

### **Preston Lodge Parent Council Meeting 3.12.21**

Present: Judith McNeill (Chair), Gavin Clark (HT), Derek France (School Librarian) Marie McMath, Colin Yorkston, Lynn Russell, Claire Jamieson, Lachlan Bruce, Sasha Maguire, Rachel Menzies, Cate Duff, Sarah Lusk (Co-opted Staff Member), Russell Devine, Carrie Thomson & Jill Brown (Clerk).

**Apologies:** Siobhan Graham, Malcolm Graham, Fiona O'Donnell.

#### **Minutes from previous meeting and matters arising:**

There will be a more structured study programme for S4s after the February holiday. In a large number of subjects there is a good structure, however Gavin will report back again regarding this.

Epraise – Steven Grady will speak to Gavin about this shortly and there will be a more comprehensive update sent to parents and carers soon.

#### **Derek France – School Librarian**

Derek gave an overview of what happens in the library. He is a member of the Chartered Institute of Librarians and Information Professionals and he encourages reading for pleasure, making sure the library is a safe space for every student, raising attainment and ensuring a culture of positive engagement. He encourages students to help him with stock selection. He has four book groups currently, who meet every week, a staff group and an Enhanced Learning book group. They shadow book awards, take part in lots of different activities, and hopefully there will be authors visiting again and there will be themed week's eg genre or writer.

The library is also used for timetabled classes, such as Nat 5 History. He delivers book talks, assists in P7 transitions and S1 introductions. He has had student escape rooms in the past to introduce himself to students. There is an online book library called "Bookflix". There are a few groups running in the library, such as the Dungeons and Dragons group, which encourages critical thinking and social interaction. There is also a Manga and Anime club, which is based around Japanese comics and characters. There is a new library club "Mad Mysterious Mystery Association", which has just started and will look at fake news and conspiracy theories. On a Wednesday there is a miniature painting drop-in session for pupils and staff. On Thursdays there is a creative writing group for all students, and some of the students lines were featured in Kathleen Jamie's recent poem. Chess club runs every Thursday and this will potentially be offered to primary students in the cluster. There are 17 pupil librarians at the moment who volunteer one week during break.

A parent asked if there were any audio books. There are a few at the moment, but some more could be ordered.

Another parent asked if there were good ways to encourage a teenager to come back to reading? Derek suggested not putting too much pressure on and trying to engage in books that the child is interested in. Most teenage boys come back to reading.

Derek was asked about e-readers, and if this was any demand on the service? Derek said that they are used, but not to a large degree, in school.

Gavin would like to express his gratitude to Derek and what he has brought to the Library and the school. The parents thanked Derek for his interesting and thought-provoking presentation.

### **Staffing Update**

Yvonne Binks (DHT Pupil Support) is leaving at Easter, and she will be a big loss to the school. A recruitment process has already started to replace her and Rachel Menzies will be part of the recruitment panel. A new DHT will be in place before Easter.

Jenny Allen (PT Classroom Practice & Biology) is taking up a secondment in Peebles, so she will be leaving PL for 18 months. Katie Montgomery has been successful in gaining the Acting PT post.

### **Headteacher's Report**

An invite was sent out for the planning of a tree as part of the Queens Green Canopy project, which will take place on Monday 7 February. There will be a Hornbeam tree planted to mark the platinum jubilee. Monica Patterson, Chief Executive of the Council, Nicola McDowell, Head of Education and Council Leader Norman Hampshire will be present.

Course choice timelines and information will be sent out shortly.

Tracking for S4, S5, and S6 will be sent out after the February holiday. Prelims have gone well and students have been very eloquent in identifying the challenges and positives of the process.

Prelim results will come out soon and grades in tracking reports will also cover effort, homework and behaviour in the classroom.

One parent said that in previous years the expected final grades shown in the tracking reports were very accurate against actual grades achieved in the examinations.

### **Covid Update**

The school is in a good place at the moment. There have recently been suggestions of cutting off the bottoms of classroom doors, however this has not been confirmed. All students wear face masks, however there is a real face covering fatigue emerging. Staff have been excellent regarding wearing face masks. There has been more updated guidance from Scottish Government, and this will be shared in due course, once we have had updated guidance from ELC.

### **School uniform**

There was some easing off with school uniform during the start of the covid pandemic, however this represents a sense of belonging and PL culture. The school will be flexible around this however they will be looking for students to be wearing full uniform after the February break. There was a discussion about pros and cons of school uniform, this may be revisited in the future.

### **SQA assessments**

The SQA will give additional support, however the exams will very likely go ahead. Further guidance on exam focus and content has now been promised by the SQA, but there is a real lack of detail. The school do not know any more than this at the moment and are unsure about how helpful the promised study guides will be. There have been a lot of bumps in the SQA road over the last two years, and a lot has been learned. Sarah Lusk has done a remarkable job with additional assessment arrangements.

### **Preston Lodge Learning Foundation**

There were no updates from the Learning Foundation.

### **Area Partnership**

Parent Councils are asked to have one member as an Area Partnership rep. They have meetings every 6 weeks. Claire Jamieson normally attends as Cockenzie PC rep. There is no secondary rep at the moment, but Claire offered to be our rep for this. There is training on 24 February and the next meeting will be 9 March. Jill Brown and Claire will take this on between them.

### **Mobile Phone Usage**

A parent asked if students are following the mobile phone policy, because there seemed to be an element of messages being sent during school time. Students are generally adhering to the policy. There are some students who are not following it and this may lead to phone confiscation for the day. The policy will need regular refresh and monitoring. One parent said that some teachers are telling students to use mobiles for some lessons, which goes against the rule of not using phones in class. GC said that the policy states that you are not allowed to use your mobile phones in class unless permission is given by the teacher. Scottish Government have pledged that every student will have a mobile device in the future, so this should resolve some of the issues around phone use.

**Next meeting will be 3 March 2022**