

St Nicholas' Primary School Parent Council Meeting 16th November 2021

Meeting Title: St Nicholas' Primary School Parent Council Meeting
Meeting Date: Wednesday 16th November 2021
Meeting Location: Virtual Meeting Teams 6:30pm – 8:00pm

ATTENDEES

NAME	ROLE	INITIAL
Rachael MacDonald	Chair	RM
Janine Peck	Vice Chair	JP
Donal McDermott	St Andrew's Parish Rep	DM
Vicki Roger	St Joseph's Parish Rep	VR
Charlotte Grogan	Head Teacher	CG
Angela Murray	Depute Teacher	AMR
Carol Lennon	Depute Teacher	CL
Aura Murphy	Member	AM
Gillian Harkness	Member	GH
Stephanie Bryson	Member	SB
Caitlin McKenna	Member	CM
Anne Quinn	Member	AQ
Margaret Clowes	Member	MC
Natalie Matheson	Member	NM
Jane Egan	Member	JE
Rebecca McGarry	Member	RMG

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Signed: Rachael MacDonald 16th November 2021

1. **Welcome and Apologies**

Apologies:

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A welcome was given to the new members who have joined the PC. RM extended a welcome to Kristin Cameron, a member of the wider parent body who had asked to attend in an observing capacity as per the PC Constitution. However, on confirming the list of attendees it was noted that the parent had not joined the meeting.

In light of the hefty agenda RM stated that the amount of time spent on each agenda item would be restricted due to the time constraints of the meeting. Each item would be allocated approximately 5minutes, and if more time was required to discuss the item, the item would be added to the next agenda for the January PC meeting.

RM asked JP to keep track of the timings and to ensure items did not go over their allocated time.

2. **Head Teachers Update:**

CG extended the welcome to the new Members.

Staffing:

All the vacant Support Staff posts have been filled.

E Barrett (10hr CA post) started this week.

D Farlow (25hr CA post) will hopefully start next week.

Quality Assurance procedures:

As part quality assurance procedures, SMT are visiting all classes to observe a Literacy Session. This links with the major priority from the School Improvement plan this session and will help support and evaluate the changes that have made to learning and teaching within the area of Literacy. Literacy and Numeracy jotters will be monitored this term. This will ensure appropriate pace and challenge for all learners.

School Improvement Plan

The School Improvement plan is now on our website, apologies as this should have been on after the last meeting in September. However due to staffing and the difficulties with updating the website, this has taken longer than expected.

Website

There have been changes to the website bringing it to life with more photographs. Within the events tab some pictures have been added from recent whole school events. The website design team at EDC have been asked to add further subheadings to the class section of the website. The plan is that on a monthly basis, the twitter posts will be added to the Website. As some learners do not have permission to be on the website, this will be reviewed by the office staff before publishing. As a school real thought has been given about how class sections could be updated on a regular basis. Unfortunately, as CT's are already uploading to SEESAW and Twitter, it is not possible for them to upload to another platform, therefore the office team will take on this role. Ms McEntee has now established her digital leader team and they will also look at the website from a pupil perspective. They will then take on the role of also updating the website.

Unfortunately, the aftermath of the secondary consultation is still having an impact. The website has been updated with the EDC policy; however, this meant a great deal of information which many parents did not take the time to read. Therefore, this section has been shortened and key points summarised and a link provided to the full policy.

Promoting the school

At previous meetings school roll has been discussed and as a community about how to raise St Nicholas' profile. A flyer/ poster has been produced that will be issued to both parishes, nurseries and local buildings. Open events had been planned in the school this month but due to COVID restrictions this has not been possible. However, links have been forged with both Oakburn and Bearsden Nurseries. 2 members of staff are currently taking part in a transition project that develops STEM activities. The programme starts in the nursery and staff from the nurseries and school work together to develop these skills. These activities will then continue as part of our transition programme in May/ June. This is a very exciting opportunity as it is allowing St Nicholas to have a presence within the 2 new nurseries as well as develop our STEM Curriculum.

HT Statement

Finally, I would like to discuss the decision-making process here in St Nicholas' Primary. As HT I make decisions every day. These decisions are made in partnership with other members of the SMT, all staff and pupils where appropriate. I fully appreciate that some parents may not fully understand or even agree with our decisions, however, I want to assure you that every decision is made with the learner's educational journey and the welfare and wellbeing of all staff and pupils at the heart.

I am more than happy to discuss any issues with parents where appropriate and where I can provide a further insight into the decision-making process.

As a Catholic school our aim is to educate children in a community of faith and learning. The Gospel Values are core to everything we do and say in order to ensure respect for everyone within our community.

However, what has occurred recently is very upsetting and is certainly not in line with our school values. Comments regarding my professionalism and about me personally on WhatsApp or said to me in person are not acceptable. Negative comments that suggest that the school "brushes things under

the carpet” are factually incorrect, as every telephone call or email is addressed by myself, another member of the SMT or the office.

As HT, I am entrusted to lead this school, every decision will not please everyone but that does not mean we do not listen to feedback. In fact, we spend a lot of our day listening and addressing the views of parents. As HT, the final decision lies with me and I would hope as Parent Council Members you would support and respect my position.

As Parent Council members I would respectfully ask that you keep this in mind when communicating with parents. If any parent has a concern, I would ask that you direct them to myself so it can be addressed. I would also ask that the tone of conversation becomes less negative and more focussed on what we can do by working together.

We have discussed at great length the school’s reputation within the local community. These negative comments, although these maybe within a closed WHATSAPP groups have a way of leaking out into our community. In fact, recently, these negative comments regarding myself and the school have come up within conversations far removed for the area of Bearsden and Milngavie.

As HT, I know that many of our parent body are delighted with school and this maybe a minority of people but as a Parent Council I hope that you will support me in addressing these issues.

3. DECISIONS ON HALLOWEEN AND FURTHER FESTIVE ACTIVITIES

It was acknowledged that the HT had already communicated the school’s decision making with regards to children not being allowed to wear a Halloween costume into school. However, after further parent questions regarding the issue the PC felt it necessary to seek further clarification for the decision. CG reaffirmed the school's decision on the matter. This included the fact that it would not prove practical for PE activities, some children are frightened by costumes, some costumes are not age appropriate and therefore a list of costumes that would not be allowed would have had to been devised. Covid issues were also considered in making the decision. The decision was discussed fully by SMT and teachers. It was confirmed that the majority of HTs in the council also did not allow children to dress up. It was confirmed that the school will endeavour to provide the children with Christmas activities and these activities were already outlined in last week's newsletter. Halloween is not part of the school curriculum whereas Christmas is.

It was felt by the members that it was now time to draw a line under the issue and to focus on the future diary.

It was asked whether this decision would be the same decision with regards to Halloween for the future.

CG said she will make decisions for the here and now and will not make decisions now for the future.

It was confirmed that this was not EDC policy and that it was left to individual schools to make the decision.

4. P7 TRIP

It was raised that P7/1 had been picked to attend a trip to sky and some parents were unhappy that P7/2 were not afforded the same opportunity.

It was confirmed that the school had been given 24 hours to make a decision on which class could attend and that the decision was made solely on the fact that P7/1 comes before P7/2 on the school class order.

It was asked if something similar were to come up again in the future would it not be best to send the DLs and Miss McEntee instead of one whole class.

It was suggested that this could be something that was considered.

5. PLAYGROUND ISSUES

This was a follow up to previous meeting discussions around antisocial activity in the playground after school hours. Local residents have lodged further complaints with local MP and councillors and EDC will now be having a site visit to assess the issues.

It is possible that EDC may look into raising pitch fences, take down equipment and/or replace static equipment with moveable equipment.

It was requested that EDC are asked whether the PC chair could attend the meeting. PC members suggested that parents would not accept a decision to remove playground equipment and that parents should be consulted in any decision regarding this.

CG will have that discussion with the Deputy Chief Executive officer who will be attending the site visit and the PC will be kept updated.

It was highlighted that replacing static equipment for moveable equipment raises questions over who would be contracted to carry out these duties and this needs to be considered.

It was asked what action had the police taken with those who were involved in the antisocial behaviour.

CG confirmed the school is not privy to this information.

It was asked if the school being made available for lets would possibly help deter the antisocial behaviour.

It was confirmed that St Nicholas is not a letting facility and was not designed with floodlights for letting.

Suggestions were made about leaving the playground open for access to help maybe diffuse some of the issues.

PC will await the confirmation of the planned site visit date and on the decision re the request for PC attendance at the meeting.

6. PE UNIFORM

Some parents would like children to be allowed to wear PE uniforms into school on PE days.

Some parents feel it would be of financial benefit to parents and that it would help with ECO issues in reducing school uniform washing. It was suggested there was a waste of resources when PE uniforms were left in school for long periods of time.

It was discussed that per the school's uniform policy, if it were decided that a PE uniform could be worn to school, a school PE uniform would be required.

It was agreed that the main parent body should be involved in this decision.

The PC have asked the HT to put this out for consultation to the wider parent forum and a decision will subsequently be made from this consultation.

7. SCHOOL ENROLMENT

It is hoped that the reintroduction of a PA will help to raise the community profile of the school.

It is hoped that further Community gardening activities organised by CM will help raise the school's profile through "St Nicholas in Bloom".

It was suggested that the school flyer and posters could be widely shared into local halls and businesses.

It was suggested sharing the flyers with local parent groups.

It was suggested sharing flyers with local toddler groups.

8. PARENT ASSOCIATION UPDATE

NM said that as the previous PA had been previously fully disbanded, she is awaiting the bank getting back to her with the new bank account and said that her and the treasurer will hopefully have this all agreed shortly. She is in the process of completing a new PA constitution and with the covid restraints she has been unfortunately unable to organise any PA events so far. She stated that the PA will endeavour to do as much as they can under the difficult circumstances and has reached out to the parent body to pull together a team of members who will be willing to help organise and support events for 2022. Parents wishing to help can contact Natalie via the school office and school Facebook page.

9. PARENT COUNCIL EMAIL

It was stated that the chair is contactable via a number of channels. School playground, personal email, school Facebook page, parent WhatsApp and through the Parent Council Reps. Members were asked if they thought a PC email was necessary for parents to contact the PC. Members agreed that they thought the channels available to parents were sufficient and that a PC email would be unnecessary and anonymous messages gave no transparency and were unnecessary.

Clarification of the role of PC reps was sought.

It was suggested that PC roles and constitution be put on the next meeting agenda. Members have agreed.

10. CCTV ON SCHOOL CAMPUS

It was confirmed that there is CCTV on the school grounds and is managed by facilities management and not the school.

11. PLAYGROUND OUTDOOR LEARNING VISIT

It was confirmed that the outcome of this meeting will be shared with the main parent body.

12. WEBSITE

DM has checked and confirmed that the wording on the website uses language acceptable to the archdiocese.

13. WEBSITE GENERAL

The school will ask for parent feedback after changes have been made and finalised on the website

14. SCHOOLS WELCOME BOOKLET UPDATE

The welcome booklet was replaced by the handbook and it has now been taken down from website.

15. BIKEABILITY

It was confirmed St Nicholas participate in Bikeability.

16. SCHOOL SPORTS TEAMS

It was highlighted that these are extracurricular activities that require staff/parent volunteers to run them. Mrs B will hopefully be restarting netball after Christmas and if any parents wish to volunteer to run an activity, they should contact the school. "Active Schools "always look for volunteers.

17. CONTACTING THE HEAD TEACHER

It was reinforced that PC reps should try to encourage parents to raise concerns directly with the school, who will always endeavour to answer any parent queries and questions and who will always reply in a timely manner. St Nicholas have an open-door policy and this should always be made known to parents.

Members expressed their support for the HT following her opening statement.

The HT, SMT and staff were commended and thanked for their hard work during difficult times and it was confirmed that they have the full support and backing of the PC.