



Linlithgow Academy Parent Council Meeting

7:00pm, Wednesday 6 May 2020, Zoom Video Conference

Attendees:

Parent Members:	Helen White (Chair), Douglas Maxwell (Vice Chair), May Geddes, Campbell Ford, Dermot Murray, Jeremy Fuller, Alison Sharp, Dorte Al-Gailani, Iain Woodhouse, Ann Marie Penman
Head Teacher:	Karen Jarvis
Teachers:	-
Pupil Council:	-
Parent Forum:	-
Clerk:	Karine McNair
WL Council:	-
Guests:	-
Apologies:	Pinelopi Louvrou,

1. Welcome, Introductions & Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted as above.

2. Approval of the Minutes from meeting of 29 January 2020

Minutes were approved and will be posted on the website.

3. Update from actions arising from the previous meeting.

- Action 1 – **Helen White** to write to Dr Elaine Cook, thanking her for coming to the LAPC and requesting a follow up as soon as possible to allow for forward planning.
Action Taken – Helen White sent letter to Dr Cook on 12 February. Dr Cook had provided an update to Karen Jarvis which Karen Jarvis was going to present at the cancelled LAPC.
- Action 2 – **Helen White** to contact Councillors David Tait, Tom Kerr and Tom Conn with copy of letter to Dr Cook and inviting them to first 30 minutes of a future LAPC meeting.
Action Taken – A number of LAPC members met with all 3 councillors at their surgeries in early February and at least one was due to attend the cancelled LAPC meeting in March. The feeling was that the Councillors were generally supportive and had concerns over the loss of any school facilities for community use.
- Action 3 – **Karen Jarvis** to send budget for drama wooden seating to Dorte Al-Gailani.
Action Taken – Joinery firm has taken measurements and provided a quote which was passed to Dorte however no further action has been taken due to Lockdown.
- Action 4 – **May Geddes** to arrange a meeting of the Health & Wellbeing Subgroup and senior management team.
Action Taken – Meetings of the Health & Wellbeing Subgroup have taken place and Karen

Jarvis has been involved. May reported on further feedback that the general feeling was that students are feeling cut adrift and are missing a connection with staff. Exam students in particular seem to be struggling with the current situation.

4. Covid-19 Response

Karen Jarvis provided the following input:

- Initial Response – The situation could not have been more challenging as there was very little warning of the full scale change to delivering the school service. A number of staff were unwell or with ill relatives and were facing many pressures. Given the varying degrees of IT ability, staff were encouraged to use Teams and SMHW which were already familiar. The aim was to get to Easter then reset after the holidays. It is still difficult to plan with any certainty and the timescale is still unknown.
- New Timetable Plan – Most schools in West Lothian have moved to ‘blocks’ as an alternative timetable during home learning. It was considered a sensible option for Linlithgow Academy as the fewer number of ‘blocks’ for a longer time could allow for teachers to buddy together to deliver a more interactive learning experience. It is likely that most of the interactivity will develop as teachers become more comfortable with the technology with mostly pre-recorded content. Although some ‘live classes’ may be trialled, pre-recorded lessons will offer flexibility to those pupils who would prefer to or need to follow their own timetable without feeling the pressure of missing out. Unfortunately, the new S3 choices couldn’t be accommodated within the alternative timetable so it was thought best to keep all pupils in their current year to avoid ‘new S3s’ disengaging from subjects they may not have chosen. This appears to have caused some confusion. The school is trying to accommodate all learners’ needs although it is acknowledged that every proposal suits some pupils better than others. It has been, and still is, a steep learning curve. Staff are also trying to plan ahead for how the school may operate once the Lockdown is eased.

Members of the Parent Council made the following observations and suggestions;

- Improving Personal Connection – The Support Team have been trying to contact vulnerable groups and keeping a log of the people they are supporting. It was suggested that a personal email from a familiar staff member would improve the pupils feeling of connection to the school. Live interaction would be ideal however it was appreciated that this may take some time to be delivered appropriately.

Action 1- Karen Jarvis confirmed that she would present staff with the aspiration of “Has there been 1-2-1 engagement regarding wellbeing outwith the online learning environment with each individual pupil over the term?”

- More Engaging Content - Staff are trying to improve engagement and liven things up. It was felt that staff are being encouraged to be more creative to connect with students. Pre-recorded videos are an improvement and it was thought that most students would respond well to live tutorials if staff could present in pairs to support each other.
- Supporting Tech Needs of Staff – One benefit of the timetabled ‘blocks’ was to have teams of teachers who could help each other. Staff are being encouraged to develop this opportunity. It was noted that teachers’ strength is their presentation skills so even an audio voiceover would enliven the material.
- Involving Pupil Council – Staff could engage with the Pupil Council to collect ideas. It was thought that this may be possible now that staff have a feel for the general direction of the school.

Action 2 – Karen Jarvis will contact Miss Baxter to consider engaging with the Pupil Council to collect their ideas about how best to navigate the current Lockdown.

- Additional Support Needs – The presentation and production of work is currently more written focussed which is a challenge for many especially those pupils with dyslexia issues. Suzanne Dyer has been trying to get in touch with those who may need additional support and there is currently a drop box for students to use paper if needed. It is impossible to deliver the same service as in school but all staff have ASL information for students and are being reminded to be flexible in their approach to helping them.
- Senior Phase Pupils – The alternative timetable for senior phase pupils has ‘study time’ as they would have in school. It was suggested that students are eager to work and staff should take the opportunity to harness the enthusiasm with challenging work to help pupils stay on top of coursework by ensuring that the volume and challenge was available.

Action 3 – Karen Jarvis to speak to Principal teachers to ensure that Senior Phase students are receiving appropriate levels of work.

- Role of LAPC – The Parent Council thanked Karen for giving her time to attend the meeting noting that very few Parent Council meetings are happening at the moment. Karen thought that having an informal forum of a few LAPC members would be useful if she needed to test an idea or communication with a small group of parents. LAPC was receptive to the idea and encouraged Karen to get in touch if she needed information feedback on anything.
- 2020 SQA Resulting – SQA issued a reasonable amount of sensible guidance which was in line with the work already started by the school. Teachers are reviewing previous performance taking into account that sometimes performance can increase significantly for the actual exam. Subject cluster assumptions are also being made to help arrive at a result. Staff are using as much evidence coursework as possible and using professional judgement. School wide comparisons with previous years are also checking for consistency. Results will have been checked by teacher, Department, Principal Teacher, Senior Team and a working group at the Council before they are sent to the SQA. The SQA can still change the result but the school is confident that the internal review process is robust and students should get the right result.
- Technology – The school has provided some IT to families. It is more difficult to provide internet access as the head teacher would be held responsible for the information accessed by the internet service. It is thought that there is a reasonable amount of device sharing within Linlithgow Academy families which makes it even more important to offer a flexible timetable. It was noted that there is a national initiative by Scotland IS to provide internet access to all households in Scotland.
- P7 transition – Staff are currently working with P7 teachers to encourage pupils to submit their personal profiles. A virtual tour of school is being arranged. Class lists are provisional but once confirmed Teams may be used to help classes form. The initial Parent information evening had to be cancelled and enhance transition arrangements remain a challenge. It was suggested that the Senior Team might be able to trial a webinar for enhance transition families which could then be rolled out to the wider P7 parents if successful. Parent Council members were happy to facilitate and be a trial audience if required. Parents could be asked to submit questions by emails which could either be individually addressed or used to produce a FAQ.

Action 4 – Karen Jarvis to discuss P7 Transition communication ideas with the Senior Team.

Instrumental Music lessons have been a success and members of the Parent Council were able to cite some best practice from other staff members which has been appreciated. It was noted that

Teams and SMHW were performing well so thanks to the teams at school and the Council who moderate these programmes. The Parent Council expressed their gratitude to Karen, the Senior Team and all staff for their hard and enterprising work in this challenging time.

5. Accommodation & Capacity Update

- Building Work – Plans remain to undertake building work in the summer to convert the staff room and conference room into 2 classrooms. It is also planned to remove the wall along the hall as well as the Student Wellbeing office to create a larger dinner hall area with an additional catering hatch. It was considered that the LAPC letter had been effective in raising the profile of capacity issues at Linlithgow Academy.
- School Roll – New S1 is likely to be around 320 pupils. The final appeals process has been pushed back so actual numbers have yet to be confirmed. Approximately 170 S6 pupils have just left so the 2020/21 school roll will be around 1370. Social distancing will be difficult. Temporary accommodation may be required. A potential delay to building the new school at Winchburgh may have a small impact on the overall numbers but the new S1 is likely to be the biggest intake for a few years albeit there will be an impact for the 6 years those pupils will be in the school. At the current projected capacity it is difficult to accommodate even new catchment pupils in the school.
- Timetabling – The 2020/21 timetable has been completed. Currently it does not timetable for split lunches and breaks as the use of the quad during this time would interrupt learning in the classrooms facing the quad. The Senior Team are still trying work through the possibility of having 2 x 50 mins or 3 x 30 mins lunches and are seeking input from colleagues at other schools for a fresh perspective to the issue. The timetable is fully staffed but with minimal contingency cover. The budget is being reviewed to find capacity for employing more staff.

6. WLC Statutory Consultation

No comments.

7. West Lothian Parent Forum

Cancelled

8. Governance

It was raised that Ann Marie Penman had tried to join the Parent Council at the AGM however this was not followed up and she has consistently attended subsequent meetings as an observer. Normally new members are appointed at the AGM as per the Constitution, however it would appear that procedures were not followed in this case and the Parent Council agreed to allow an appointment to occur in this instance outwith the AGM. Jeremy Fuller nominated Ann Marie Penman and Douglas Maxwell seconded the appointment. Ann Marie Penman was appointed as a member of the Parent Council with immediate effect.

Parent Council meetings are open to the full parent forum unless a closed meeting is called to discuss matters of a sensitive nature. Given the current exceptional circumstances it was deemed justified and more practical for the Parent Council meetings to be limited to members only. The Parent Council members will try to be aware of wider issues they are hearing about and represent these at future 'Lockdown' meetings.

It was felt that the Parent Council needed to communicate the current meeting arrangements to the wider parent forum and make themselves available in case families wanted to raise any issues.

Action 5 – Karine McNair to draft an email for the school to send on behalf of the Parent Council asking for issues to be sent to the school which will then be forwarded to the Chair.

9. Dates of Next Meetings

- LA Parent Council
 - Wednesday 3 June 2020 at 7pm (provisional)