

Preston Lodge Parent Council Meeting 7.10.21

Present: Judith McNeill (Chair), Gavin Clark (HT), Cate Duff, Lachlan Bruce (Councillor), Siobhan Graham, Jean Harper, Neil Gilbert (Councillor), Russell Devine, Sasha Maguire, Sarah Lusk (Co-opted Staff Member), Claire Jamieson, Jill Brown (Clerk).

Apologies: Fiona O'Donnell, Lynn Russell, Malcolm Graham, Gillian Neilson & Anne Thomson.

Minutes from previous meeting and matters arising:

It was mentioned about changing for PE. Gavin has had a visit from Judith Wood (Health and Safety ELC) and agreed new reduced numbers, which is around half capacity. Changing is optional for core PE. Students were asked to only change if they really wanted to, however uptake was low. The issue that Judith Wood identified is there is no external wall in the changing rooms for ventilation. A lot of students are happy not to change. The long term plan is uncertain due to the ventilation issues.

One parent mentioned that it was difficult for her child to do some exercises in his shirt. Was it possible for them to wear polo shirts on PE days?

GC stated that students could wear a T-shirt under their school shirt, and parents would be advised about it. If it went to just wearing PE clothes then uniform would disappear. Teachers are not doing anything in PE that could cause issues with wearing a tie.

JM has contacted ELC about the ventilation and has received a response back from ELC. Schools have received CO2 monitors and took readings as part of an ELC pilot over two days.

GC: The monitors have mostly remained green in PL and the school appears well ventilated. One parent questioned whether the tests had gone on long enough and would like to challenge this further. It was brought up about how ventilation in the winter would work with the windows open? Last winter the heating was up full with the windows open and it still was above minimum temperature. One parent stated that this should also be put within the risk assessment, carried out over a longer period of time with students taught within a decent temperature. There were also concerns over energy price rises if increased heating is needed, however this is an issue for FES, who own the building.

One parent suggested that we are going to have to live with Covid, so if we cannot improve the ventilation then we have to think of another way. Could fans be used? After discussion it was agreed that this would increase other viruses to be spread around.

A parent noted that it is interesting that the council have only asked for a couple of days for the monitoring to be done, it needs to be longer for it to get a proper outcome. Scottish Government has money put aside for this however if it starts to run towards buildings being rebuilt then the money won't go far.

Duke of Edinburgh volunteers: Gavin will follow this up.

School update

There was a really positive visit from Karen Haspolat, ELC Quality Improvement Officer. The school is in a good place and attainment statistics are looking positive.

Normal tracking and reporting and Parent Consultations (online) have resumed. Parent booking system has been put in place and has worked well. There was an error in the S2 reports - they had a primary school grade for numeracy. Apologies will be made for this. There has been a huge increase on interventions and a more structured format for this.

The first school event was held for the first time in 18 months. It was a small Prize-giving event to celebrate achievements for students last year. This was a great event for S4, 5 & 6 pupils. The Peter Ford award was awarded to the pupils who have helped at the Pennypit. Rewards were given out covering a variety of areas.

Musical instruction team has been changed, and PL now has a very strong music instructor team. There is really strong planning for the musical offering at PL.

Staff absence and how it would be over the winter was discussed. GC explained that PL are very proactive at recruiting supply teachers and managing staff absence.

The new Rugby development coach has made a really positive start.

Wellbeing

Students are doing really well, especially going through a pandemic. PL are trying everything available to be as nurturing as possible. Pupil Support staff have been discussing how S1 students' last normal year of schooling was P5, and the wellbeing implications of that.

The atmosphere in the school is calm. Vaping is a major problem in all Scottish High Schools and continues to be a challenge in PL. However, it is being tackled and addressed. It has been a focus in assemblies and will continue to be focused on.

One parent asked about the level of fights, especially amongst girls. GC acknowledged that there had been a recent spike in this regard, but that generally there were very few fights at PL compared to other schools. Most of the fights so far have been mucking about which ends up going too far. It will be a big focus in forthcoming assemblies and there will be a special one for S1's to address this. GC is confident that the recent issues can be resolved.

There has been a huge reduction in mobile phones being used inappropriately in class as a result of the new policy on mobile phones.

One parent mentioned that she had an early phone call about homework not getting done and this had been well received and was appreciated.

SQA assessments

This week there has been a letter sent out from Nicola McDowell. There will be prelims, which at PL will take place in the 3rd and 4th week in January.

Parental role

There will be a questionnaire sent to parents to ask for parent views on areas of PL's work they think are strong and areas where improvements can be made.

There is a space on the Preston Lodge Learning Foundation for 2 Parent Council representatives, to help them oversee the Trust's work, involving 3 or 4 meetings per year. Anyone interested can email GC for more information and LB is also happy for anyone to speak to him about this. PLLF feedback is to be made a standing topic on the agenda for every meeting.

Hopefully we might return to having visitors to the Parent Council. To be discussed further at the next meeting.

AOB

One parent asked how S6 are going to be prepared for sitting exams for the first time. GC explained that work lies ahead for all s4-6 students all over the country. There will be no more than 50 students in one exam and most will be held in classrooms.

Next meeting will be 4th November 2021