

Parent Council AGM and meeting 15/09/2021

Present: Angela Fletcher, Aileen King (Chair), Louise (Secretary), Ruth Johnson, Mark Jones, Jade, Marilyn McRobb, Vicki Wright, Wendy Townsend, Jackie Mellon, Kim McIntyre, Susie Hogg

Apologies: Lea Sime

HT Report

Good return to school. Good feedback from parents and pupils. P1 have settled remarkably well without a full transition.

It was good to hear that there is some element of normal returning to school. Jackie explained that they hoped they would be a bit further forward with a return to normality but noted that a return to normal is still progressing in the right direction. Children can now play across the playground, specialist teachers are back teaching multiple classes, library, gym hall and computer suite reopened. P7s are able to go through the school, campaigning for House Captain, meeting buddies, JRSO duties as well as planning pupil council. Some classes are planning to get out and about for a walk/local trip.

School improvement plan - brief overview at last meeting. Big drive on raising attainment, particularly in literacy curriculum. Staff are looking to develop the curriculum, looking at what children need with a particular focus on teaching writing which will include some professional learning for staff. Around January inservice - bring in outside trainer re: writing.

Rollout of digital devices this session across Midlothian which will see each pupil in both Primary and Secondary issued with a digital device. This will be directed by the Digital Learning Team.

Midlothian Council is working towards becoming a nurturing authority. Hawthornden have already implemented some principles and have appointed Kim McIntyre as Nurture Lead. Kim will attend training and cascade to staff.

It is expected that Hawthornden will be a pilot school for an enhanced support classroom starting in October this year. The class space is for children who need a bit of extra support, whether that be for literacy, numeracy or social needs. Staff in the classroom will work with class teachers to discuss how individuals can be supported across the school. A number of other schools across the county will also be piloting this project. The theory behind the pilot is that children should be able to access support within their own school community. Interviews are underway for 1 class teacher and 2 learning assistants for that class. Outcome expected in a few days.

There are plans to establish a sensory room which will be located in the old DHT office, now that Jackie and the DHTs are sharing an office. School have been lucky to have been granted some significant outside funding to create it.

PEF Funding - advertising for 3 learning assistants and 1 youth worker to work across the school. Can offer alternative curriculum for those children who need it.

Visits to school - COVID restrictions still in place for this. Very likely meetings will need to remain on Zoom for parent council for the foreseeable future. Meet the teacher and parent consultations still need to be done remotely also.

Email communication - the main communication method will change to email after the September weekend. Some points will still be emphasised through Facebook and the app but it is important that parents share their email addresses with the office to receive important communications.

Health and relationship education - RSHP resources will continue to be used throughout this session. Laura Birrell is setting up a working group with staff and parents to look at and discuss delivery of the programme at different stages.

Consultation on holidays - Midlothian Council have proposed a change to holiday dates to allow the school to break up earlier than the proposed date of 22nd December to bring us back into line with Edinburgh Council. There are also changes to the following year. A Google Forms link will be shared shortly to allow Parent Council members the opportunity to vote on the proposal.

Communication

Difficult to keep in touch remotely. Great teachers sharing their emails so that parents can get in touch directly. It was felt the move to email will be positive.

Fundraising

Normal activities like discos and fayres are still not manageable given the current COVID situation and the lack of volunteers. These events take a lot of planning and may need to be cancelled depending on COVID rules so it was felt best to postpone any discussion around them for another year.

3 events pencilled in for the next year - Coin Wars, duck race and a Christmas hamper raffle.

Coin wars - will be held from 27/09/2021 to 13/10/2021. Louise will issue letters for printing to the office ASAP and arrange social media advertising.

Hamper raffle - will focus on fewer themes this year but will follow the same general format as past years with pre-order tickets available.

A parent suggestion was for a pumpkin decorating competition. It was agreed that the school would hold a Halloween fun day in class, with children dressing up, taking part in Halloween themed activities, possibly with some costume competitions for small prizes. This is planned provisionally for Friday 29th October and a small donation would be asked of pupils on the day, similar to a dress down day.

School events - it was noted that the P7 sponsored walk goes a long way to paying for end of term activities. The aim is to do this with the current P7s after the Easter break (in hopes of good weather!) There is always a charity event throughout the year - a charity has not been selected and Ruth agreed to look at who could take a lead on organising this.

P7 camp fundraising - Some parents had raised the possibility of arranging some fundraising to help with the high cost of P7 camp. Mark Jones felt a car wash or similar could be arranged by school with PTA support.

P7 Leavers

Lovely feedback from last year's parents and pupils who generally felt the activities were a great way to end Primary 7.

Susie, who had a P7 last year said that she felt the whole experience was such a joy for children and that she felt they got more out of it than they would have with a prom. There was a big build up, being with their friends and generally enjoying themselves in a more inclusive atmosphere. It was felt this was preferable to holding a prom which can be a lot of pressure both socially and financially. There was a lot of praise for the way that Mr Jones and Miss Bethke organised the week.

Any other business

P7 jumpers - there was some discussion about P7 jumpers and whether there would be merit in introducing them earlier in the term. There were pros and cons and it was agreed that, in light of a possible change to uniform policy, this would be discussed later in the year, ideally so that any change would fit in with next year's P7s.

AGM

Chair - Aileen (seconded Louise)

Vice - Lea (Seconded Susie)

Secretary - Louise (Seconded Aileen)

Treasurer - Vicki volunteered her help (seconded Aileen) - this is to be discussed with current Treasurer, Sarah Kelly, who was not present at tonight's meeting.

Next meeting - November - all things Christmas