Gracemount High School Parent Council
Minutes of Meeting
Wednesday 2nd April 2025

Attendees - Alison Sutherland, Sylvia Simpson, Louise Herbert, Katrina Coutts, Ross Hunter and Pamela Hamilton.

Apologies - James Anderson, Suzanne Baxter, Margaret Cairns, Rachel Laing, Suzy Ross and Linda Wardrop.

Chair's Report

Katrina did not have much to report.

<u>School Uniform</u>

- A councilor had been in touch to discuss the recent communications regarding not promoting any specific uniform company for uniforms with logos.
- RH advised that uniform is not enforceable, but a dress code can be set.
- RH advised that school uniform is not a priority to the teaching staff compared with other concerns such as swearing.

PVGs for PTA/PC members

- JA had advised that the chair of the primary school PTA has become aware that PTA/PC members may be required to have PVG certificates.
- RH not aware of this
- KC will try to find out if this is the case.
- RH suggested online meetings may be a way around this.

Projected Numbers for School

- KC raised concerns with the council regarding social spaces.
- Councillor advises that this matter has been raised and will not move on to these numbers until these matters have been addressed.

Treasurer's Report

Balance

- Unchanged except for £5 charge - AS to liaise with GPS regarding their change of bank account.

Requests

- RH requested that the PC might donate some money to outdoor seating which he is planning - it was agreed that this could be supported.

Head Teachers Report

Swearing

- RH, SLT and all curriculum leaders met and identified swearing as a priority amongst the teachers' concerns.
- RH advised that there is a minority of pupils who are swearing at teachers or other pupils and that there have been 2 exclusions this week.
- RH met with head of education Lynn Binnie who is encouraging reporting of such behaviour.
- Current reporting systems are time consuming - staff members report it to the business manager who then inputs the information.
- May inset day - staff will be taught how to use the system in order that they can report any incidents of swearing.
- The data will then be used to support interventions - this will take time to get this right.
- RH hopes that these interventions will support recruitment and retention of the right type of staff.

Consultation School Vision

- Pupil parliament identified key themes such as belonging and learning.
- 4 statements - 220 votes
- Vision Statement agreed.

Staffing update

- MIss Hannah (Art) - continues to be on long term sickness; hopefully a solution will be found soon.
- Nat Foster and Julie Wilson are both returning from maternity leave to work 4 days per week - RH will be offering one day posts internally.
- Modern Languages - Mrs Davies on Mat leave - 1 year post will be advertised.

- History - Cat Murray has left to work at WHEC - FT post will be advertised.
- J Knight - Mat leave - Vacancy - will be advertised after Easter.
- ESB - mat cover - 3 day post will be advertised.
- New appointments Maths - Miss Euston and Computing - Mr Gilmore.
- RH is happy that we have 2 business and 2 computing teachers.
- Strategic Equity Fund - a bid has been made for money to target specific areas - GHS have put forward 3 bids for 2 PSOs and one youth worker - these bids have been successful and will be funded for 23 months - advertised after Easter.

Recruitment Training

- Dates in April and May 25.
- RH is keen for parents to become involved as it adds to the process.

Awards

- Will soon be time for the presentations.
- After last year's controversy, this year awards will be determined by the SEMIS awards; bronze for 50 merits, silver for 60 merits, gold for 70 merits, and platinum for 100 merits.
- Dependent on how many children achieve, perhaps only those with platinum of gold will be asked to attend.

Inclusion Review

- Has been submitted to councillors on 25/03/25 for approval.
- No news of additional staff as yet.
- Any additional staff would be across the learning community rather than just GHS.
- Details not shared.
- Moving resources closer to the learner.

- Increase of 204 to 211 FT equivalent.
- Reduction of 33 to 10 temporary posts
- Waiting for final confirmation but RH is hoping it will be positive.
- AS suggested that PC could support some additional courses such as “raising teenagers with confidence”, or putting resources together for parents.
- “Progressive masculinity” will come to the school and work with 12 S3 boys to offer a training programme where they will become role models for other boys. AS enquired whether they might do an information night for parents and the PC can fund this. RH will reach out. When advertising this it was agreed that the Netflix show ‘Adolescence’ should be used to gather interest.

<u>Easter Study Day</u>

- Extensive programme this year - details are on the school website.
- Successful grade booster sessions - RH is in contact with the donor who funds these session and is hopeful that the donations will continue.
- RH felt that the staff who are involved are a credit to the school.

<u>Parent Feedback</u>

- 86 responses - very low compared with previous suveys.
- SS advised that the link did not work for her.
- It was suggested that rather than attach the link in a document that it could be in the body of the email.
- All emails look the same all from GHS - it was suggested that there could be something in the title of the email noting the survey.
- RH asked if people preferred text or email - it was discussed that text may be more obvious.
- The survey will remain open and another email will be sent out.

Homework Survey

- 37 responses
- 28 in favour
- 13 in favour of developing reading and would be interested in attending parental sessions.
- RH shared some research regarding homework - limited evidence of the benefits of homework nationally and internationally.
    - Schools should be responsive.
    - Homework should be done at school rather than home.
    - Should be relevant.
    - Quality of the task is more important than quantity.
    - Should not be used as a punishment for example if the pupil fails a test.
    - there should be a clear purpose.
    - Preparation for class - AS advised that this was a useful tool in one of her son's classes in the past.
- Implementation and change requires clear reasoning as to why this is an issue, clarify if it is a priority and identify if there is likely to be any significant gains.
- GASS - this is a good example of how to do homework well as some S4 students attend for Maths where they do their homework with peers and their teacher on hand to help if required.
- AS asked if the library hour could be used to do homework or catch up on class work for students who attend SLB - RH advised that Mr Foley is currently assessing the benefits of library hour.

Focus on Writing

- Mr Foley is developing a strategy for teaching writing.
- 3 levels , Green is level 2, yellow level 3 and red is level 4.

- What is good writing?

Self Evaluation Visits

- All schools across the learning community.
- 4 x quality indicators were assessed by school staff and inspectors.
- Level 6 is excellent and level 1 is unsatisfactory.
- Benchmarks were used to evaluate these levels.
- The school evaluated themselves at 4 for leadership and change and inclusion and well being.
- The school evaluated themselves at 3 for learning and teaching (due to having 15 new members of the teaching team recently) and attainment outcomes.
- The report matched mostly.
- Areas for improvement include consistency amongst staff and staff involvement in change.
- RH felt the process was worthwhile and there will be a focus on learning and teachers, to drive pedagogy and staff inclusion.
- Areas of positivity include inclusion, culture, relationships and culture of care.
- RH is confident that consistency will improve now that staff are more settled.
- Permission has been granted to share the full report and RH will do this.
- There is a move toward collaborative working within the learning community on key areas such as attendance.

AOB

- Parent Teacher Evening - SS mentioned that 3 of her child's teachers were absent that evening and only one has been back

in touch with her since, despite reminders. RH advised he will chase this up.
LH advised that she thought the recent parents evening went well having all teachers in the same area; appointments did not over run
RH advised some concerns re noise and confidentiality.
RH advised that for this year group it was not a fair split having A-M then N-Z as the second evening was very quiet.

- Attendance - SS advised she was concerned about staff absence.. RH advised that there are Absence Management Procedures in place where stage 1 and 2 absences are triggered by absence durations and episodes, but that stage 3 cannot be triggered until the staff member is no longer being paid (unique to the teaching profession)
  RH was keen not to breach any confidences and advised that absence management is a supportive measure including referral to Occupational Health Service and mental health supports.
  Where a class is impacted then the senior team will be asked to ensure that no one class will be impacted. Senior students will be given priority in these situations.

Next Parent Council Meeting

Tuesday 10th June 25
6pm in the school Library