

Parent council meeting 19/01/2022

Present – chair Lyndsey Aitken, treasurer Lynn Sinclair, secretary Lorraine Kennedy, headteacher Ross Hunter, Guidance teacher Julie Wilson, Michelle Wright, Jacquelyn Anderson, Amanda Farmer, Tracey McRae, Catherine Fraser

Chair report – the chair reported that she had spoken to Parents Connect, who work with the Scottish government, to try and get some clarity on the exam situation. Parents Connect are aware the situation can change but are keen that the government provides clarity on the matter. They are also working on the appeals process as they feel it was unfair last exams and they are looking to set up a working group to look into this. Lynn Sinclair raised the point that Gracemount High did not have a lot of appeals and felt there has to be more discussion on this. The chair said a meeting will be held in future to discuss the matter further.

An update was provided on the recent SCS meeting which looked into how schools coped during the COVID lockdowns. The main feedback from this was that schools were using various styles of teaching, it was emphasised that this was not the school's it was that different schools used different methods. Parents have also felt let down that they have not been able to meet with their child's teachers for 2 years and this is causing some concern.

Treasurer report – the treasurer reported that the council funding had now come through and the parent council's balance is now at £1080.64. The treasurer said they are now looking for funding requests from the school.

Update from guidance teacher Julie Wilson – Julie reported that she has been talking with the parents of pupils who are in the 60% bracket. Julie is working on making parents aware of what is available to help pupils with studying for their exams. The difficulties in applying for the new free travel card was raised and Julie was keen to offer advice on this. It seems to be easier if the child already has a Young Scot card. The school's Facebook page is still being pushed and Julie said that they are working on adding links to posts.

Scott McKenzie who is part of the school's COVID committee gave a presentation on recent COVID measures at the school. Scott reported that over December COVID cases had increased but they were starting to drop again in line with the national trend. He said that staff and pupils are still adhering to the COVID measures put in place which is helping in the recovery.

The issue of school uniform was raised by parents present. Parents feel that more has to be done to ensure pupils adhere to the uniform policy put in place at the start of the school term. Headteacher Mr Hunter explained that measures are being taken to try to get pupils to wear the uniform. He said that parents are being contacted if their child is not in uniform and the vast majority of parents have been supportive about this. Mr Hunter said that there had been a drop in uniform wearing after the Christmas break but staff are working on this.

Headteacher report –

**Mr Hunter outlined that a Team Risk Assessment has been completed with due as a preventative measure to reduce and manage stress levels Team RA**

5 key areas identified that we are looking to action:

1. Workload

2. IT issues
3. Pupil behaviour
4. Decision making
5. Team ethos – rebuilding from covid

A Draft action plan in place and shared with staff. The senior Leadership team are working very hard to manage staff stress levels – directly impact on whole school.

### **Careers Event**

This event took place in January. Most sessions were delivered in school with 3 being delivered online. Evaluations will be sought from senior pupils but initial feedback was very good and the employers were very impressed with our young people. A number of young people expressed an interest in the careers and there was the option offered for some follow up work experience for some pupils in particular fields.

11 partners / 130+ pupils engage with these session

Careers Week:

- Morrisons Construction (Constructions & Engineering) – 20 pupils
- CodeClan (coding) – 3 pupils
- GlamCandy (beauty) – 10 pupils
- Edinburgh Leisure (Sport & Fitness) – 17 pupils
- Edinburgh Academy of Music – 7 pupils
- You Can Be a Doctor (Medicine) – 17 pupils
- Neilsons Solicitors (Law & Legal Services) – 8 pupils
- TSB (financial Services) – 13 pupils
- QA Apprenticeships (IT & Business apprenticeships) – 7 pupils
- Army – 8 pupils
- Edinburgh Early Learning & Childcare Academy – 20 pupils

### **Attendance Policy**

Mr Hunter gave an updated on approaches to attendance

### **Dress Code**

**Mr Hunter outlined the schools rationale for their dress code policy**

1. To reduce financial pressure on families
2. To promote a greater sense of belonging and pride in the school
3. To promote the health and safety benefits of pupils being easily identifiable to their school.

A discussion took place regarding the schools approach and Mr Hunter will continue to address the issues related to this. Mr Hunter did stress the challenges of the Covid era and how the school were rebuilding many approaches.

### **Equalities**

Mr Hunter gave an update on equalities issues and how these are being managed in schools. Data was provided on the number of equalities issues dealt with so far. The school continues to promote its Rights Respecting School approaches at all times.

### **Attainment reviews**

Mr Hunter provide an update on attainment priorities and the work of the school hub and supports for pupil from S3 upwards.

### **Formal Assessments**

Programme being finalised now for programme 2. Balance with assignments/coursework in school.

### **SQA.**

Using learner conversations with young people the school are currently discussing appropriate levels of qualifications for pupils. This is to ensure that every pupil is being presented for qualifications which give them the best opportunity to succeed. Parental communication will be sent home if there are any proposed changes to qualification levels.

### **Empowered Learning**

New iPads will be distributed to all S1, S2 and S5 next week. S3 and S4 will have their current iPads migrated over to the new software which will allow them to access all the relevant technology for teaching and learning. The school will be continuing to focus on using these iPads to support learning both in school and at home. The school will be sending communication home with reminders to sign use agreements and to bring iPads to school fully charged.

### **Teaching and learning**

The school are continuing to work together to ensure that teaching and learning is of a consistently high standard across the school. The Maths and Science faculties are working with the School Improvement Group trialling a Gracemount High School Teaching toolkit to support lesson planning, evaluations, and professional learning. Further consultation and feedback on this will take place later in the session.

17 Staff signed up to a professional reading group.

### **Humanutopia**

Young people in S1 and S3 will be participating in the Humanutopia programme during the week beginning 31<sup>st</sup> January.

The courses are aimed at improving the mental health & wellbeing of pupils by empowering them to make positive changes in their life. They work on developing a range of life skills which will help individuals to become more employable and increase confidence in communication with others. The Humanutopia aims underpin our school values of Responsible, Respectful and Safe and we look forward to watching the young people thrive and to seeing the positive impact of these sessions.

### **Royal Merchant Company**

Allocated £1500 for the school which will be split between the wellbeing and Enhanced support bases

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### **Staffing**

Mr Hunter gave an update on staffing

Next meeting 28/03/2022