

Parent Council Meeting Minutes – Tuesday 2nd February 2021 Meeting via Microsoft TEAMS

Attendees:

Lee Picken (Chair), Dee McIntosh (Secretary), Naomi Barton, Serena Broadway, Leanne Gordon, Alexa Pope (Head Teacher), Ingrid Donaldson, Kirsty Cummings, Neil Rudram (Treasurer), Ruth Gaffney, Poilin Glacken, Sara Pellegrini, Catherine Salmond, Gillian Smith, Mhari Hargreaves, local councillor Susan Webber AND 3 guest parents.

Apologies:

Sonia Rutherford

TOPIC	KEY DISCUSSION POINTS	ACTIONS
Home Learning Feedback	Parent feedback was gathered on home learning at the end of 2019/2020 and again before tonight's meeting. Much of this was shared with the management team who pulled together the following "You Said, We Did" list of points: • The management team acknowledge that they won't be able to get home learning right for everyone but they are trying their very best to do so and are very grateful for the feedback. • Feedback previously suggested the timing of the SWAY could be improved. Receiving this in the morning did not leave parents time to digest the work and timetable the day. SWAYS are now issued twice weekly on Tuesday and Friday afternoons. Another benefit of this is that parents can use the weekend to complete school work earlier in the week should this fit round their working schedule better. • Feedback highlighted that children were having to wait for parents to send their SWAY onto them before they could start their work. As all children now have a Microsoft 365 account and their own associated email address, SWAYS are now being sent directly to children (in the upper school only) to help children better manage their own workload. • Feedback suggested that SWAYS were sometimes too "full" and this put too much pressure on families to complete. In addition there were sometimes tasks put into the SWAY that assumed the child would have parent support at home to help them complete. This doesn't always exist and / or parents don't always know how to help children complete them. As a result the SWAYS are always checked by the management team to ensure they aren't "too big" or don't contain tasks that require too much parental support. In addition, activities on the SWAYS are now starred if they are deemed to be priority tasks or the focus for the week on which teachers will give detailed feedback.	• AP to discuss provision of more feedback and due dates on work provided to children, especially in the upper school. • AP to look into the possibility of providing audio feedback to children rather than written. • AP to consider how children could be

	• The management team wanted to remove the “sameness” feeling for learning through home school this time. Therefore, they introduced the world of work and Scotland topics which they feel have gone down well and helped the school to feel more connected. • Feedback suggested that children really felt disconnected from their teachers last time and would benefit from some more direct contact. Teachers have tried to include their own teaching videos in the SWAYS (or audios) wherever possible this time round AND, the big change this time, Microsoft 365 accounts were rolled out to all children to support the introduction of online working and TEAMS calls. Teachers and parent and child feedback have suggested that the children are more engaged and feel more connected this time round as a result. • Alexa recognised that there has been mixed feedback about the snack and story. The children are really enjoying the small group sessions with the teacher. However, the afternoon time slots don’t seem to work for a lot of families and children are not all / always engaging in the story. Alexa confirmed that they have looked at the timetable but there hasn’t been anything they could do about the afternoon time slots (until schools start to return). They are currently scheduling over 180 live calls per week and have to be mindful, when timetabling, that children are often sharing the same device for their calls. Some of the older classes have introduced learning games after the story time and this has been going down well. Teachers had thought about hosting just an online playtime for kids to chat and be monitored but to do this across the school was going to be too difficult to organise. Ingrid gave a quick update on homelearning at Nursery • SWAYS are issued at the same time as the rest of the school and they very much ensure staff are very visible on these for the children. • Each SWAY has a welcome video at the start and a feedback form at the end asking parents and children what they liked / didn’t like about it. • Staff make check in phone calls to each child and they seem to be working really well. At the moment the nursery do not have live TEAMS story sessions but this is something they are beginning to look into. Questions / Feedback from Parents: • Lisa said she has noticed a big difference in the home learning this time around. Her child feels so much more connected to the school, is so much more engaged now and has been able to complete more work. Alexa	involved in setting their own timetable of work for the week. • AP to continue looking into online Cello lessons. • ID to review the allocation of Fridays at nursery. Could these be given to pre school children as a priority? • SW to pass email summary to AP about the community shop in Wester Hailes. AP to share this information with the parent body.
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	confirmed that the teachers have also fed back to her that they have felt so much more connected to their class this time around. • Sarah said that her child loves the nursery SWAYs and the check in phone calls from the staff, however, she is very pleased to hear that the Nursery are looking into a live group story time. Her child would benefit so much from seeing friends in this way during lock down. • Kirsty asked whether more feedback could be given on work and / or maybe due dates be added to the SWAYs for specific pieces of work to motivate children to complete the work. As a parent she feels it is hard to prioritise the tasks and know what to focus on when the children are just not engaging. Alexa said she was glad to hear that parents were looking for more feedback and will raise this again with staff as she acknowledged there is more they could do here. However, it should be appreciated that “good feedback” on all tasks for all children will just not be possible. • Leanne shared that she felt the Scotland topic was really great for her as both of her children could work on this together at home. Leanne also felt that the teaching videos have been a very useful addition this time around too. However, she would appreciate having clarity around which tasks teachers would like to provide feedback on so she could ensure her children completed these as a priority. Ingrid shared with us that the P3s are trialling a focus of the week task that is shared with the children through the SWAY. The children upload their completed work on their small group TEAMS channel and the idea is that the teachers will provide direct feedback on the call and maybe follow this up with detailed feedback via email. So far, they have found it to be tricky to deliver feedback over the live group calls as children aren’t always listening etc. Both Gillian and Ruth suggested providing audio feedback via email rather than written. This is something they do in their schools and they feel it goes down better with the children and it saves the teacher time too. Alexa will investigate this further with staff. • Poilin asked whether more could be done to give children guidance to create a rough timetable for their work. Poilin asked whether the timetable for the week could be something children discuss as a group on their Monday live call. Alexa thought there was maybe something they could do here and linked this to an idea they had already been forming around digital teaching sessions online around topics such as organising their own online Microsoft 365 accounts (as these will stay with the children until they leave secondary school). • Poilin also asked when / if Cello lessons would be starting online. Alexa said they were really unhappy they hadn’t started yet as both herself and the Cello teacher want them to and are ready to start them. However, approval from out with the school is needed here and it has not yet been forth coming. Alexa will look into this again. • Mhari had received a lot of positive responses from P6 parents on the live group sessions the school have introduced. Parents were a bit less positive around the snack and story sessions and Mhari felt this could	
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	improve if parents were made aware that the story sessions were also being used for some learning games. Mhari also felt that some kind of timetable and more teacher feedback would go down well with P6 parents and children. • Catherine asked whether a few packs of printed worksheets could be put outside in the jotters boxes for families that don't have a printer. Ingrid thought this would be achievable. • Ruth gave a few more tips on things her school have learned from homeschooling – put three tick exercises in the SWAY (one literacy, one maths and one other) to help parents prioritise. They also found parents had issues uploading and sending videos to the school. Ruth has set up a separate email account for parents to send their videos to. • Gillian also asked whether the Friday allocation of nursery hours could be revisited and possibly allocated to pre-school children as a priority as they have missed so much time in nursery. Ingrid agreed the original allocation had turned out to be unfair (given the weeks missed due to school holidays). This is something she will raise with staff and look into further. Alexa gave an update on the Hub and other support they are providing at the moment: • The hub school has 4 “bubble” groups. One group at nursery stage, one at P1-P3 stage, one at P4-P5, one at P6-P7. Each primary age bubble has at least one teacher every day. In addition there are a number of PSA's in each bubble. • The busiest day is usually Wednesday and there are around 50 children in then. They consist of children who have key workers as parents and vulnerable children. • The hub runs from 8.30am to 3pm every weekday. • They have issued 25 ipads, sim cards and some kindles (that they were gifted from Amazon) to families needing more support for home learning. • They are working with Tiggy Brown to provide a food bank facility for families in our school community. Tiggy has worked with all schools across the cluster area and has set up additional storage facilities at the Corner Café. At our school, Ingrid and Alexa are preparing and delivering food parcels to 4 or 5 families per week. This is something they absolutely want to keep up over the longer term, however, there are practical issues around where to store food once the schools return. • Lee shared with us that Tiggy Brown and a parent from our school community (Donna Sawyers) are trying to set the food bank up as a charity and they have asked Lee to sit on the committee for it with them. Therefore, it is likely this will be in place for a while.	
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	Sue Webber told the parent council that a community shop has been set up in the old Tesco at Wester Hailes. Families receiving benefits (there may be other conditions) can apply for a membership. Here, they can purchase low cost food shopping from supermarket brands such as Waitrose, M&S etc. The more members the shop has, the cheaper the prices become. Alexa asked if Sue could send an email onto her with details that she could share with the parent body.	
Road Safety	- Health and Safety report has been issued after the incident in the car park in November 2020. The report stated that they are happy with the temporary solution that has been put in place i.e. to close the gates at busy periods with the janitor only allowing access for deliveries and under special circumstances etc. - It was recognised that this wasn't a convenient solution for blue badge holders. Instead they will be given the janitors phone number to call should the gates be closed when they need access. - Alexa has requested full costings for 3 longer term solutions – 1) replacement barrier in current position 2) replacement barrier but move it down to the gate and 3) automate the gate - The report has called for better signage on the gate to warn pedestrians that there is no access to the school. - Unmarked parking bays used by the staff, in the car park but on the hill, have to be marked out if they are actually safe to use. Yellow lines have to be added to areas in the car park that are dangerous for parking. - Bollards have to be put in front of the shed housing the gas mains. They will either be metal or concrete. Dee asked whether the shed will be replaced with a more permanent building. Alexa believes it will be. However, in both cases the temperature needs to be well above freezing for a number of days before work can commence. - Alexa has had no update from the Edinburgh Council / Spaces for People with regards to the closure of Baberton Mains Wynd. However, Sue Webber confirmed that letters would be issued to the residents on the Wynd later this week. This would not be a consultation, it would simply inform them of how and when the closure would be implemented. - Lisa raised the issue around the increased risk to children of crossing the Drive once the closure is put in place and asked whether we could request a pedestrian crossing or lollipop lady to make it a safer route to school. Sue Webber stated that this was very unlikely to be approved. - Poilin agreed that she would liaise with Alexa and set up a new road safety group after the February Break to take forwards actions from the last parent council meeting.	PG and AP to set up Road Safety group and meeting after the February break.
AOB	Naomi and Lee gave a brief update on plans for Currie High rebuild. The entry date for students is still set to be 2024. The council are in "Phase 2" of the build which means they have designed the building and they do not believe much will change between now and when work commences. Lee and Naomi both said it looks like they have taken on board a lot of what the community asked for in the design and it will be the envy of all high	AP to consider putting sanitary products in the toilets for P5

	school children across Edinburgh. It looks amazing. Dee asked what the capacity will be in the new school. Lee said they are building it to hold up to 1000 children but will have the capability to extend should it be needed. • Sara asked whether it would be possible to put sanitary products in the toilets for girls when they have their period. Alexa said that the current process is that children can either bring their own, ask their teacher (each class has a stash of items in the classroom) or they can go to reception. At the moment everything that is not deemed to be absolutely necessary in the toilets has to be removed for COVID reasons. This is something that will be revisited when restrictions ease again. • Alexa mentioned that they are hoping to have a 14 class school next year. There will be no need, based on current information, for a composite class (subject to this not being needed to support the incoming P1 year stage). This has not yet been finalised though. • Sara asked whether the nursery was expecting to roll out the 1140 hours soon. Ingrid confirmed that they are expecting to roll this out in August 2021 subject to Nether Currie nursery being finished and open at this time. The finish date for the nursery is 5th August so there isn't much wiggle room. • Alexa said there will be announcement about teachers moving around in the P4 year stage. It is expected that Mrs McWhirter will move and be the lead teacher in P4b and Mrs Craig will be the lead teacher for P4a. • Naomi asked if the school had to track "attendance" during home schooling. Alexa said the school were tracking attendance through check in's at live calls each day. • Lisa asked for clarification of the date that school term would end. Our understanding is that terms ends, as per council website term dates, on 25th June. • Dee asked whether the school would keep the parent council in the loop on any discussions held with CEC around strategies that may be employed to help close the education gap emerging due to home schooling / covid. For example, plans that may be put in place for repeating years, encouraging composite arrangements, more testing, smaller class sizes etc. It would be good for parents to know what's coming sooner rather than later and if any work they are doing at home would feed into that decision. Alexa and Ingrid said that they weren't privy to any such discussions yet and at the moment they are focussed on getting through home schooling and not yet on the next academic year. • Questions were raised with Alexa and Ingrid as to when we would find out about classes being shuffled / not shuffled around and how the pre school transition would work this year. They could not confirm this yet.	upwards once COVID restrictions ease. • AP to share details of planned class rearrangements for next academic year as soon as she can. • AP / ID to share details around pre school transition as soon as they can.
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NEXT MEETING DATE: Monday 1st March