

Preston Lodge Parent Council Meeting 4.11.21

Present: Judith McNeill (Chair), Gavin Clark (HT), Cate Duff, Siobhan Graham, Fiona O'Donnell (Councillor), Russell Devine, Sarah Lusk (Co-opted Staff Member), Jill Brown (Clerk) Pauline McGowan, Carrie Thomson, Lynn Russell.

Apologies: Malcolm Graham, Jean Harper, Sasha Maguire.

Minutes from previous meeting and matters arising:

Duke of Edinburgh, Sasha has had contact from them.

Finance Update

School budget is in a good position. The school was in a tougher position previously, with a deficit in 19/20 so this is very positive. Budget is balanced. Well over 90% of the budget is spent on staffing. There have been a few absences this term but not a significant issue. The Scottish Government is covering some costs of the curriculum, so there will be no charge for pupils in CDT and Home Economics. Trips which are SQA linked are covered by this funding and there is a new more inclusive policy regarding day trips. It was asked if chrome books were paid for by the school, which many are, although the ones distributed to students were funded by Scottish Government and the Preston Lodge Learning Foundation. It was also asked what the ratio of chrome books to pupil was, and Gavin will find this out.

Head Teacher's report

All Scottish schools are experiencing issues with behavioural challenges resulting from covid, and there has also been a national issue with inappropriate use of social media, directed at staff. There have been a few unofficial PL snapchat and tik tok accounts which are being investigated. The students themselves have been reporting inappropriate videos. The policy for mobile phone use in class is working with few confiscations happening and positive feedback from parents. It was raised that there may be some parents who do not know what their children are engaging with online. There are some good links within the Young Scot platform around online awareness. It was talked about how best to get this message out to parents. There has been a big increase in community incidents over the weekend and Halloween was problematic. Some members of the community have been posting CCTV on social media and young people have been identified.

The pipe band is back rehearsing inside. PPlus is being accessed by approx. 60 percent of recipients. The social media presence is being rebooted and a member of staff is taking this on. There has been a lot of work around the Fuel Change Climate Change project within school, which will see an incremental

increase in Climate teaching across the school. There are lots of areas in the curriculum where climate change education can have an impact. Visiting professionals are now allowed greater access in school.

Preston Lodge Learning Foundation Parent Council Reps

When Lynn Sutherland leaves the Parent Council at the end of the year new representatives on the school's charitable trust will be selected. Lynn gave an overview of what was involved. It is only 3 or 4 times a year that the group meet. The last meeting was held face-to-face. Colin Yorkston, having left the Parent Council, has become a general trustee.

Covid

Schools guidance has not changed, and there won't be any Christmas concerts or dances. It is becoming tougher for students to maintain face mask wearing although there is still good adherence. It is becoming colder in classrooms as the weather changes and windows remain open. Advice has been given to students to wear warm jackets to school.

Tracking Interventions

A pilot project is taking place in S2, focused on more structured interventions after the first tracking window. Tracking letters went out today for the seniors, too. Every S4 student 'at risk' of not achieving 5 qualifications has been investigated, with action being taken. Parents can be reassured that the school will be in touch if needed. Interventions can involve anything from in-class engagement to meetings with families.

SQA assessments

There is no real update on this at the moment, and it is still most likely that there will be exams. The forming of estimates becomes critical whilst uncertainty still remains. There will be prelims in January. Whatever transpires all students will either receive an exam grade or an estimate grade. There will be more students with assessment arrangements this year. Prelim arrangements were discussed and this will be an agenda item at the next meeting.

Promoting Meetings:

How to promote meetings more effectively was discussed, and it was agreed that in the future the meetings will be advertised on Social Media and also via Groupcall to parents. Face-to-face meetings are allowed now, but only if online meetings are not working satisfactorily. It was agreed that the current arrangements were working well, but that the situation could be revisited if guidance changes.

AOB

It was asked if there were any members who would be interested in becoming admin of the PC Facebook page. Anyone interested should contact Lynn.

The issue of pupils punching and kicking bags was raised, which has resulted in items being broken. Gavin has contacted the senior management team and the guidance team however no-one was aware of this. It will be raised at the next assembly.

The offering of PE in S4 was raised, because on one occasion the only options were volleyball or a walk. Gavin was not aware of this and will look into it.

Next meeting will be 2nd December 2021