it arrives and will be able to pay for these through Parent Pay.

6. Prelims

SQA have confirmed there will be no Nat 5 diet. Students will be graded by teachers using internal assessments and end of topic tests. There should be a broad body test (like a prelim), possibly in March. SQA have not yet confirmed when they require the grades. Higher and Advanced Higher students will have the equivalent of a prelim in January. There is real concern that students have no exam experience as there were no Nat 5 exams last year and no prelims, so no experience of collective exam in the school hall. SBC will not allow prelims to take place in the hall.

7. Extra Curricular Activities

Good to hear that outdoor activities will resume after the Christmas break but real frustration at the lack of imagination with regard to indoor sports. The blanket ban from local authority to all indoor sport within school is short sighted but there is nothing that can be done.

8. Review of Curriculum

The Rector gave an overview of the Macro element. He has been meeting with principle teachers to look at the Core Curriculum and explained that debate is needed to determine what core knowledge is. Using specified content will achieve broader learning. For S1-3 learning each faculty will review what is currently being taught, looking first at Social Subjects. It is hoped to involve committee members/parents in the discussion process of refining the Curriculum.

9. Any other business

Within COVID guidelines the school is attempting to ventilate classrooms and some children have complained of being cold and potentially struggling to concentrate on studies. The question was asked whether the rule of uniform could be relaxed during these current restrictions? The Rector is aware that some classrooms are colder than others and suggested ventilation of classrooms between classes. He will continue to monitor this but there will be no relaxation of uniform rules.

Aware that last years S6 pupils did not have a Prom, would it be prudent to ask last years students if they would wish to attend this years Prom. Whilst it is unfortunate that last years students missed out it was felt that opening it up to both S6 years would result in a much bigger event and be harder to supervise with regard to alcohol consumption with many being over 18.

10. Next Meeting 20th January 2020 at 7pm via Microsoft Teams.