

LINLITHGOW ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 24th March 2015



PRESENT:

Parent members: Jo Smith, Laurie Boles, Douglas Gray, Mark Fulton, Kathryn Morrison, Derek Wolfe, Elspeth Brown, Kate Signorini, Jen MacDonald

Head Teacher: Karen Jarvis

Teacher representatives: Peter Scott, Rhona White

Pupil Council representatives: Neil Anderson, Rebecca Carey

APOLOGIES: Jenny O'Donnell, Lindsay Guthrie, Helen Boxall
Douglas Taylor

1 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

1.1 The minutes of last meeting held 12th January 2015 were approved. They are available on the school website under Information for Parents>Parent Council>Meeting Minutes.

2 HEAD TEACHER'S REPORT

- 2.1 Staffing update: Claire Wright (Art) had been made permanent, Fiona Mackay (Home Economics) was moving to Bannockburn High School, Annie McRobbie was taking up a position at Wallace High School and Stuart Forrester would be returning from secondment. In addition E Gribben (History) was moving to Armadale Academy and J Cavin (Business Education) to Dean High School.
- 2.2 FAQ sheets had been produced for parents on the topic of course choice and exam presentation in S4 and S5. These had been well received and Mrs Jarvis thanked members of the Parent Council for their input.
- 2.3 Ann Sinclair and Mrs Jarvis have been working of Parent Council members to amend the School Handbook. It has been trimmed but could be further improved for the next session as identified in the Parent Council's priorities. **[Action for next PC session]**
- 2.4 LAA have agreed to fund a new school website using Wordpress. Steven Moore has been into the school for initial discussions. The website would be tablet and mobile compatible. Members advised that written agreement was sought to ensure that the school maintained the rights to artwork and content.
- 2.5 A condensed version of the school improvement plan has been produced. This will go on the school website in the near future.
- 2.6 A team from West Lothian Council came into the school to review its practice in relation to supporting pupils as they prepare to leave school. The school received very positive feedback in relation to this.

3 PARENT COUNCIL PRIORITIES FOR 2014-15 ACADEMIC YEAR

3.1 At the AGM last October, the Parent Council agreed its priorities for the academic year 2014-15. Two items were still outstanding for discussion: i) more interaction with the

catchment primary schools, particularly those outwith Linlithgow and ii) pupils being allowed off premises at lunchtime.

- 3.2 It was agreed that the Chair should write to the parent Councils of all the catchment area primary schools to introduce the Academy Parent Council and LAA, make them aware of the school website as a useful source of information and to invite a representative of their councils to attend our AGM in the next session.
- 3.3 S1s were advised to stay on school premises during lunchtimes for the first month, at least until the September holiday.
- 3.4 It was felt that there was now less incentive for pupils to leave school at lunchtime as there are a number of lunchtime clubs, better choice of food is available and queues are more manageable due to the pre-order machines.
- 3.5 It would not be feasible to enforce children to stay on school premises at lunchtimes but pupils who do leave the school are expected to act responsibly and as an ambassador for their school.
- 3.6 It was agreed that guidance as to the lunchtime 'policy' should be given in the school handbook. **[Action: School Office]**

4 DEALING WITH CYBER-BULLYING

- 4.1 The school's current policy for dealing with cyber-bullying is that pupil support staff, if alerted, will support pupils impacted by cyber-bullying even if it is taking place outside of school.
- 4.2 Previously the police could only be alerted by the victims themselves but the advice now is that anyone concerned about a particular situation should contact the Child Exploitation and Protection Centre (CEOP).
- 4.3 Cyber-bullying is covered as a general topic within PSE lessons. There is also an internet safety section on the school website with useful links. Pupils are encouraged to take personal responsibility and be accountable for their actions.
- 4.4 The Pupil Council are to have CEOP awareness training and will raise the issue of cyber-bullying at a future meeting.
- 4.5 It was agreed that the next school newsletter should include a general item about cyber-bullying. **[Action: School Office]**

5 TEACHERS' REPORT

- 5.1 Teachers were conscious of pupil workload, particularly that of S4s, at this time of year across all subjects even if they are not being presented for an exam.
- 5.2 EIS has reported that the change in assessment policy and the turnaround now required has had an impact on teachers.

6 PUPIL COUNCIL REPORT

- 6.1 The Pupil Council had organised another successful No-Smoking Day event and participated in Citizenship week.
- 6.2 The S3 Pupil Council representatives were to give a presentation on lockers to the school's senior management team. The S4 Pupil Council was focusing on science awareness and

the S5s on transitions.

- 6.3** The Pupil Council would be issuing rules and guidance for using the library.

7 LINLITHGOW ACADEMY PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION (LAA) UPDATE

- 7.1** On Friday 29th May, LAA would be hosting a Quiz night to raise funds.

- 7.2** Teachers would be happy to help out at LAA events such as the above Quiz Night. They would prefer to have a role rather than attend in a social capacity.

- 7.3** On behalf of the Parent Council, the Chair thanked LAA for its generosity in funding a new website for the school.

8 PARENT COUNCIL REPRESENTATION AT FORTHCOMING PARENTS' EVENINGS

- 8.1** Laurie Boles and Elspeth Brown offered to staff a Parent Council stall at the S2 Parent's evening on Tuesday 28th April. Aim is to raise awareness of the Parent Council, what it does and to encourage parents to subscribe to the school website.

9 DRAFT SCHOOL SESSION DATES 2016/17

- 9.1** West Lothian Council had requested feedback on their draft session dates for 2016/17.

- 9.2** It was queried why the summer term in 2016 was ending on a Thursday (30 June) rather than a Friday as has been the norm. A preference was expressed for a Friday finish.

- 9.3** Concern was expressed about the Easter holidays 2017 not including the public holidays of Good Friday and Easter Monday; this was felt to disrupt teaching time, particularly at a time when some pupils are preparing for exams. It will also cause additional and unwelcome challenges in terms of childcare for working parents.

- 9.4** Concern was expressed about the first week in May 2017 - the calendar document is misleading but it appears that staff and pupils are on holiday on Monday 1st, then there is an in-service day on Thursday 4th May. This was felt to cause serious disruption to the school week. It was assumed that the in-service day was due to local council elections but this shouldn't necessitate a holiday for all schools in West Lothian.

- 9.5** A preference was expressed for the summer term to finish a week earlier in 2017.

- 9.6** One member requested a move towards 6 week summer holidays rather than 7 week holidays.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 10.1** S6 course choices: more guidance was requested about the choice S6 could take and what the tariff points were. It was proposed to get feedback from the current S5 and S6 years give on their experience and that FAQs based on this information could be posted on the school website in August for the next session.

- 10.2** A sixth year common room was discussed.

- 10.3** Peter Scott brought to the attention of the Parent Council an art exhibition by children with autism to be held in the Palace Crypt in the week commencing 11 May. High quality display boards were needed and Laurie Boles offered to contact the Round Table with a view to funding these.

10.4 It was noted that the S1-S3 hockey club coach had resigned and that there was only one coach remaining. The school offered to help promote the hockey club if required. The Parent Council could have a sign at its stall at the S2 Parents' evening in April encouraging new members.

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

7.00pm, Thursday, 28th May 2015 in the Conference Room.