

Castlehill Primary School Parent Council Meeting 17 November 2022

Bearsden Academy 17/11/22 at 7:30. Chair: Gemma Kemp.

Attendees: Katherine Currie (Co-Treasurer), Mairi Eadie-Campbell, Alice Hall (Clerk), Gail Hunter, Aimée Kelly, Clare McCafferty, Graham McCormick, Lesley McLean (DHT), Alastair Muir, Cllr Alan Reid, Katie Reid (Co-Chair), Cllr Calum Smith, Mandy Thompson (HT)

1. Apologies: Stephanie Baynham, Claire Chamberlain, Marianne Charrier, Margo Currie, Lynsey Haggarty, Sara Kelly, Rosy Marshall-Macrae, Stephanie MacPherson (DHoC), Caroline Miller
2. Minutes of the last meeting. Agreed. On the review of the anti-bullying policy, the HT said she would set out plans at the January meeting of the Parent Council, with a discussion of the outcome at the following meeting. Involvement of the children would be critical. Progress on the defibrillator was still stalled. However, the school had received a letter from EDC asking about local provision.
3. Head Teachers report
 - On staffing, the HT said the school had approval to advertise for a temporary SLA within the ELR to cover a long term illness. Recruitment would also start shortly for another part-time SLA in the ELR. Stephanie McPherson, the now permanent DHoC, would start maternity leave in January and her post would be advertised on a temporary basis as soon as possible. Valerie Fiskien was reducing her hours through flexible retirement, Shirleyanne Lloyd from Oakburn would start first week of January on a temporary basis. Fiona Douglas, the Early Years teacher covering Helen Whitehouse's maternity leave had been successful in gaining a permanent post elsewhere and Mariela Mitova would cover the remainder of the maternity leave.
 - The HT then gave an update on the School Improvement Plan (attached). On targeted interventions, she confirmed that where children were receiving this support, the parents/carers were fully informed. On the internet safety session, Alice noted that some people may be keen to attend but unavailable and the HT said she would also ask for expressions of interest in future sessions. On the survey of parental/carer involvement in learning the HT noted that 61% was a good response rate given other pressures faced by families. PC members offered to highlight future surveys through parent Whats App groups. Clare highlighted the importance of parents/carers feeling confident they were supporting their children in the right way. The DHT said that teachers were being encouraged to produce videos demonstrating how the learning is done in class, and noted that if people had any questions or concerns they should contact the school.
4. Fundraising Group Report. Alice reported the Halloween discos had been attended by 90% of mainstream pupils and 29 EYC children. Tickets had not been required but the fundraising team had asked for donations and

sold sweets and toys on the night. Overall the event made £619, with around £130 through online donations. Plan for a Christmas carol singalong had unfortunately had to be delayed because of restricted capacity in the fund raising team, but a Christmas hamper raffle would be organised instead. Families and local businesses had been asked for donations and the plan was to start promoting the raffle in the last week of November. Tickets would be sold online and in person at the Christmas shows and nativity, with the draw taking place on the evening of Monday 17 December. It was also agreed that the school should initiate a Christmas jumper swap (done).

5. Update on work of the Parent Forum. Katie said the last meeting had included an update on the work of EDC's education committee and an explanation of their mental health strategy and nurture programme. There had been a lot of discussion about how to get items on the agenda. Katie had raised speed of procurement and others had raised issues such as active travel, air filters, school lunches (healthiness and availability) and the impact of new housing estates. PC members were invited to feed in any points to raise in advance of the next meeting the following week.
6. Issue for discussion.
 - a. Hosting large school events: The HT said that the recent Harvest Service had been tricky as – due to the welcome increase in the school roll - when the whole school was seated in the hall there was only space for 70 seats for parents and carers. This had led to many parents being disappointed at being unable to attend. The school therefore wanted to propose a new approach going forward which would see no parents at the Harvest and Easter services (with parents/carers having the opportunity to see their children perform at class assemblies instead); the P7 leavers assembly restricted to parents/carers for that class and for musicians (up to 3 tickets per child); and the Burns night service restricted to the parents/carers of finalists. For Christmas, there would be no difficulty accommodating parents/carers at the P4-P7 concerts as the children would be watching the dress rehearsal instead. The main challenge was the Christmas service, where the proposal was to open to parents/carers of musicians and P3 children only (given those children would have speaking parts), but to put on a separate showing of the nativity play only for P1/P2 parents and carers. This approach was agreed by PC members.
 - b. Upgrading of the microphone/sound system: It was agreed that the PC would fund a service of the sound system and purchase of new microphones (**Action:** Katie to organise the service/buy the microphones and Graham to set them up). In the meantime, it was agreed that we should look either to borrow or hire microphones, ideally borrowing from the Castlehill Baptist Church (**Action:** Graham to follow up with Alastair on what's available).

- c. Funding transport for school trips: It was agreed the PC would cover the cost of school trips this academic year, but parents/carers would be invited to donate to the cost if they wanted to; the recent P3 trip had raised £90 in this way. It was noted that some people had been confused about plans for the P6/7 trip and what money needed to go where – it would be helpful if this was clarified (**Action**: DHT). Katie also underlined the importance of parents/carers not feeling obliged to give their children money to spend in the gift shop.
 - d. Approach to homework and expectations of children at different stages: Gemma asked whether the school saw homework as optional or compulsory. The HT said the school had run a consultation a few years ago and there had been a 50/50 split between parents/carers who thought there was too much homework and those who thought there was too little. It was a difficult challenge as staff spent a lot of time planning homework which was only well spent if the children then did it. The school was therefore keen for children to do homework – but if families were struggling or finding it stressful they should let the school know. The DHT also said the school was planning to offer a weekly homework club from January. Alice asked about marking and the HT said all homework should be marked, but the way this was done varied from comments in a jotter to review in the classroom. Katie also asked about offering optional projects for stretch. The HT said the school used to organise family projects and found that most children were keen to do these even if voluntary because of peer pressure; there was therefore a risk this increased pressure on parents.
 - e. Potential purchase of litter pickers: It was agreed that we should fully support interest from children in litter picking. Katie offered to donate four pickers to the school and said that if they worked well, the PC could look to fund more.
 - f. Progress on ipads: The DHT confirmed that the order for the iPads had been made, although delivery depended on supply. She also noted that now the school was registered, future orders should be quicker.
7. Any Other Competent Business: It was noted that it would be helpful to have more notice of future opportunities for parental/carers engagement in the school to allow rearrangement of work and other commitments.
8. Date of next meeting: 26 January 2023.