

Kirknewton Primary Parent Council meeting minutes - Monday 9th March 2020

Present: Neil Gwynne, Simon Fuller, Stuart Douglas, Pip Shiels, Laura Stewart, Angela Coulter, Angela Herkes, Carol Allardyce, Fiona Cain, Lesley Dicker, Kate McLelland, Pamela Berry, Geraldine Lucas.

Apologies: Natalie Tracey, Devanshi Vyas, Sarah McNee, Karen Davidson, Nikki Thomson, Angela Hogg, Debbie Douglas, Alix Malcolm, Carl John.

1. Approval of minutes – all agreed. Previous action points addressed.
2. Letter sent to West Lothian Council Operational Services Senior Manager (06.03.20) regarding school lunches and we are awaiting response in due course. Will feedback any response at next meeting.
3. **Issues raised via class reps:**
 - Some P4 parents raised that their children are frustrated that some children in the class get access to more varied resources (eg baking, nurture room) than others. Mrs Tracey said that she would like to speak to the P4 class in order to get their views. Prior to the meeting, she advised the Chair that there are no restrictions on any of the areas and teachers can book any of them to use with their class. She will remind the teachers of this. Discussion concluded it would be useful if the teachers could explain to pupils why other pupils have different opportunities for various different reasons.
 - Another parent raised a number of queries regarding the nursery including the “Safe arrivals policy” which is in place at the Primary School. This is where the school will contact parents/carers if a pupil is unexpectedly not present. This does not apply to nursery currently as all children arrive with a trusted adult. Nursery staff do often call as courtesy but this is not a blanket rule.
 - The current state of the Orchard area and the upper end of the playground is very messy – this issue is to be raised and discussed with HT. HT advised that the tables have been knocked over by the stormy weather and the Eco group have been using the desks outdoor activities. This will be followed up.
 - There is not currently a teacher offering Cycling proficiency to our children in P6/7. Parents have asked if this can be offered and ideally looking for a parent who is willing to do the training and help out. The parent would also need to be PVG checked. Members of the Parent Council have said that they will ask people they know and can feed back to the school with any suggestions. Lesley Dicker will also email the School of Education at Edinburgh University. This training would have to be during school time.
4. **Discussion regarding the purpose of the Parent Council** (and the different roles of people within):
 - What themes would we like to include and can there be sub-groups lead by individuals (communication, eco, etc).
 - Defining roles* (**please see additional information below**): Main roles of Chair / Vice chair / Secretary discussed. Do well feel these are right and how do we engage other parents? Mrs Turnbull would help to distribute a parent survey to hear more voices within the school.
 - Parents present read these roles together and discussed points.

- New P3 rep Kate McLelland and P7 rep Stuart Douglas were formally appointed.
- It was suggested that it would be useful to put a note in pupils red folders/school bags to highlight to all parents who their class reps are.
- It was agreed that the proposed process of issues being submitted by class reps before the pre-meeting with the Chair & HT to enable these to be discussed and responded to at the meeting – a summary of the issue raised and a general update will be provided in the PC meeting (and included in the minutes and website where appropriate) and any specific actions will be taken forward as required with the class rep.

5. Update from Chair / Vice chair:

- Met with and contacted chairs from other PCs.
- GL contacted existing class reps and added everyone to a WhatsApp group which is now up and running – used to communicate meeting dates, upcoming events and suggestions to put forward.
- Using parent portal to improve communication and Mrs Turnbull is on board with updating the website. Met with Mrs Turnbull in the school office to discuss communication to parents and particularly an app that she had been exploring. Subsequent contact with West Lothian Council informed us that they are developing Parent Portal to be used as main communication between school and parents. An app will therefore not be pursued. The website is being updated and will be kept up to date with more information
- We have been thinking about how we can be of best use to the school. We have met with HT to see what we can support her with. The main themes which arose are: Communication, Parents volunteering, Sustainability (Eco group) with a view to applying for the green flag in the future, Equalities framework for learning (currently in Year 1) to get parents involved and Funding applications (aligning with the PSA).

6. **Twinning:** Village twinning is definitely going ahead and it would be good for the school to be involved. This was raised last year with Mrs Tracey and could be lead by a parent who has a particular interest / passion in this. A hugely valuable experience and involvement for children of all year groups in school in terms of links with another country: History, languages, etc. School is based near Lille, a small town called Saily-Lez-Lannoy.

7. **Sub-group proposals / setup:** Vice chair set up 5 flip charts on various areas: Communication, Twinning, Funding applications, Sustainability and “other themes to consider”. Parents worked around 5 carousels and gave their thoughts and ideas. These are to be formalised and fed back to HeadTeacher and Parent Council reps by Lesley Dicker in the near future.

AOB: **Next parent council meeting – Tuesday 28th April 2020 (CHANGE OF DATE).**

Final PC meeting for school year – Wed 3rd June 2020.

- Next meeting will allow time for feedback on points discussed tonight.
- Carl John was due to attend our meeting this evening but we advised him to reschedule to next meeting due to unusual format of this meeting.
- Playgroup will close at Easter time. If you know of any parents, with a young pre-school aged child, who would feel strongly about this, it would be important to follow this up and try to save it.

- Near miss last Thursday night 5pm child ran out between parked cars on the yellow zig zag lines and a parent has raised this serious concern (outwith school hours). Parents who are picking their children up from after school club are parking on the zig zag lines and this is causing major risk to our children. Parent Council / School will contact the council regarding this and to ensure that this is reported and actioned. After our meeting, Mrs Tracey advised that she will send a letter out to all parents/carers reminding them not to park on the zig zag lines causing obstruction.
- The flashing lights for the 20mph zones outside the school are not operating. This was raised with Mrs Tracey after our PC meeting and she has advised that the school will contact the council regarding this concern.

Action points:

- ✓ State of orchard area in playground
- ✓ Cycling proficiency for P6/7
- ✓ Note in pupil bags highlighting official class reps to parents/carers
- ✓ Yellow zig zag lines outside school and flashing 20 MPH light up boards are not lit up
- ✓ Invite Carl John to our next meeting (GL to email alongside minutes)
- ✓ Information on themes to be circulated to absent class reps and information collated and discussed with Mrs Tracey to agree next steps

*Defining PC roles:

Purpose of the Parent Council

From the school website:

Kirknewton Parent Council aim to:

- Develop a positive and effective working partnership with the school to promote and support learning and wellbeing.
- Represent the views of all parent/carers, giving a voice and increasing active involvement in decision making.
- Report back to parent/carers on matters discussed.
- Promote and establish links to the wider community. (from handbook: encourage links between school, parents, pupils, pre-school groups & the wider community)

The main roles of the Chair/Vice Chair are to:

- Make sure meetings run smoothly and efficiently; are on time and are run in an inclusive and friendly way
- Delegate tasks to other members of the group and make sure these are completed
- Make sure all Parent Council members know they are there to represent all the parents in the school – the Parent Forum
- Act as the spokesperson for the group and liaise with the HT
- Play a part in the school inspection & other formal activities
- Give an annual report to the Parent Forum – usually at the AGM

The main roles of the Secretary are to:

- Support the Chairperson to ensure the smooth running of the PC
- Ensure meetings are well organised and minuted
- Maintain records and hand these on to the next Secretary
- Handle communication and correspondence

The main responsibilities of a committee member/class rep:

- Keep the aims of the parent council in mind when acting on behalf of the group
- Make yourself aware of Parent Council processes (how meetings are run, how to raise concerns etc) and get to know fellow PC members
- Represent the views and interests of **all** the parents/carers in the school (ensure issues raised are not just one person's view)
- PC members should let parents and carers at the school know about the work of the committee and how they can get in touch
- PC members should not bring the PC into disrepute in any way. If a committee member is unhappy with committee business and/or decisions made, they should raise this with the Chair or at a meeting and respectfully encourage further discussion