

Law Primary Parent Council
Minutes of meeting on Monday 15 January 2018

1 Attendance

Parent Council

Stacy Cathcart (Co-Chair)

Helen Dowson (Co-Chair)

Frances Hill (Clerk)

Attendance was not taken at this special meeting.

Teaching staff

Mrs Wareham

Mrs Penman

Mrs MacNiven

Councillors

Cllr Goodfellow

1 Home Learning Presentation

Stacy Cathcart gave a presentation on the results of the home learning survey. Parents/carers, pupils and teachers were all questioned about how they felt about home learning, following the home learning pilot launched in 2017.

Mrs Penman and Mrs Wareham outlined the proposed way forward for homework, based on the results of the surveys and academic research into the benefits of homework:

Home Learning Proposal

- Set a Year Stage-relevant target for reading four times a week.
- At the start of each block of work, teachers give out a booklet of Year Stage-relevant Maths and Spelling activities, including website information, to be completed at home but not marked by the teacher.
- At the start of each block, give out a life skills grid to be shown to the teacher at the end of the block, with an agreed reward for completion (e.g. house points/merit certificates).
- No topic homework.
- At the teacher's discretion, and where appropriate, send home unfinished work.

A question and answer session was held following the presentation. The following points were made by parents:

- Several parents/carers expressed concern that work completed at home would not be marked, checked or handed in. Some felt that children would need an incentive to complete the homework.

There will be a new way of discussing home learning at school, encouraging children to take responsibility for their learning. Staff will also look at opportunities for reflective learning in the classroom, building on the work they have done at home.

- A parent pointed out that homework provided a useful communication channel between parents/carers and teachers. It was felt by some that homework provided an opportunity to see what the children were working on and gain an insight into how they were coping. ***School staff responded that the usual communication channels should still be used – email, making appointments, giving teachers notes via the child. In addition, events will be organised for parents to come into school to view recent work by the children.***
- A parent asked how teachers would spend the additional time through not marking homework. ***Staff explained that workloads for teachers are already too high and this proposal is a way of alleviating that stress. Teachers will be spending the additional time on other classroom activities as well as lesson planning, preparation and attending meetings.***
- Many parents/carers expressed concern about the impact on students when they start High School. They are worried pupils will be unprepared for the routine at High School, where regular, compulsory home work is set. ***Fraser McCallum the Deputy Head of North Berwick High School was due to attend the meeting but gave apologies on the day. It is hoped he will attend future meeting to discuss this matter.***
- A parent asked about whether East Lothian Council had been consulted about this new system. ***East Lothian Council are aware of the homework pilot and are supportive of the initiative. Other schools in the catchment are also monitoring what Law is doing with a view to possibly implement a similar pilot. It is not compulsory for a Primary School to set homework.***

Action: Mrs Penman and Mrs Wareham to take into account feedback given during the meeting before launching the system in the school. The school will monitor the effectiveness of the new system and will review it next year. Parents are encouraged to give feedback via the Parent Council.

2 Update on matters arising

2.1 Traffic issues update

There have been more comments received from parents expressing concerns about traffic around the school. The Chairs and members of the Parent Council wrote again to the Roads Officer. A response was received which stated that no changes would be made to traffic management around Grange Road until the housing developers have completed certain works. The Council have said they will look at some other issues that were raised – for example hedgerows that needed trimming and signage that was not working.

Action: Parent Council to continue to lobby the Council on this matter. Stacy Cathcart to send a copy of the letter that was sent to ELC to Claire Mackenzie, Community Councillor.

2.2 Education Service Review

The Education Service has visited the School to review how the School is meeting the needs of its pupils. A questionnaire has been circulated to parents to gather their views.

Action: Members of the Parent Council to complete the questionnaire and encourage participation amongst parents/carers.

3 Dates of meetings for 2018

- Monday 19 March 2018
- Monday 4 June 2018