

Minutes of Mintlaw Academy Parent Council Meeting

**Wednesday 16th September 2020 via Skype
(immediately after AGM)**

Present

J Mannion, M Lee, Mrs Lee, Cllr N Smith, N Elrick, V Fowlie (chair), Y Beagrie (treasurer), Cllr J Ingram, E Preston, P McLean, K Osterberg (secretary), Cllr A Simpson, EJ Whitehead (Depute HT), G Oldham (Depute -Welfare and Pastoral Care), L Duthie (HT), G McCluskey (HT and Depute Performance Management)

Apologies

No apologies

Minutes of last meeting

Propose - VF

Second - EP

Chairperson's report

Nothing to report as covered in the AGM

Treasurer's Report

No transactions since last meeting

Current balance £1541.21

Head Teacher's Report

• General Update/phasing back on campus/protocols/use of masks

Really positive start to term, phased re-start worked well. Pupils have been excellent across the school in their attitude and demeanour. There are lots of new protocols for Covid and these are being reviewed constantly. School interpreting government guidelines on mask wearing to make it manageable. Challenges around this as not all pupils come into school with masks. Office has been handing them out but this is not sustainable. Policing of wearing masks is challenging.

• Parents' Nights/ Tracking Reports G Oldham

No Parents Evenings are planned for session 20/21 due to Covid challenges around physical distancing. S1-S3 will receive tracking reports termly. S4-S6 youngsters will receive 3 tracking reports to tie in with their assessment calendar. Parents, as currently can, contact the school should they need to discuss individual pupils. The increased frequency of tracking reports is now in the school calendar. S2 is due a full report as they did not get a full report in S1 during to the timing of lockdown.

This session, teachers will share course content with parents via the website and course content summary will accompany pupil reports. Work is currently being done to achieve consistency across homework, effort and behaviour ratings and to ensure clarity on where each child is in his / her attainment. In the senior phase there will be target and working grades throughout the session. The first tracking reports (S1 and S3) are going out towards the end of this term. S4-6 will

be issued during the last week of term. The S2 full report will go out early next term. Tracking reports will be phased so deadlines do not all fall at once and overwhelm staff.

• **Staffing**

We are currently in a very healthy staffing situation. Extra staff were brought in as the return to school was expected to be Blended Learning which would require more staff and more staff were required in the event of staff being off sick. LD said some staff have been Covid tested but there have been no positive cases. The school roll is also up. LD said that the shortened summer holidays were not restful for staff as e-mails were still coming in on a regular basis. This first term has been hard for staff. Maths department has extra staff until Christmas.

Staff changes

- Amber Wright -Biology (probationer)
- Emilia Wright- Maths
- Roddy Lees- Maths
- Isaac Closs- English (probationer)
- Emily Bell-English
- Lois Wappler- English
- G McCluskey- 0.2 HT (Acting) 1 day a week
- EJ Whitehead Substantive DHT (4th depute headteacher)
- Ali Hynd 0.2 DHT (Acting) 1 day a week covering G McCluskey
- Nicola Robertson- 0.2 PT Faculty (Acting) September 21st covering A Hynd
- Lucy Howie-Maternity Leave (Nov 2020) Health and Well-being leader. New covid regs mean she must leave earlier.
- Debbie Snape-Leaving January 2021. Retiring
- Grace Legge-Leaving January 2021. Retiring
- Raymond Geddes 0.6 FTE (October 2020) 3 days a week
- Gordon Robertson 0.6 FTE (August 2021) 3 days a week
- Lorraine Coleman 0.6 FTE (August 2021) reduced to 3 days a week rather than retiring.

- **Kitchens/ technical areas update**

Visit last week from Learning Estates. Morning spent with LD and Audrey Campbell looking at teaching kitchens and tech areas. Outcome is they need a total refit as a matter of urgency. Possibly begin next summer but dependent on funds.

- **Phasing off-campus**

S5/6 will be allowed off campus all other years to remain on. Litter, and as a result seagulls, are terrible due to all children eating outside. This is to be looked into.

- **ICT bids (PC £5000 donation)**

The donated monies have been put towards a major investment in ICT. LD stated we don't currently know where we are going re another lockdown but school is making sure we have enough equipment for all staff to have an i-pad to facilitate home teaching.

- **Budgets**

Budgets are doing ok, but aware that there is no extra money. £60,000 from Pupil Equity Fund- demonstrating the amount of socio-economic issues in the area- has mostly been focused on IT.

- **Mintlaw Academy Improvement Plan 20/21 (Leadership of Change / E-Learning / Family Learning / Attainment / Welfare / Partnership Working)**

Improvement Plan- LD will share more detail later. PC will have a summary at the next meeting.

- **Where are we now?**

It is an anxious time in the school trying to be one step ahead. Strategies are in place in case of potential local lockdown. SQA changing so trying to keep up with this.

- **SQA 2020/21 EJ Whitehead**

Questions were asked about whether there would be any traditional format exams this year. EJW stated that the Deputy First Minister has asked the SQA to hold off publishing the changes to assessment for this session. The justification for this is that he wants to see the recommendations from the Priestly Report, which is looking into last sessions, before making any decisions about this year.

Currently there are performance management meetings where principal teachers and senior staff are looking at estimates versus final grades to inform final decision making regarding SQA exams this session. EP asked how many pupils were adversely affected by SQA marking down. LD replied we were in line with almost all schools and that in the Mintlaw area we have a high percentage of socio-economic deprivation issues which affects results. Some courses and levels within faculties went up, some stayed the same and some went down. School not always sure about the logic applied to marks changing. Results were better than expected. Increase in higher grades due more to stats and algorithms rather than performance. LD said very comfortable with our estimates and all individual queries have been amicably resolved. EJW continued that the estimating of grades and grade evaluation involved lots of work for staff. Currently meeting with faculties to keep track of changes, any issues arising and how pupils will cope. Concentrating on building confidence in staff and pupils. They want to give pupils a real exam experience, this is problematic with current covid guidelines and will need a lot of work arounds.

- **S1 Transition Evaluation/ Settling in G McCluskey**

G McCluskey said S1 have settled in well. This year was an unusual transition process but we have now realised we can do it successfully online. Parents and pupils were surveyed. 60 parents responded with very highly positive responses. Teams has worked well and it will keep being used to get pupils used to it. Almost 150 parents attended the transition meetings through Glow. Very successful. S1 Maths evening for parents will be done the same way and if also successful English will follow suit. There is an enhanced programme for more identified at risk and vulnerable pupils to be worked on. Family Learning Twitter feed set up by G McC is being used to communicate with parents. He said if you connect with them at S1 they are more likely to stay on.

7. AOCB

- M Lee and Mrs Lee brought up the issue of a serious incident concerning online trolling, bullying and sharing inappropriate content. A pupil had set up a page on Instagram called Mintlaw Memes. G McCluskey responded that this pupil had been soliciting fellow pupils to post embarrassing photos and videos of their school mates. This was reported by pupils who were asked by the school to report the page to Instagram. Police were called the next day to the school to issue a talk. Staff tracked the page and Instagram took down the page by that evening. Pupils responded well in reporting it. There were no new posts as of today. M Lee stated that at that moment his wife was looking at Instagram and it was live again. EP responded that she thought they might be old accounts and she couldn't see any current ones. M Lee said there was a page with a slight name change Mintlawwatch and that had posted two days ago. G McC said they would look into it. He expressed that when out of school online activity was not under the remit of the school but of parents.
- KO said that she had had difficulty using the new Aberdeenshire council "myaberdeenshire" portal to pay for school consumables. The basket had a minimum £5 checkout and the consumables were £1.80. It was felt that this might be a glitch but LD said they will check with Audrey Campbell. EJW, P McL and JM all advised to use Aberdeenshire Pay It as this doesn't have a minimum basket.
- Cllr Ingram said how impressed he was with staff and their hard work. He congratulated the school on its SQA results attributed to the dedication of the staff. He hoped they get a more meaningful rest during the tattie holidays. Cllr Smith also said well done to the school in these strange times.

8. Date of next meeting (General termly meeting)

It was decided to hold a meeting via Skype in November. Date to be decided nearer the time as so much is currently unpredictable and subject to changing.

VF closed the meeting at 19.32.