

Preston Lodge Parent Council Meeting 2.12.21

Present: Judith McNeill (Chair), Gavin Clark (HT), Jean Harper, Siobhan Graham, Russell Devine, Sasha Maguire, Rachel Menzies, Pamela Currie, Sarah Lusk (Co-opted Staff Member), Jill Brown (Clerk).

Apologies: Malcolm Graham, Gillian Neilson, Pauline McGowan, Neil Gilbert, Fiona O'Donnell & Lynn Russell.

Minutes from previous meeting and matters arising

The ratio of chrome books to students is about 1:3 chrome books to students. There was a question about S4 PE: there is normally a choice of 2 or 3 activities available. There was a letter issued to parents yesterday from Nicola McDowall, Head of Education, regarding social media and an email will be sent also. Calum Stewart has been monitoring social media.

Head Teachers' Report

There are a lot of nice Christmas things going on and a lot of positivity in school. There was a semi-professional Christmas video completed last week and the team are making more videos to add to this. There have been several House events in school, which were a success, and The Chase will likely be done again. The planning for curriculum for 2022-2023 is underway and there are only minor changes coming. The school roll is projected to be increased by up to a third in the next few years. Safety measures for Covid are on-going. There are some students complaining about having to go out at lunchtime when it is so cold at the moment. It will be assessed each day and students are free to go outside on any day, if they choose to.

Sarah Lusk: There have been referrals made into the Pennypit for winter coats, hats etc. Referrals will be ongoing.

A parent pointed out that the emails advising that a pupil has been a contact are very frequent. Can these not be issued just when they have to isolate? The guidance has been issued from Lothian Health Board around the letters, and is not controlled by the school.

Mags Maxwell is leaving, to return to Ross High School and a new guidance teacher will start on Tuesday. Staff absence is higher at the moment and it has been a challenge getting supply, with SMT having to cover classes at times, although this is happening in all schools.

P7 transition is starting with an online meeting next week. *(this was subsequently rearranged for 10 January, following staffing and technical challenges)*

East Lothian Council were invited in for a visit to look at classroom learning. Karen Haspolat (Quality Improvement Officer) and Duncan McBride (DHT Dunbar GS) came and were shown round the school by students. They were enjoyed the learning they saw, and had some positive feedback that was shared with staff. They also had some constructive questions about next steps, which are being discussed and considered in school.

Learning Estate Review

An email is going out to parents and there will be a questionnaire sent to students. Preston Lodge has come out as a 'B' in the categories, which means *Satisfactory – Performing well but with minor problems (the school buildings and grounds generally support the delivery of services to children and communities)*. There are some issues with the building and this is a council-wide programme. Our school building will be added to over the next few years. In discussion it was hoped that in any future extension there would be more social areas, which are greatly needed. Also better PE changing facilities are needed, along with improved toilets. The group discussed the length of time that FES still have the contract for and what might happen near the end of this.

A parent added that parents have not been in the building for some time and have to rely on what their children say!

Covid Update

There has been very little change. Some students have still to be reminded about wearing their face coverings. The majority of students are still wearing them properly, though, with no issues. We are awaiting next steps after the CO2 monitor testing.

SQA assessments

There is no change currently in this area. There will be a letter sent out to parents of senior students about prelims. Preston Lodge prelims will be January/February. S4-6 attendance and engagement is a concern nationally, and we have similar issues to other schools. In general, though, attendance has been good. The prelim timetable is affected by the Additional Assessment Arrangements timetable, which has, in turn, been affected by an increased number of students reporting anxiety. This is a country-wide issue, and we are working with other schools, and East Lothian Council, to ensure our approaches are correct. Sarah said that they are in process of putting together the support timetable as soon as they can.

One parent mentioned that her son is sometimes not at school at the start of the day, due to free periods but absence texts are sent. Gavin confirmed that S5/6 students without lessons first thing may miss registration, but they must request permission for this from the school.

Focus areas for interventions are in place, where students are not performing well. Data has been analysed carefully and this will be shared at a later date. A mentoring scheme will start in the new year for S5 students.

It was asked why Open University courses are not covered in the tracking reports. GC: we take care of the courses we offer in school, but when students participate in external courses there is sometimes less, or even no, feedback. Another parent said that they would not expect feedback from school as it is

the equivalent of a college course. It was also mentioned about the lack of support available to students when they need help on these courses. Gavin will look further into this and report back.

Preston Lodge Learning Foundation

There is still a vacancy for a PC member on the Trust, and by the end of this session there will be two vacancies. There will be a Trust meeting next Thursday and there will be more to come around this in the new year.

AOB

Gavin asked if there was an interest in any visitors coming along to the meeting for a short period and telling us a bit more about their role. This would be welcomed and will be arranged. Gavin will have a think about who could be asked. Ideas would be Derek from the library, Ruth Patterson, Avril Rodgers and Sarah Lusk.

Next meeting will be 13th January 2022