

Minutes Parent Council meeting 11 February 2021.

Meeting held online.

Present: Jamie Farquharson-Welsh, Catriona Beverly, Gill Jones, Isla Stewart, Kim Scott, Emma Roberts, Kathryn Masterson, Louise Drain, Angela Eggerton, Jacqui O'Donovan, Julia Ezennaya, Mark Tartaglia (left after p 1), Jackie Fernandez, Sofi Izatt.

Apologies: Sam Long, Peta Bennet, Dawn Mutch

1. The Chair Jamie greeted everybody welcome. Sam and Peta have decided to step down from the PC and the meeting expressed their gratitude for Sam's and Peta's valuable contributions to and hard work for the PC.

2. Head teacher's update.

As of 22 February all P1-3 pupils and the children attending school at the moment will be full time in school. P 4-7 will continue with remote learning from home.

Staff will be offered to be tested twice weekly for COVID and testing kits are on their way.

Three new members of staff have joined since last meeting and a fourth is awaiting a PVG.

The government's strategy for pupils returning to school has a focus on health and wellbeing. The school is well prepared with two online resources (Emotion works and Tree of Knowledge) as well as a designated space; a "nurture room". This is in addition to existing measures to promote good mental health. The school has started a journey to become autism accredited.

The school acknowledges that progress in literacy and numeracy is a worry for many parents. As children return to school, this will be assessed.

Remote learning does not easily include collaborative learning and team work. The school is looking into how that can be included and various ways are being tested.

The school is trying to tackle the digital divide by supporting families with poor internet access. Different from the first lockdown, more teachers are now required in school so this has proven harder. Still there is a 96% participation rate in remote learning.

There is a lack of IT devices for P4-5 but thanks to fundraising by the Chair and donations from the PTA and the Fellowship church in Banchory, 43 new devices have been ordered. The government has supplied 30 new devices. (The PTA kindly donated money towards Chromebooks for the P6-7 some three years ago.) The school has 14 iPads that are quickly becoming outdated so a choice must be made soon whether to continue with iPads or move on to Chromebooks also for the younger years.

Gill Jones continued the technological update. The main difficulty experienced by remote learning pupils has been to access Glow from an Apple device. This problem may continue when the license for Seesaw runs out at end of April and a new communication platform will be introduced; Google Classroom or Microsoft Teams or another app. (Stopping Seesaw is an Aberdeenshire Council decision and has to do with data protection rules .)

The school is well ahead on the technological side of learning and will take part in a pilot project covering Northern Scotland.

A discussion ensued on the best way to communicate between teachers and home. Online sessions to help parents with /online/learning from home was suggested.

Nursery update

EYSLP reported that 19 children currently attend during the week and they are looking forward to a full return on 22 Feb. Seven new children will join to make a total of 66. .Current working hours are 8.45 to 16.45 but after April it is envisaged the hours will increase to 8.00 to 18.00. Four staff have enrolled in a virtual nature school aiming to learn how to make better use of the outdoors during the winter months.

3. Update from PC Chairs in Aberdeenshire meeting
Jamie attended and learned that there have been 37 cases of COVID related to schools in Grampian. The advice was to wear a clean uniform every day but if that was not a viable option, to air the school clothes daily and take them off immediately upon returning home.
4. Progress on earlier issues.
The PC donated £500 to furnish the “nurture room” which has now been spent. Sofi has produced an easy-read version of the new constitution which will be made available and will contact the Council liaison officer regarding translation of the constitution into other languages.
Due to COVID Jamie has not been able to meet with the Pupil Council to discuss how they wish to spend money the Parent Council has allocated. Catriona suggested an online questionnaire. *Jamie to action.*
Jamie has done some fundraising in the community towards Chromebooks and got some £8500. Further £1000 was given by the PTA and £1200 donated by the Banchory Fellowship Church. It was suggested the P4-5 classes, being the principal recipients, write thank-you cards. *Jackie F to action.*
5. With that Jamie thanked everybody for attending and closed the meeting.

Minutes taken by Sofi Izatt

