

NORTH BERWICK HIGH SCHOOL PARENT SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

MINUTES OF PSP MEETING OF 5 MARCH 2019

Present: N Bradley (Chair)
K Dunwoodie, Parent Member
L Gurney, Parent Member
J Massie, Parent Member
L Turnbull, Parent Member
N Meikle, Parent Member
L Johnston, Parent Member
E Clark, Parent Member
J Leslie, Parent Member
V Crummey, Parent Member
L Forrest, Parent Member (from Item 2)

Attending: Lauren Rodger, Head Teacher
Robert Jones, DHT
Joanne Bloomfield, Staff Member

In attendance: Cllr Jeremy Findlay
Cllr Jim Goodfellow
Allison Cosgrove, Clerk

Others in attendance: A Clark, D Grant, E Grant, S Begg, E Davidson

Apologies: Cllr Jane Henderson, Hilary Way.

1. *Minutes of previous meeting:* These were agreed by all present.
2. *Matters arising:* Mrs Rodger was looking at addressing the values and priorities of the School in a different way.
School Expansion Project: Plans had been based on the amount of \$75 funding that would be available from developers, but £1.2m would be required from capital funding, which had been agreed. There would be a drop-in session in two weeks' time with parents to explain progress.

Cllr Goodfellow explained the negotiations with North Berwick Trust and the developers concerning additional land. There could be two extra full size rugby pitches, giving four full size, one smaller size pitch and access to the community pitch during the day. This would be confirmed in due course, but negotiations were ongoing. He added that this would be a school for the 21st century, rather than a 20th century building with extensions.

A question was asked about the amount of land that would be left, and Cllr Goodfellow confirmed that it was approximately the same amount and would be reserved for Education purposes in the future. The Trust would continue to own this ground. Building work would start on the school in the summer with two firms involved, one on the buildings and one on the sports facilities. Management would be between ELC and FES.

Sederunt – L Forrest arrived.

Parent reps from each year group: the Chair would contact members and ask if details could be shared so that each year group of parents would have a point of contact. **Action - Chair**

A parent asked if the Parent School Partnership could have a generic gmail address, and the Chair would find this out from the IT department of ELC.

Action – Chair

3. *Head Teacher's Report:* Mrs Rodger reported that the School Review was taking place during the current week. She thanked parents who had assisted with the process. The Review would take three days and would look at six Quality Indicators from *How Good Is Our School?* A group would meet pupils as well as parents and they had been attending a lot of classes. There had been some initial feedback with a draft report in about two weeks which would also be on the website. More information would be given at the next meeting.

Staffing – A report on staffing was made to the Parent Council. Parents queried whether staff vacancies were an issue with the Review: Mrs Rodger advised it was not an issue at the moment. On staff absences, she explained the problems with short and long term absence.

On Recruitment and Selection training, the Chair would find out if there was any training currently on offer.

Action – Chair

Dress Code – Mrs Rodger was disappointed that the dress code was not always adhered to. A memo had been sent out and improvement was noted. There had also been an issue with some pupils arriving too late for registration: after names had been taken, this had reduced.

Robert Jones reported on the arrangements for Study Leave, which this year start two days after return from Easter holidays. Study Skills have been shared with pupils in preparation for exams, with strategies explained in terms of self-testing and interleaving (revising more than one subject at a time). Teachers would be available during the school day in study leave time. The Chair asked if pupils could be sent a link to the leaflet on study strategies, and Robert Jones agreed.

Action – R Jones

Mrs Rodger explained the dress code for studying and for exams. There was some discussion about dress code and it was suggested that the Pupil Council might wish to be involved in the forthcoming consultation. Dunbar Grammar has shared the questions they put to the school community in their recent dress code consultation.

Mrs Rodger added that it was hoped to have an evening on study skills for parents in September/October.

4. *School Trips:*

Cllr Findlay took the Chair for this item, to avoid a conflict of interest.

It was noted that questions had been raised on the Malawi trip, with concerns that it was very expensive and represented “voluntourism” where students were fundraising towards a trip rather than a good cause. Parents had questions about the role of the school, the benefit of the trip and whether it was value for money. Mrs Rodger advised that efforts had been made for previous visits to our partner school to be reciprocal, but this had not worked out except in music and dance. She noted the visits that are planned to be undertaken during the trip – to Mary's Meals; visiting kitchens purchased by the School and an AIDS Centre, where the School had funded training. The School did not have the capacity to organise another trip to Malawi themselves, so a professional company had been involved. The team wanted to strengthen links with the Mary's Meals organisation.

Robert Jones added that it was about forging links rather than the benefit to individuals. Cllrs Findlay and Goodfellow explained the role of the Educational Trust. A parent noted that the pupils wanted to emphasise the value of being in Malawi, rather than the trip just being a holiday.

This led to further discussion on the role of school trips, and Mrs Rodger emphasised that the numbers going on the ski trip included 40% who were eligible for free school meals. The 3rd year trip was to Dalguise and was available to all. The School was moving to a more equitable stance.

Robert Jones would ensure that information on school trips was available on the website and there would be emphasis on the cultural and humanitarian aspects.

Cost of the School Day: The information provided by the National Parent Forum had been circulated. Mrs Rodger hoped that the PTA would see this, as fundraising was mentioned. Useful ideas such as a Christmas Jumper exchange were made, and noted that uniform was available in Asda or Tesco. It was suggested that the Eco-Committee could take this forward.

Parents suggested that the cost for young carers could be included as well as budgeting information for parents for school trips and sports equipment. The Chair would take this forward to the Eco-Committee.

Action – Chair

5. *Issues raised by Parents:* Parents asked about access to teachers at parents' evenings. The Chair said there was a lack of understanding of the level of information available and that parents needed to know what the contact would be. Moving the S1 Parents' Evening from April to earlier in the school session was agreed to be a better option, and Mrs Rodger said this would be shared with school staff when compiling next session's Working Time Agreement. Mrs Rodger advised that software was being sought for booking appointments with teachers. The Homework Policy and Mobile Phone coverage would be discussed at a later date.

Date of next meeting – Tuesday 30 April.