

Dalkeith High Parent Council Meeting Minutes



DATE: Thursday 12 January 2023

Attendees

- Cara Chambers - PC Chair
Emma Ormerod - DHS Head Teacher
- Diane Ward - PC Secretary
- Julie Bones – Depute Head - /Coursing & Timetable
- Emma O’Connell – Depute Head – Pupil Support
- Parents/Carers x 11 attended representing S1, S2,S3, S4, S5 & S6

Apologies

- Diane Hedlund – Treasurer

Intros

- around the table
- Emma O’Connell gave a short intro to parents. Joined last week and is delighted to be at DHS. Welfare of the pupils, attendance, Head of Pupil support. Systems, Learning adapt and current systems. House head of Buccleuch.

Previous Minutes – Passed. To be posted on school website

Actions from previous minutes

Action	owner	update	Date raised	Carried over	Status / Action Complete Date
Dates for EO introductory sessions for Junior & Senior year parents	EO	EO to confirm by next PC in Jan 23. Dates will likely be in March. EO to schedule in	Sept 22	Carried over to, Nov, Jan 23.	Open - Update in March
Work Experience	EO	feedback PC input to staff and issue an update on timings, support for pupils, process how staggered missed lessons would be managed. EO advised employers finding it hard to accommodate a single week. No plan on how school will accommodate this. Does not look likely any work experience will be planned.	Sept 22		Closed Jan 23
Show My Homework – lack of parental view in Google Classroom.	CC	Need more info/input from council on MLC preferred tool – looks to be Google Classroom	Sept 22	Further update required. 12/1: CC to follow up	
Discipline	EO	Improvements seen	Sept 22	check in updates ongoing at PC	Closed Jan 23
Study clubs	EO	comms been issued	Sept 22		Closed Nov 22
Toilets	EO	No complaints have been raised since last PC. Main toilets are open at break & lunchtimes. Getting cleared by SLT at end of breaks	Sept 22		Closed Nov 22
S6 common room space	EO	Not due to lack of space in school	Sept 22		Closed Nov 22

Parental involvement in extracurricular activities	CC	PC to put something out on FB page if EO has any special requests	Sept 22	ongoing	ongoing
Buses	EO/	no update – new transport team now in place that are looking into transport for schools	Sept 22	ongoing	ongoing
Staffing vacancies	EO	more updaters on this to follow	Nov 22	EO to confirm	See minutes Closed
Breakfast club	SM	Kellogg's offering 1000 toward breakfast club – SM to look into	Nov 22	SM to action if interested	Closed
CC & DW to arrange a call with Gail Currie	CC		Nov 22	By next PC in March	Carried over
State of school IT infrastructure and update to equipment such as musical instruments	EO CC DW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CC to draft a letter to MLC councillors to fight for action. EO to investigate state of musical instruments at HT meeting with other MLC schools Can PC/PTA fund raising help? Once funds issue known for instruments DW to help look into resources to help with any repairs <p>Update 12/1/23:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-house audit complete. Next step for MLC Instrumental services to carry out audit. Raised at HT session. More info in minutes on rollout of pilot on new equipment 	Nov 22	Update at Jan PC. More updates will follow in due course	ongoing
Parents need clarity of who they can contact about which topic, how and expectations of a process.	EO	<p>Action for EO to update website</p> <p>Update 12/1/23:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing work on school website, including work on mobile responsive state. EO will keep PC updated of any significant updates. 	Nov 22	ASAP Check in on progress March 23	Open
Next PC topic focus to be coursing & tracking	EO		Nov 22	Jan 23 PC – covered in minutes	Closed

Actions from this meeting

Topic	owner	Action	Date raised	Carried over to:	Status
Focus groups to work with some parents on different topics. Details and any	EO	Create focus groups and communicate / ask for parent/carer participation	Jan 23		Open - Update in March

sessions will be communicated.					
IT infrastructure	EO	EO to keep PC up to date with progress – see details in meeting minutes on this topic. Wider MLC initiatives taking place	Jan 23		Open - Update in March 23
Changes to MLC high school model	EO	Provide an update on any progress and further discussion with parents in attendance at next meeting	Jan 23		Open – update in March 23
Mentoring 121s	EO	Update on success & next steps	Jan 23		Open – update in March 23
Formal assessment 2	EO	Letter to come out covering plans	Jan 23	Noted in 20 th Jan news bulletin the Formal assessment 2s have been cancelled. No letter was issued prior to this.	Open – update in March 23
Uniform consultation	EO	Consultation to start. Provide update at next PC	Jan 23		Open – update in March 23
PC Fundraising	CC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CC will put a post out for fund raising ideas CC to ask Gail Currie and other School groups how other schools raise funds 	Jan 23	Report back at next PC with some ideas & discuss	Open – update in March 23
Careers fair	EO/DW /JB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EO to discuss with DW to explore if parents / pupils can help set up a careers fair. Create a google form to gather thoughts and info from parents/former pupils reach out 	Jan 23	Update at next PC	Open update in March 23

HT update – Emma Ormerod

1. Staffing

- Greta Lachlan - left (English)
- Rebecca Watson – leaving Drama 13/1/23 – role being advertised
- Maternity leaves will be covered
- Vacancies in: Drama, Business & computing, Pupil care & Welfare officer.

2. IT infrastructure - moving forward – covered below under ‘Plans’

3. Parental meetings with all parents – still to be held. Dates to be agreed post Feb (St David’s prelims taking place) so likely to be March.

EO Would like to set up smaller Focus groups to work with some parents on different topics. Details and any sessions will be communicated. **(Action)**

4. SUSTI (SUSPended Timetable) – details handed out & on website. Created a real buzz about the school. In process of gathering choice forms from pupils. Looking at equity so all can take part. More info will filter out. Will be the last Monday/Tuesday of summer term.

5. Work experience – Not in a position to offer whole year group experience – not enough business connections and set up post covid as work place set ups have changed.

- DYWF – looking at creating a new experience for next year. Planning is in progress.

6. Planning for next year

Council have created a new role – HT of Lasswade has been seconded and is out looking at the curriculum across Midlothian, looking for creative ways to resource classes and subjects. For this to work, a common school day and periods need to align, this will be looking to be introduced in 2024/25.

- MLC has 6 High schools which work collaboratively.

Subjects offered

- All are offering different subject availability & at varying levels (eg Nat5 - Advanced Higher Computing Science offered at Lasswade, but not at DHS).
- Currently there is an equity across MLC high schools on subjects & levels for senior phase where pupils can travel to another school to study.

School day

Another difference is the length of school day between MLS high schools. **ISSUE - With school day times differing it is a barrier and needs solved for this model to work across all schools.**

Pilot scheme

Aim - to improve equity, outcomes and positive destinations, and not detrimentally affect pupils if a school does not cover a certain subject...

- DHS are part of a pilot scheme – ‘the isle’ – a 360 view video tracking / digital camera classroom,
- There are 2 devices in school which are being piloted to help integrate this technology for next year to open up opportunities to work collaboratively across schools and offer subject choices not currently available in some schools
It means a teacher is in different school to some pupils.
- Highlands & Islands already use this and it shows lots of positives and great potential.

EO went on to explain:

With incoming ‘21 hour contact times’ for teachers in the classroom with pupils coming in from Scottish Government, will mean this new technology is a very valuable solution to covering classes.

To help the new model kick off some considerations underway include:

- DHS reduces from a 33 period week to a 32 period week to help align. Reduce a Friday and finish earlier in line with other High Schools in MLC.
 - Impacts need solutioned.
 - Start Finish times, Timetable.
 - In preparation we would do consultation with parents in senior phase.

Benefits – offer a wider range through working with other schools in the consortium – staff resourcing and focus benefits. Alignment.

If we lose a period a week, we lose a subject from each year group. We need to be pragmatic & fair when looking at this. However, it becomes more difficult and we go up through the years.

Some ideas being investigated to help reduce the timetable...

*****NOTE – THERE IS NOTHING SET IN STONE – THESE ARE ALL IDEAS TO INVESTIGATE FURTHER*****

- PSE & PE, CREATE A health and wellbeing module that may be easier in the senior years.
 - More flexibility in S1 & S2 as they get 2 PSE and 3 PE. Might be a solution to reduce these.

- S3 Core – 1 RE, 2 PSE & 1 PE – may look at RE. We only have one RE teacher, so other teachers provide cover/assistance. Reducing RE would let the RE teacher teach more of S1 & S2.
- S4 – looking at the collaborative PE/PSE to come up with a wellbeing focus
- S5 – Study period cut
- S6 – PE reduced/cut

Question – if PE was reduced – how would school help support the issue of the lack of exercise occurring as a whole in Scotland? How do you create a culture to keep encouraging exercise in all years?

Response - Maybe create opportunity from PSE time to be collaborative in wellbeing and work with PE during that time.

EO asked “What was feeling of an earlier finish on Friday to align with other schools?”

Attendees did not have much objection. Sounded fairly positive to a 32 hour week as step 1 –

EO confirmed further communications will come out after a meeting that EO will be attending.

****NOTE - Some schools have already issued a letter today 12 Jan. DHS has a slightly more challenging position so letter will follow.**

EO explained ...The aim is to align across the region, and especially with St David’s because of the busing.

- Legal requirement for children to be in school for a certain time
- 2 schools already in alignment.
- Step 1 – school day align
- Step 2 – Senior phase consultation in following session to reduce the impact on core subjects
- Step 3 - period times need to align.

EO emphasised ... to change the full school day it will require a full consultation, the short term change will enable bigger benefits come 2024/25 in offering wider opportunities across MLC High Schools.

General feeling from the PC attendees is that the small change is really worth the bigger benefits. Making it clear we are aligning with the rest of the authority and therefore we are not a negative impact in reality.

We await the letter from the letter lands from MLC co-Ordinator.

7. Attainment next steps

- I. There will be 1-2-1 meeting with S5 pupils in the mentoring process – comms coming out from EO
- II. Formal assessments completed – Craig Knight collating details and letter will come out ahead of the next tracking report.
- III. Quality assurance process about to start post formal assessment – asking staff if pupil at correct level based on the assessments.
- IV. EO wants a full school overview of attainment.

Question – Prelims used to be a really big deal in case of appeals process. Will we have a second set of formal assessments ahead of final assessments again?

- EO = There is time in the calendar for 2nd assessments
 - JB – they came in it helped with the move to early prelims and a solid appeals process.
 - EO will ensure letter will include info on formal assessment 2 which should be out ahead of parental consultation meetings.

 - Coursing v consultation timings - flexibility will be given if the choices are before consultation.
- V. Coursing – choices to be made – best choice for pupil and their attainment.
- VI. EO is working with Craig Knight to understand the attainment levels across all subjects to ascertain overall performance.
- VII. It is felt that formal assessments/prelims before Christmas are good, as pupils (and teachers) get good downtime and enough time is then available to take any action on results. Prelim 2 are a good addition.

Questions from the floor

- I. Feedback that some s1s are showing levels of boredom – a lack of fun – there seems to be a lot of post COVID.
Big shock / big change from P7 to S1 and a lot of final primary school in lockdown.
Transition was not the same.

JB – still a lot of focus on Senior Phase to raise them back up post COVID. Transition is taking time to come back from pre-COVID.

- II. What is PSE for?
EO - Emma O'Connell is looking at PSE programme.

8. Uniform consultation next steps

EO issuing a form, to collate thoughts from parents/carers on what it looks like. Pupil parliament meeting to discuss, and a pupil group will form.

9. CC - PC Fundraising

We used to have PC & PTA.

CC will put a post out for fund raising ideas

Will ask Gail Currie and other School groups how other schools do it. (EO said PC had sub groups at MGHS.)

Other questions from the floor

- **PE changing time** – late to next class coming up as an issue. Pupils need time to change clothes. This is not about simply wanting to wear PE kit to school. Pupils are waiting to get into changing rooms post PE class and have no time to change & get to next class on time. Resulting in them getting told off by next teacher that they are late.
 - EO said this will come into the uniform consultation.
- **ALDI – stopping kids going in**

- EO confirmed not one pupil had been identified on video evidence of stealing.
- EO was asked by ALDI to communicate to all parents and refused as it is not for school to do this.
- It is a difficult situation and is an issue for 3 schools, not just DHS.
- Is school canteen back to full menu at lunch menu offering hot & cold?
 - Now seeing a Wider choice available at lunch as well as a limited selection at break.
- Are there any plans for Social events...discos, fun events?
 - EO suggested this is something school captains could help look into to
 - Confirmed there will be no big show at the end of summer term, but there are plans for a 'showcase' event.

EO brought up the School's Hardship fund and that this would benefit from fund raising.

- **Careers fair** –
 - DW to work with EO/JB to see if a group of parents / pupils can help set up a careers fair. Former pupils, parent's employers etc have skills and contacts that could create a great opportunity and wide variety of cover.
ACTIONS include ...Create a google form to gather thoughts and info.
 - Midlothian wide careers fair DYW & Careers officer may be organising for next year.

Next PC: 28th March 2023

Thanks & Close