

## LINLITHGOW ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL



### Minutes of the Parent Council Meeting held on 13th January, 2015

#### **PRESENT:**

**Parent members:** Elspeth Brown, Kate Signorini, Helen Boxall, Jo Smith, Jennifer MacDonald, Douglas Gray, Mark Fulton, Lindsay Guthrie, Douglas Taylor, Derek Wolfe

**Head Teacher and Advisor to Parent Council:** Karen Jarvis

**Teacher representatives:** Peter Scott, Rhona White

**Pupil Council representatives:** Neil Anderson, Rebecca Carey

**In attendance:** Catherine Devlin, Iain Woodhouse

**APOLOGIES:** Kathryn Morrison, Laurie Boles

#### **1 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING**

- 1.1 The minutes of the meeting held 20th November 2014 were approved. They are available on the school website under Information for Parents>Parent Council>Meeting Minutes.
- 1.2 Elspeth Brown was nominated and seconded as Vice Chair of Parent Council.

#### **2 HEAD TEACHER'S REPORT**

- 2.1 An advert for a permanent member of staff in the Art Department was to go out.
- 2.2 The vacancy in the PE department had been filled.
- 2.3 School events in the run-up to Christmas had been well attended.
- 2.4 There had been a positive reception to the school's amended Senior Phase Presentation Model.
- 2.5 It was agreed that the Parent Council Meeting minutes and Parent Teacher Association minutes should be filed separately on the school website.

#### **3 PARENT COUNCIL PRIORITIES**

##### **3.1 Continue to promote use of and subscription to the school website**

- 3.1.1 There was still the need to point people to the website as a primary source of information. It was not necessarily clear what 'subscription' meant i.e. registering on website to get update emails. This should be made clearer to parents/carers.

##### **3.2 User-friendly summary of school improvement plan (SIP available on website)/User-friendly guide to Curriculum for Excellence/ Update the prospectus/rough guide for parents to school life including 'top tips'.**

- 3.2.1 These three priorities could be taken together under the banner of improving communication, with staff, parents and pupils working together on this.

3.2.2 Parents with children in P7 and S1 would find a basic guide to Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) very valuable with an introduction as to what to expect in terms of assessment, exams and course choices.

3.2.3 S5 pupils could write a one page summary of their take on CfE and the transition to the Senior Phase.

### **3.3 More interaction with primary schools, particularly those outwith Linlithgow**

3.3.1 Parent Council meetings could be opened up to catchment area Primary School Parent Council members.

3.3.2 This agenda item would be carried over to the next meeting for further discussion.

### **3.4 Pupils off school premises at lunchtime**

3.4.1 This agenda item would be carried over to the next meeting for further discussion.

### **3.5 School LGBT/Stonewall group had expressed a wish to come to speak to the Parent Council to take about the work the group does.**

3.5.1 The Pupil Council representatives agreed to ask if Stonewall representatives would like to make a presentation at a future meeting.

## **4 S3 COURSE CHOICE**

4.1 Arising from the above discussion regarding Curriculum for Excellence, some questions were asked about the S3 course choice process such as whether pupils should be encouraged to take subjects they are good at with a view to better results or take subjects that would complement their core interests.

4.2 The Head Teacher stated that the period from S1 to S3 should not be exam driven and should focus on learning, in keeping with the principle of the Broad General Education phase. The Senior Phase Presentation Model should provide pupils with a number of flexible options for assessment.

4.3 The support for the S3 course choice process included teacher recommendations, the Course Choice booklet, S3 Course Choice Evening, a S3 Parents' Evening, Careers Evening and individual interviews with Pupil Support teachers.

4.4 Useful website links included My World of Work (on the school website).

## **5 TEACHERS REPORT**

5.1 An oral update from the teachers was received

## **6 PUPIL COUNCIL REPORT**

6.1 The Big Quiz was held on the last day before the Christmas holidays and was deemed to have been a successful event. Funds raised went toward extra-curricular clubs for their equipment or travel.

6.2 The Pupil Council had prioritised the Library as one of their areas of activity dealing with issues such as opening times, access and the role of pupil librarians. A report has been sent to the school's management with the aim of making the library a positive experience for all.

6.3 Any suggestions as to improving the Pupil Council noticeboard display were welcomed.

- 6.4 The Pupil Council was also pursuing the use and allocation of lockers.
- 6.5 The Pupil Council would be supporting No Smoking Day again on 11th March with activities such as a breathalyser test. Leaflets would be distributed to pupils.

## **7 LINLITHGOW ACADEMY ASSOCIATION (LAA) UPDATE**

- 7.1 The LAA Christmas Craft Fayre went well and £700 was raised.

## **8 WEST LOTHIAN PARENT COUNCIL FORUM**

- 8.1 The Chair reported on the West Lothian Parent Council Forum in December where the Woods Commission Report on access to vocational education was discussed and Validated Self Evaluation.
- 8.2 The Scottish Parent Teacher Council (SPTC) gave a presentation to the meeting and it was recommended that Parent Councils in West Lothian took a group membership of the SPTC insurance policy which would cover PTA activity as well.

## **9 PARENT COUNCIL REPRESENTATION AT PARENTS' EVENINGS**

- 9.1 The Chair would provide a slide for a presentation to parents at the P7 Information evening on Thursday 15th January. It was agreed that next year there should be representation in person to introduce parents to the Parent Council.
- 9.2 Forthcoming dates included:
- Thursday 22 January - S3 Course Choice evening and Careers Evening
  - Wednesday 11th February - S3 Parents' Evening
  - Tuesday 28th April - S2 Parents' evening

## **10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 10.1 Peter Scott noted a proposal to showcase pupils' art work at Linlithgow Burgh Halls to raise the profile of the Art Department. The Chair recommended making contact with Gail Boardman who runs the Line Gallery and used to be a member of Linlithgow Primary School Board.
- 10.2 The dwindling numbers of girls involved in the Hockey Club was noted.
- 10.3 It was suggested that a LinkedIn group might be set up to provide a network for former pupils of Linlithgow Academy. 1000 people already have Linlithgow Academy noted in their profile on LinkedIn. The school office staff would look into this.
- 10.4 School office would investigate whether the 'wled' email addresses are still being forwarded or are now defunct.
- 10.5 It was noted that Edinburgh University had stated that their unconditional offers assumed that students did not change their S6 course choices afterwards. S6 pupils with unconditional offers were advised to inform the University if they were going to change or drop courses. Other universities may have the same policy.

## **11 DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS:**

11.1 Tuesday, 24th March 2015

11.2 Thursday, 28th May 2015