

Dalkeith High Parent Council & PTA Meeting Minutes



DATE: 28th March 2023

Attendees

Head Teacher – Emma Ormerod
 PC Chair – Cara Chambers
 PC Secretary – Diane Ward
 DHS Staff - Hamish Duncan

Parents/Carers attended representing S1, S2, S4, S5 & S6

Apologies – Diane Hedlund - Treasurer

Previous Minutes/Actions

| Actions from previous meeting | Update | Status |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| SMH | Show My Homework v Google Classroom. Cara brought up a Mid PC chair group. No update from council on how parents can have more visibility. EO - piece of work is underway at council level that may introduce an additional feature (google guardian). | EO will update when any info available. |
| Gail Currie – Parent Council Liaison | not met yet, need to engage with Gail to plan for next year and what PC should look like. | Roll over - include in handover of PC caretakers |
| Audit of musical instruments | Completed. Instrumental services say all instruments in good working order. | Any updates from pupils welcome. |
| Communications – broad comms | , hard to get the messages out. Could an app help? Channels for year group – piota app (Kings Park use it Scot Ed). Suggested this might be an option as a centralised option. | Demo required of this system – Aoibhe? |
| Midlothian School alignment | EO - Work still ongoing and not any more info to add. Won't be implemented this coming year. Consultation will happen starting in June, hoping to conclude in October, (Heads, staff, parents, pupils) | |
| Careers fair | Plans in motion for next session. | |

Mobile Phones (Hamish Duncan – Social subject curriculum leader at DHS)

We heard how there is a problem in classes with high instances of pupils looking at phones during in class – very challenging, disruptive and time wasting.

We learnt about:

- A pilot which ran for the a few months in his class, and then opened up to wider department.
- The pilot which has been trialled now for almost a year.
- Outcome – reports a big difference and less referrals for mobile phone use/issues to pupil support.

Mr Duncan explained how the 'process' works:

- Desk all numbered,

- Pupils allocated a set desk.
- A hanging Numbered organiser / numbered pouches
- As pupils come in to class they put their mobile in the correct numbered pouch
- End of lesson, they take phone out.

Questions from the group

1. *What if they don't put a phone in their pouch -*
 - *stepped procedure – if it's not put in,*
 - i. *if phone is used pupil asked to put in pocket.*
 - ii. *if refusal, then duty office called, and pupil dealt with on an individual basis.*
2. *What if child replies on phone for medical reasons / personal situation?*
 - *Exceptions will be made, but school will need to be made aware of.*
3. *What if someone takes the wrong phone, this is a serious incident of personal property (expensive) going missing with personal information at risk.*
 - *Mr Duncan advised this has never happened. Assurance that there will be a high level of vigilance of school to safeguard property.*

Implementation:

- From August – all years.
- Potentially it will be a phased roll out

Positives –

- Less interruptions in class, better focus.
- This is to be seen as saving time in the classroom,
- Removing inappropriate use which result in problems that mobiles cause.

Policy:

Have a draft policy that covers many features.

Parent Group concerns::

1. *Needs consistency across the school.*
2. *Concerns about theft of property.*

*****Since PC meeting a note has gone out in the school Bulletin *****

Uniform – Group activity

Parent group did activity to provide feedback/views on uniform on the questions from EO. Resulted in open discussions and differing views.

*****Since PC a Uniform input on some set options has been issued *****

Financial impacts across council

- School has lost some budget which equates to about 1 member of staff, and impacts budget to purchase items for school.
- Fewer post going up for permanent staffing, resulting in NQT placements instead.

Staffing

Physics – Mr Moncrief, moving to Ireland at Easter break. 19 applicants, six interviews on Friday 31st March.

- Question raised over exam study leave cover, class coverage in June and Advanced Higher coverage.

Biology – interviews after Easter holiday

NQTs to be placed in:

- Business

- Computing
- Drama
- Maths

Other post: Nurture Teacher post, pupils needing support / challenging behaviours (4 interviews 29/3)

Recent Power Outage

- Phones were down so had no way to contact parents
- Were told it would take until 12:30 to fix
- Some areas in school didn't come back till after 1pm
- Many building features depend on electricity and only emergency lighting was on.
- Had operation meeting with BAM since.
- Actions for school/council
 - Draw up a contingency plan,
 - Check all protocols and
 - Communication / test

Attainment – leavers data (EO)

We received an update on data for leavers –

- DHS came out on top of all comparators
- Over S4-S6 there were 174 leavers - largest in past few years
- **Attaining for our leavers in 2022** – we exceeded all comparators – each course is allocated points, each grade allocated points which all add up – and DHS was coming out very high attainment across all comparators.

Aim is to be in line or above the National level. Data showed we are more or less in line with National establishment. Some work still to be done, but definitely improvements.

- Numeracy – we are exceeding – exceeding at level 4&5 exceeding virtual comparator which is a good improvement.
- Positive destinations – exceeding all comparators – How is this found out?
 - Throughout school a survey takes place to understand what the surveyed pupils want to do when they leave school,
 - Then... colleges, universities, Careers Scotland, HMRC, and contacting some former pull's to understand where they are.
 - Results in data for 'positive destination'
 - Negative in this data is it does not compare the destination to the one what pupil aspired to in the survey – only if they are in a 'positive destination'
 - Further / higher education – we are below virtual & National, but in line with authority

It was evident there is still work to be done.

Quality assurance visit

EO confirmed the school had received a positive result.

*****At this point the time for the meeting had expired so EO will send details out in the School Bulletin *****

Future of PC, succession plan 23/24 (CC)

- Both the PC Chair & Secretary will be standing down as of the start of the next school year. The Fund Raising Treasurer is also standing down.
- Need replacements for all three posts.

- CC will do AGM in Sept, then hand over.
- CC & DW to meet Gail Currie to understand what ideas / opportunities / options / resources there are to help make PC & meetings going forward. Any interested parties would be welcome to be involved in this.

ACTION – We need replacements for Chair, Secretary, Treasurer for return post-summer.

AOB

1. 2nd Prelims – question as to why the change happened so late as pupils were not prepared for only one set of prelims.
 - Some subject did run mocks – but not formal assessments.
 - Final predicted grades are being issued.
2. SQA stances / inclusions / updates on exams – EO will arrange an update (This came out).

Next Meeting

Date TBC (late May / early June)

Actions for next meeting:

Filling PC roles