

# Minutes of St Joseph's College Parent Council Meeting held on 22 January 2022 at 1900 virtually by Zoom.

## Present

Mel McGill (Chair), Bernadette Jones (Headteacher), Lynn Mitra, Thalakunte Muniraju, Linda Nosratzadeh, Fiona Purdie, Flavia Seton, Gail Stewart, Rebecca Topping, Keith Walters and Amanda Brown (Clerk).

## Apologies

Barbara Chierici-Black, Tommy Crombie and Claire Renton (Vice Chair).

## In attendance

Jennifer Challinor, Hakeem Koleoso, Avril Dunlop and Jane Collins (SDS)

## Welcome

M McGill welcomed everyone to the meeting, thanking them for attending. In terms of housekeeping, she introduced herself and A Brown the Clerk to parent/carers attending for the first time. M McGill went on to introduce Jane Collins, who is the school's Careers Adviser for Skills Development Scotland (SDS) who attended to give a presentation on the role and purpose of SDS within the school. M McGill stated that in addition to the minutes being available on the school website, the SDS presentation would also be shared.

## Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved.

## Matters Arising

M McGill stated that all the necessary paperwork, including the accounting information and the details of current Parent Council members has been sent to the Authority. She explained that this is an Authority requirement. Since this data has been received by them, they have released the Parent Council Annual Allowance which been lodged into the Parent Council bank account.

There were no other matters arising from the previous minute.

## Jane Collins – Skills Development Scotland (SDS)

J Collins introduced herself to the Parent Council and then, using a PowerPoint, she gave her presentation – see attached file.

J Collins started her presentation by asking 'What do you think a Career Adviser does?' and confirmed that, as part of her role, she provides advice on possible jobs that pupils may be interested in and makes them aware of other employment opportunities that may be of interest to

broaden their horizons. She stated that she also works with pupils to explore the reasons behind their career aspirations by assessing their skills and interests. In doing so she is then able to provide support in finding suitable/ appealing career opportunities for them. She explained that the advice given is not just for current pupils and that there is a post-school service too. She then went onto explain what her role within the school entails and that in addition to giving one to one advice, she also does group work with pupils in different year groups. She stated that for each year group the sessions are specifically focused to meet their career choice needs, citing that with S3 pupils she supports them in making subject choices and with S4 she supports them with their future pathways. She also explained that through the group work she is able to explain and demonstrate the benefits of using My World of Work (MWOw) – the SDS career support website. She went on to explain that she meets all pupils in each year group once a year and in addition to this works with specifically targeted pupils more frequently. J Collins then explained that during the one-to-one sessions she supports pupils complete research for their potential career opportunities.

With regard to the wider role of SDS J Collins explained that the service runs Parents/Carer Events both locally and nationally to help support Parents/Carers. She stated that such events run by SDS can be very beneficial to Parents/Carers because in assisting pupils make a career choice, research shows they are the most influential. The next SDS Parent Event, an online support session, will be on 27 January 2022. Parents can book this to attend this free event here:

[https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/how-to-have-meaningful-career-conversations-tickets-230815504387?fbclid=IwAR0PDui0xn0rIOT2VoCCyGWP\\_740OkH2kdVxb8hmZuivHossyESj5IMe4e8](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/how-to-have-meaningful-career-conversations-tickets-230815504387?fbclid=IwAR0PDui0xn0rIOT2VoCCyGWP_740OkH2kdVxb8hmZuivHossyESj5IMe4e8)

J Collins informed the Parent Council that in addition to events the websites ‘My World of Work ‘and ‘My Kid’s Career’ can also be very beneficial in helping support pupils in making career/course choices. Additionally, for those who prefer written material there is a range of paper-based resources available.

In the final part of her presentation, J Collins described Foundation Apprenticeships, Modern Apprenticeships and Graduate Apprenticeships and explained the difference in these Apprenticeship pathways; including who each apprenticeship type is aimed at:

- Foundation Apprenticeships are ones that pupils can access through school as part of their subject choice. These are completed through DG College and are equivalent to Highers – either one or two Highers depending on the specific apprenticeship course. Since specific to the job/ career they are highly regarded in industry.
- Modern Apprenticeships are work-based training schemes that combine employment and college training.

- Graduate Apprenticeship supports a pupil work towards a degree while working in an organisation. Entry to these would be similar to the general entry requirements to a university course.

J Collins stated that to support Apprenticeships that there will be a Scottish Apprenticeship Week in March and for Foundations Apprenticeships the 'Big Future' campaign is running currently and will continue until 20 March 2022.

M McGill thanked J Collins for her full and very informative presentation and asked Parent Council members if there were any questions. There was one question relation to work experience and whether this is still completed by pupils in school. J Collins and A Brown (who is a Pastoral Care Teacher) explained this is carried out from within the school and Pastoral Care staff do this. Work experience is done by pupils on a need basis rather full year groups going out, as happened previously.

## Headteacher's Report

B Jones started her report by also thanking J Collins, stating that she is an asset to the school and works tirelessly to help ensure pupils leave with a positive destination. With regard to the information presented she stated that:

- If the information about the SDS Event can be provided to the school, it can be posted in the Pupil Bulletin and on the webpage to inform the wider parent/carer group of this event and hopefully encourage participation.
- Since the school will be distributing information booklets to parent/carers very soon about subject choices, the paper-based leaflets can also be distributed at this time.

## Participation

B Jones reported that at the end of last term an outdoor Carol Service was held on Monday 19 December. This was very much enjoyed by the pupils who performed and those who attended.

Eve Crombie (S3 Pupil) has been selected to play for the Girls under 15 Scottish West District Football Team which is a great honour since selection to this area level team is highly competitive.

## Attainment

Prelims are currently in progress. To allow for appropriate social distancing the Games Hall is being used and it is proving to be a good space for this purpose. B Jones stated she is aware that this is first exam diet for 2 years and that the circumstances surrounding sitting exams is challenging for pupils, but that she believes by having this prelim experience, it will be beneficial in preparing pupils for the formal SQA examinations.

### Attendance

B Jones reported that at the end of last term and on the first day of this term attendance in school was at its lowest – around 75%. Since then, the absence has fallen significantly, and it is currently around 7%. For those pupils who are absent, there are only a few not in school who either have Covid or are isolating. B Jones also reported that only one member of staff is currently absent due to Covid. She was therefore pleased to report that within the school, the mitigations still in place, seem to be working.

### Staffing

B Jones stated that the post of Depute HT has been advertised and a number of applications have been submitted and those who have applied are currently awaiting RC Church Approval. Once approval has been given, interview dates will be decided and when these take place, they will involve members of the Parent Council. She would speak directly to M McGill about this in due course.

B Jones then stated that as part of the staffing exercise for next session, staff have been asked about their contract intentions for next session and beyond. She indicated that some staff are looking for a reduction in their contracted hours and while others are considering retirement. Based on this information there will be an Authority recruitment drive commencing in February to fill required posts for the start of the new session in August.

She went on to state that with regard to the school roll, although new S1 numbers have yet to be fully confirmed, they are sitting at around 150 pupils and based on this figure the school roll is likely to be more than 900 pupils next session.

### Ventilation in schools

B Jones explained the purpose of the CO<sub>2</sub> monitors now installed in every room. Their purpose is to encourage good airflow within a specific space. By checking the CO<sub>2</sub> levels they are able to detect the airflow. If the CO<sub>2</sub> levels are high this would suggest the airflow is poor making it easier for any viruses in the room to be contained and transmitted. They therefore help staff be more able to monitor the Airflow and improve the ventilation in the room should the CO<sub>2</sub> level become too high. B Jones stated that because we are in the redeveloped school, most rooms have good ventilation, including those without windows. She went on to explain that when the monitors were introduced at the start of the term they were beeping frequently because they were not properly adjusted from the factory setting to suit the classroom environment. The monitor settings have now been changed and the beeping is far less frequent. B Jones also stated that she is aware that in ventilated spaces it is colder and therefore pupils are allowed to wear warm jumpers/jackets in class but that they should still be wearing their school uniform.

With regard to the Prelims, the Games Hall ventilation has been increased to help ensure pupils sitting exams are not affected by poor ventilation.

M McGill said that it is good to know there is a reason for the beeping and what it enables teachers to do in helping support better airflow that will hopefully also encourage more effective learning.

## Parents Evenings this Session

B Jones explained that face to face Parents' Evenings are still not permitted due to Covid. To help parents/carers have a clearer understanding of their child's progress, all school reports will continue to have a comment. Additionally, parents do have the opportunity to contact their child's Pastoral Care teacher if there are specific queries that need to be addressed.

To provide further support to parents/carers, since the S2 Information Session on subject choices normally held during a Parents' Evening cannot take place, Ms Belille-Sharp will shortly put out a webinar on how to complete the Option Choice Form. This will offer step-by-step guidance and support for children and their parents/carers when completing this form.

M McGill – welcomed this extra support and indicated that she was sure it would be helpful to parents and pupils alike.

## Covid-19

B Jones stated that with regard to possible changes to Covid regulations, the Headteachers will meet again to discuss how these will be implemented once guidance has been issued from the Scottish Government next week.

M McGill asked about Lateral Flow tests (LFT) and if the school has sufficient supply to meet the current demand. B Jones stated that the school does have enough tests and it is currently distributing the original ones. The Authority also has a good supply and pupils are picking these up, as necessary. J Challinor stated that when submitting test information via the Government website the school information is required for children and queried whether the school receives this information. B Jones indicated that the school does not receive information from this source. However, the Government does check attendance of staff on a weekly basis, including noting the numbers that are of absences Covid related. The school produces an absence list and by checking the daily absence the school is able to assess the impact on either a specific class or year group. Logging the school name against the test result of a child helps flag up to Public Health if there is a problem in a particular school.

B Jones also spoke about vaccines and that pupils within the school will shortly be eligible for their second vaccine and should therefore be able to access the NHS drop-in clinics. There will also be a

planned day when pupils will also have access to vaccines in school. Due to efforts and resources being placed on this currently, other vaccinations normally done in and around February will be carried out in May. M McGill asked if there were any other questions on the Headteacher report. There were no questions.

## PFA Report

M McGill stated that K Walters has taken over the role of Chair of the PFA. With regard to the PFA, since they share the need for the Connect membership and insurance, they have reimbursed the Parent Council for half of the invoiced amount.

## Treasurer's Report

L Nosratzadeh stated that all accounts held by the PFA and Parents Council are now online making it easier to make transactions. She informed the Parent council that the current balance in the Parent Council account is £629.27, which includes the Allowance from the Authority and also the PFA reimbursement for the Connect Insurance.

PFA Accounts - The PFA has a total of £6847.76 in both accounts including the 100 Club. B Jones thanked the PFA for offering to give financial support to the Music department so that it could purchase a MacBook that is needed for Music Technology classes. She stated that the PFA are likely to receive another request for financial support to help with the purchase 20 measuring jugs for the Home Economics department. HE requires these specific easy-to-use jugs that have clear measuring instructions and these specific jugs need to be bought independently because they are not available through the Authority's procurement system.

## AOCB

K Walters, who is standing for election at the next Council elections, asked if it would be helpful for Councillors to attend Parent Council meetings. M McGill stated that she would like this to be the case, so Councillors are able to find out what is happening in school and be able to act on this information. J Challinor also stated that it can be incredibly useful to have Councillors attend meetings to help explain any Council policy pertaining to schools and education. B Jones stated she would be more than happy to have Councillors attend as this might help inform Councillor decision making.

There was no other business and M McGill thanked everyone for their attendance and contribution. The meeting closed at 2030.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 16 March 2022 at 1900 via Zoom.