



Linlithgow Academy Parent Council Meeting

7:00pm, Tuesday 27 October 2020, Zoom Video Conference

Attendees:

Parent Council Members:	Helen White (Chair), Douglas Maxwell (Vice Chair), Campbell Ford, Dermot Murray, Jeremy Fuller, Dorte Al-Gailini, Iain Woodhouse, Ann Marie Penman, Nicola Gordon, Andrew Grant, Pooja Gupta, Keith Mason, Milca Menezes da Silva, Silvia Small
Head Teacher:	Karen Jarvis
Teachers:	Rhona White, Luisa Burgess, Alistair Blair
Pupil Council:	Finlay Watson
Parent Forum:	Alan Duncan, Elspeth Brown, Iro Boudali, Jude Philip, Paul Hammond, Shona Smith, Linda Melvin, Jennifer Leonard, Michelle Ryan, Jeremy Armon, Richard Payne, Magali Redding, Alison Spori, Fiona Couper Kenney
Clerk:	Karine McNair
WL Council:	CLlr Tom Conn
Guests:	
Apologies	Pinelopi Louvrou, Eilidh MacDonald, CLlr David Tait, CLlr Tom Kerr

1. Welcome, introductions & apologies

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

2. Minutes from meeting of 3 June 2020

Minutes were approved by email and published on the website.

3. Update from actions arising from the previous meeting.

- Action 1- **Karen Jarvis** will discuss the possibility of smaller pastoral care groups with the Senior Management Team and Support Team.
Action Taken – Completed
- Action 2 – **Karen Jarvis** will find out if there is a way to make teachers allocating work more visible so students know who is setting the work.
Action Taken – The 2020/21 timetables are now well underway and pupils know their teachers but this has been a learning point for home learning.
- Action 3 – **Karen Jarvis** will confirm whether it is possible to have a replacement for the parent engagement aspect of SMHW on Teams.
Action Taken – Karen Jarvis has asked but unfortunately Teams doesn't offer any similar parental platform. Parents are encouraged to discuss tasks set on Teams with child.

4. Headteacher's Report

Karen Jarvis provided the following information:

- Building works – 2 classrooms have been created from the conference room and staff room. They are currently being used by PSE classes and plan to move for faculties use in future. Assembly hall wall has been knocked down with archways and booths installed. Assembly hall is being used for packed lunches which is helping with canteen capacity.
- Covid response – One way system working reasonably well. The new 3 x 30 minutes lunches to alleviate overcrowding and speed of serving food seems to be working. The new lunchtimes are the only solution at the moment as can't mix BGE/Senior Phase at the moment. Mask wearing compliance is pretty good. Going through 3-4 boxes of disposable masks a day handing out in morning and in the dinner queue.
- Attendance – There was low attendance in first couple of weeks of August but since then attendance has been slightly lower than normal but not concerning. (Checked after meeting - most year groups sitting around 94 % (more often 97-98 %)).
- Recovery plan – Supported study timelines have been adjusted to make sure they comply with new SQA guidance and all faculties are ensuring that they aware of SQA criteria, adjusting courses where necessary. Staff are looking at assessment windows for gathering evidence for SQA assessments and all evidence is being held electronically. Guidance teams are tracking Health & Wellbeing, intervening where required. S1 have had training on One Note Teams and planning to roll out training to seniors. KJ would like to host a webinar for parents to provide training on One Note.

Action 1 – Campbell Ford to discuss hosting parent One Note training webinar with Karen Jarvis

- Reporting – SEEMIS (management info system) underwent a technical glitch which delayed the reports for S1-S3. S1 reports have now been sent out and S2-S3 reports are imminent subject to final checks. Senior Phase initial reports have been issued but were delayed due to waiting on exam information from SQA. After consulting with parents, another more robust report will be issued shortly.
- Parents' Nights – Virtual parents' nights were trialled last week by 2 West Lothian high schools and WLC approved for all schools to use them last Thursday. Karen Jarvis consulted with staff on Friday and received support to trial this at Linlithgow Academy. Virtual parents' nights will be booked in the usual way with 5 minute slots with teachers. Due to maximum weekly working hours, the nights will need to be carefully scheduled to ensure staff do not exceed the number of permitted working hours.

Action 2 – Karen Jarvis to have trial Parents' Night with some Parent Council members

- Water – Responding to parent concern, jugs have now been placed at the canteen hatches and pupils can refill from them. Sanitiser and paper towels are available to ensure cleanliness. The school is unable to provide water bottles due to the expense and also unwanted environmental impact.

Action 3 – Karen Jarvis to send Groupcall detailing water refill arrangements

5. Teacher's Report

Rhona White provided the following information:

- F1 Team – Congratulations to Genesis who are through to the world finals. They are seeking engineering input and **Andrew Grant** offered to share expertise.

- In service day – IT colleague provided workshops to give upskilling to all staff. Some staff completed a training course and are now certified IT trainers.
- Recovery plan – Staff are working very hard to ensure pupils are prepared for SQA changes. Disappointingly, some Supported Study sessions have not been well attended. Staff are continually gathering evidence for Nat 5.
- Morale - Staff are finding it very hard. There is a lack of social contact between staff since they can't meet. There is also an increased workload but no increased time which is very stressful. Some feel they don't know pupils as well as they have in the past since staff can't walk around classes with flexibility. There is some frustration around IT as students aren't always consistent in their saving and submitting of work.

It was noted that there has been very little staff absence and those having to isolate have been known to log into the classroom and present the lesson from home. There seems to be a culture of appreciating how difficult the situation is for colleagues and pupils and everyone is pulling together.

The Parent Council offered their support and thanks to the teachers for all the hard work they are delivering in very difficult circumstances.

6. Pupil Council's Report

Finlay Watson provided the following information:

- Elections - The Pupil Council have been focussing on elections now asking prospective members to complete an online form.
- Carbon Neutral School – Looking to fundraise in order to back UN development projects to offset the school's carbon footprint. The Parent Council suggested that ethically it might be a good idea to look at reducing the carbon footprint as a first step.
- Pupil Council Best Practice – The Pupil Council are trying to interact with their peers at other schools and it was suggested that the Parent Council might like to try something similar, which was considered with the caveat of weighing up the time commitment.

7. Councillor's Report

Councillor Tom Conn noted that the accommodation issues raised by the Parent Council earlier this year have been halted due to Covid issues taking precedence. It is still a pressing issue since there are more housing developments happening and in the planning stage. He has been told that temporary accommodation wasn't deemed necessary for this session and suggested that accommodation needs should be addressed by Senior Management.

8. Items from the Parent Forum

- School lunch timings – The actual school day is now 20 minutes shorter although the time spent in class is the same. It isn't possible to incorporate the 20 minutes into more class time since the school is bound by the Working Time Agreement which sets maximum teaching hours.
- Water bottles and refilling – As discussed in Headteacher's Report. It was noted that Scottish Water are trying to make the public tap at The Cross Covid safe and **Jennifer Leonard** offered to provide contact details in case they are able to help with the school's water fountain provision.
- Music tuition and quality of instruments – Music tuition is through IMS who are not managed by the school. Karen Jarvis welcomed **the parent** asking the question to get in touch with her to discuss the particular instrumental quality of concern and should be able to put them in touch with Head of Music.

- Parental feedback/term overviews – Reports and Parents’ Nights were discussed in Headteacher’s Report. Term overviews are available on Teams however, it was appreciated that parents do not have access to this.

Action 4 – Karen Jarvis will check if term overviews can be sent to parents via office staff.

- Staggered Start – A parent had raised concern that work hadn’t been uploaded to Teams on the non-school days when starting in August. Karen Jarvis has checked with principal teachers who confirmed that staff had uploaded work, in some cases this was continuing project work or completing work. It should be remembered that staff were also in school teaching on those days so they were juggling a lot of tasks without a lot of time to upload. Moving forward should be in a better position as more attuned to online learning.
- Post Covid education focus – Comments were made that online learning had fallen short of what had been hoped for. In particular, it was surprising how little contact pupils had with teachers. Karen Jarvis appreciated the feedback and it was felt that most of the points had been raised in the 3 June meeting. Following Parent Council feedback at the June and earlier meetings, changes had been made and improvements were visible.

A comprehensive review at this stage is quite difficult as the situation is still evolving and staff are still dealing with lots of changes. It was noted that staff have worked hard to upskill their IT capabilities and it was felt that should home learning be reintroduced, the school were better prepared to deliver a more positive experience.

It was noted that West Lothian Council had removed some IT options for interaction with pupils and the school were dealing with restricted tools for pupil contact. Some of the restrictions have now been lifted e.g. camera facility now accessible through Teams. Work is being regularly uploaded onto Teams, particularly for Senior Phase students so if people are isolating they can keep up with the work of the class and some have been known to join the class by video. **Andrew Grant** offered to speak to IT teacher (Jackie) to see if there are ways parents can provide support to the school.

Members of the Parent Council felt that a ‘Lessons Learned’ document would be useful to show the positive steps the school had made as well as acknowledging that mistakes were made. It was felt that this would improve communication with the Parent Forum and perhaps settle some of the questions parents might have had.

Action 5 – Karine McNair to email Parent Council Members for volunteers to participate in ‘Lessons Learned’ exercise.

9. Discussion to agree the business for the year ahead

- Communication – External to Parent Forum – There is a Parent Council page on the Linlithgow Academy website. Various social media platforms were discussed and it was considered that the only way to have effective pages was to have someone in charge who had the skills, motivation and time to moderate. Silvia Small had an interest in this.
- Health & Wellbeing – It was thought that work can always be done to improve wellbeing for staff and pupils. Jude Philip and Jennifer Leonard had specific interest.
- Employability – Using the skills in the school community should be a focus to ensure pupils had employability skills. Dermot Murray, Campbell Ford and Andrew Grant had specific interest.

It was agreed that the 3 topics would be put to the Parent Council members and those with a specific interest could note their interest and develop aims for the topics.

Action 6 – Karine McNair to communicate topics to all Parent Council members

10. Any other business

- Communication – Zoom - The Parent Council discussed the best way to use Zoom. It had become aware from the AGM that dial ins to the Zoom meeting didn't have the vote function and apologies to anyone affected but it was a consequence no one was aware of at the time. The Chair agreed that video attendance would be the default position but in the interests of inclusivity, a dial in option could be provided by special request.
- Communication – Internal Parent Council – It was agreed to trial Basecamp as a way of communicating between members and this would be reviewed at the next meeting.

Action 7 – Karine McNair to invite all Parent Council members to Basecamp

- Funding webinars – If the school want to deliver webinars, the funding should be addressed early so that they can be in a position to provide it when required. The school budget for the Parent Council is insufficient for a Zoom licence. It was noted that WLC seem reluctant to use Zoom and perhaps Teams could be an alternative, although it is the less familiar platform for the parent forum.

Action 8 – Helen White to write to Councillors asking they approach WLC for funding for webinar licences.

- School Tour – Some newer parents felt uncomfortable with their unfamiliarity of the school building.

Action 9 – Karen Jarvis to ask for the virtual tour of the school building to be reposted on website.

- SEEMIS Info – Parents have access to information through the Parent Portal but some of the information (e.g. school management information) isn't available although if specifically requested it can be provided. Information from class tests is usually provided at Parents' Nights.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and participation in the meeting.

Next Meeting is on Monday 7 December 2020