

Tynewater Primary School Parent Council

Tuesday 23 February 2021 18.30 -19.30 hours
Online Teams Meeting

MINUTES

1. Welcome and apologies (6:30)

Apologies: Clare Lorimer, Anna Davanna, Matt Elliot, Kirstie Broadfoot, Corinna Hewat

Present: Emma Diffley, Julia Critchley, Aurora Mancini, Douglas Lawson, Jane Brown, Solveig Hoy, Laura Else, Annabel Kershaw, Dave Milligan

2. Minutes of last meeting/Outstanding Actions (6:35)

Previous minutes: accepted

Actions from last meeting: nil outstanding

3. Chairperson's Report on PC Chairs meetings with MLC (6:40)

Emma reported back to us following her attendance at the Midlothian Council (MLC) Chairs of Parent Councils meeting. Tynewater PC will put the summary slides from this meeting up on the website. Summary of the meeting as follows:

- a. MLC are keen to engage more with parents and will use the parent council chairs meetings to do so. They will meet approximately once per month. These meetings are relatively new and have been introduced since lockdown.
- b. MLC are reviewing the quality of remote learning to ensure consistency across the county. Much of the meeting was discussing remote learning/provisions in schools.
- c. MLC will survey Midlothian parents regarding experience with home learning to try to understand more about children's engagement.
- d. MLC's Attendance and Nurture Strategy are looking for parent input (2 or 3 representatives) to assist in reviewing communication/engagement materials. There is no commitment to meetings, only to review materials when they are available. If interested please contact leisa.randall@midlothian.gov.uk
- e. Concerns in some areas of Midlothian (not Tynewater) regarding provision for children with additional support needs. MLC anticipates all that all arrangements in place prior to the latest lockdown would be reinstated as soon as possible.
- f. Children who are kept away from school because parents do not deem it safe will be marked as absent and no specific home learning will be provided for them.
- g. Children who are isolating for Covid-related reasons will have remote learning provided by schools.

4. Treasurer's Report (6:45)

Aurora presented the treasurers report.

Currently there is approximately £5000 in the accounts. Though a small number of outstanding payments will bring this down to approximately £4500. AM is still trying to change signatories on the account. The bank is not particularly helpful and the process is ongoing and taking time.

Action point:
AM & ED to finalise the change of signatories.

5. Headteacher's Report (6:50)

- a. DL opened with being delighted to report that there are lots of happy children back at school with the return of P1-3 this week. Online learning for P4-7 continues except for those children in school (vulnerable/key workers).
- b. He outlined the teaching arrangements and a full description of the these are outlined in recent correspondence from school (information for parents).
- c. DL outlined the carefully thought out safety arrangements in place for drop off/pick up which utilise the multiple entrances/exit the school has. Details in the information for parents' correspondence from school. Please can all parent/carers remember to keep 2m apart.
- d. DL congratulated all the staff for the enormous amount of hard work being put in.
- e. Describes current staffing in nursery (outlined in information for parents) and explained that Miss Davie (Nursery) has been shielding because she is expecting a baby in May. Congratulations to Miss Davie.
- f. Described the arrangements that have been going on with nursery children and how much the nursery children have enjoyed spending time with P1 and P2.
- g. Google meets have been going really well. DL and Mrs McCabe have been visiting the classes during the meeting. Children are responding positively to these meetings
- h. DL and Mrs McCabe have been tracking the progress of the children on Seesaw. Additionally, the school is focusing support on those children who are not seeming to engage with remote learning.
- i. Regarding breaktimes the staff have separated out the playground into defined areas for each class. This way all children are all outside at the same time. Having different breaktimes spreads the staff too thinly. DL described the practicalities of how the splitting up of the playground has worked. This is reported to be working very well.
- j. DL reports that the Tynewater teaching staff and learning assistants have all remained healthy throughout.
- k. Question for DL from SH. SH thanked DL and team for all the hard work and asked whether school is happy with the level of

engagement from children and whether there are enough devices? DL responded that only a small handful of children are not engaging and the parents concerned are struggling to help the children engage. The staff are working hard to try and support these families and do phone families when engagement is low. The staff have prepared and hand delivered paper learning packs. DL reassures us that everyone has a device. A small number of children were without a device in January and this was quickly resolved with devices sourced for these children.

- I. DL announced that Midlothian Council has committed 10 million pounds for digital learning over the next 12 month and all children from P1 upwards will be provided with their own device. ED highlighted the benefits of MLC funding these devices rather than our PC trying to fundraise for iPads. Such benefits include cover for ongoing maintenance costs and reduced pressure on fundraising committee.
- m. Comment to DL from AK was to thank the staff for the hard work and efforts to organise a P1 nativity despite the pandemic. DL replied that the staff and children had very much enjoyed it.

6. Discussion

- a. home learning and return to school (7:00)
 - (i) This was covered during Chairpersons report and headteachers report. Nil else raised.
- b. vegetable patch / gardening (7.10)
 - (i) ED raised how untidy the school vegetable beds are at the moment. Uncertain how parents can be allowed into the playground to help with the garden? DL responded that school are very keen to make progress with garden projects. Unfortunately grand plans were interrupted due to Covid restrictions last year.
 - (ii) Currently only really 1 family at a time could be allowed in to help at weekends. DL to update the parent council once restrictions loosened.
 - (iii) DL hopes to have the children outside weeding soon now that the weather is improving.
 - (iv) DL reminded us of the school's desire to acquire outdoor furniture for a whole class to be able to have classes outdoors.
- c. playground markings (7.20)
 - (i) ED noted that specific funds have been raised by parent council for playground markings and that the parent council are keen that this money is kept for the intended purpose. Mrs Leonard has been confirming cost of playground markings.
 - (ii) Action point: ED will contact Mrs Leonard for these quotes

7. AOB (7:25)

- a. SH again passed on her thanks to the staff for all their hard work and asked if staff can let us know if there is anyway the parents can help?

- DL responded by highlighting that this has been a difficult time for lots of families, staff and children both. Overall compared to previous lockdown this has been much better with Tynewater being open (for keyworker/vulnerable families) and the staff have much preferred this arrangement.
- b. LE also thanked DL and staff for managing all these challenges. LE asked, having experienced Covid isolation herself, what the council provision policy would be for the children who now have to self-isolate while school is open? DL responded that in this situation staff will put content from in-class onto seesaw or deliver paper packs to the home as necessary. DL reassures that measures are in place to ensure home learning will be available going forwards for anyone having to self-isolate.
 - c. ED reported back on the planning application for the proposed development behind the school. Regarding the survey from the Tynewater parent council to parents/carers about the proposed development there were 58 respondents. 56/58 respondents strongly object to the meeting with 2 being ambivalent. ED has fed our parent survey results back to the planning department.
 - d. ED thanks DL and team on behalf of the PC and parents for hard work during these challenging times.
 - e. DL passes on to children in P4-7 how much staff are missing the children and so looking forward for them coming back

8. Date of next meeting and close meeting (7:30)

Next meeting Tuesday 23 March 2021 at 1830-1930 and will be online.

Note: if you have an issue you wish to be raised at a Parent Council meeting, please email us on tynewaterparentcouncil@gmail.com, speak to a parent council member or contact the school. All parents and guardians of children at the school are welcome to attend the meeting.