



Mintlaw Academy
Minutes of Parent Council Skype Meeting

Wednesday 16th June 2021

Present:

V Fowlie (chair), L Duthie (HT), K Osterberg (sec), Cllr Smith, J Mannion, Y Beagrie (treasurer), P McLean, S Noble (DHT), E Preston, N Elrick

Welcome:

VF opened the meeting at 6.05pm and welcomed everyone.

Apologies:

Cllr Simpson, Cllr Ingram, L Newbould

Minutes of last meeting:

no corrections

Propose - VF

Second - EP

Chairperson's report:

VF attended a meeting on Monday of this week with Laurence Findlay, Christine McLennan, Vincent Docherty (Head of Education) and Ashely McDonald of Aberdeenshire council's Education and Psychology Service. They spoke about Family Nurture, a project which promotes the importance of nurture. A series of leaflets have been launched online and they hoped we could promote these through the school. KO said she would post them onto the PC's Facebook page after the meeting.

L Findlay gave a covid update and said Aberdeenshire is in the top 3% uptake of voluntary, at home lateral flow testing.

There will be activities for children in the summer holidays. After the elections the government have committed to free primary school meals. There are no school inspections planned for next year. SQA will have changes in exam format for the way ahead.

Treasurer's Report:

YB said there are no changes from the last meeting making the total balance to £2032.31. VF said after a new ruling we will have to start showing the council what we spend this money on. This year some of this money was donated to the school for IT equipment and it was discussed and agreed that further donations would be a good use of this money as we currently have no running costs. LD said the school would look at what it could be spent on. *Post meeting YB emailed a statement to VF and KO.*

Head Teacher's Report:

- Covid Recovery

LD said that today's covid figures were concerning. The school receives the NHS weekly update and the numbers amongst young people are rising. Shire numbers not high but rising. After the summer holidays they want school life to be as normal as possible. Assemblies are needed. P7-S1 and S2 have been severely disrupted due to covid and extra communication is needed from the school to help them settle in and understand how things are run in the school. From day 1 of this year's P7 Transition it was decided that the children should come into to the school rather than virtually as last year. There has been a lot of conversation around the school and feelings are that there are lots of positives to take out of the last 2 years and onto next year. School roll is currently between 840 and 850 as not all S5/6 returns are confirmed yet. Staffing levels are currently supplied for this number of pupils.

- Staffing

Lots of staffing changes.

Leaving:

Mrs H Richards, who was much liked and celebrated in the Leavers video. She is being replaced by Mrs Colette Fraser (PT ASL).

Mrs C Tough- not replaced yet

Ms E Wright

Mr I Murray

There are lots of applicants for the PE post.

Move to 0.6

Ms L Coleman - being replaced by Ms N McLeod

Mr G Robertson

Mr J Holding

Maternity

Mrs R Lawson

Probationers for 2021/22

Maths

Physics

Business Ed

Drama

12 month 0.4 DHT-Alan Reid. This one year post is specifically aimed at a group of 25 pupils who have been identified as needing extra support, particularly over the last year. Alan's original post is yet to be filled.

- Excelerate Update

Mintlaw Academy has been accepted as a partner school for the Excelerate programme run by the Wood Foundation. The programme is a 3-5 year one which aims to develop quality links between education and the world beyond school. The Wood Foundation will support the school over the course of the programme with high quality professional learning as a means of upskilling staff on building skills for young people.

- Accommodation- HE Visit

LD said HE have been in touch regarding the Home Ec refurbishment and will be coming for a site visit on the 21st June. A decision on where/when to start will be made after this.

- Virtual Awards Ceremony

The video was again really well received. It is a massive amount of work and a huge undertaking, hundreds of hours go into it's creation. It has currently had 1.2k views on YouTube. As it is such a huge project the school will have to review this for the future.

- SQA

This has been a challenging year with the SQA re qualification and assessment. Staff have done everything they can to ensure fairness. There has been a different system this year. Last year's algorithm didn't work for everyone so this year has been all teacher judgement. This has been very challenging for staff and a huge responsibility. Lots of inter-faculty liaising and cross marking. Also liaising with the same faculties in other schools. During the recent In-service days faculties were each working with two other schools. Lots of assessments have been done with rigorous quality assurance within faculties. SN also confirmed the above. A letter from the HT is going out to S4/5/6 families this Friday. A booklet explaining how to appeal is also being posted out to senior phase pupils direct from the SQA. The Tracking Reports that are being sent out with working grades will be the actual grades that the children will have had sent to the SQA by the school. Certificates will be sent in August.

VF asked once these working grades are sent to the SQA will they be changed? LD replied that the system is unprecedented and the appeals process at SQA is unclear. Initially there wasn't meant to be an appeals process due to the rigour of the assessments. SN said there is awareness that some pupils may be disappointed but by and large most are ok. NE said thank you for all the hard work and efforts of the staff and for getting the marks out so quickly, it has made a huge difference to her children avoiding stress over the holidays. She also said she hoped this may be a new way forward dropping the traditional exam format. LD thanked her and said that the SQA is going to be reformed with a new name and a new format. There is scope for a high level discussion on ongoing exam format. VF said that this assessment by teachers couldn't continue every year as it is too much work. LD agreed and said staff have had no breaks and are now exhausted. More support is needed to change the format as potentially the single exam may be no more.

LD said she was impressed with the seniors, they are looking smart and their behaviour and attitude is very good. They are eagerly applying for prefects and head boy/girl.

NE said the children were aware of how hard the staff have been working.

VF said L Findlay mentioned at the meeting that, after the OECD report, there are 12 recommendations for the Curriculum For Excellence. More has to be done getting pupils ready for work life, more appropriate courses are needed.

- **Parents' Meetings/Evenings**

Next session Tracking Reports will be continued. Highlight information on courses, expectations. In-person meetings are not expected soon due to the uncertainty of covid. Currently Parents' Nights options are virtual or phone. Some shire schools have held virtual parents' evenings which have been quite successful, LD asked the committee what they thought. The general consensus (NE, JM, EP, PMcL, VF, KO) was that although face to face is preferred they would be happy to attend a virtual one. KO suggested asking parents once the reports are out, if they would like a parent's evening or whether they are happy just with reports. LD said a survey might be an idea. EP mentioned the resurrection of HT Tuesday where previously families could chat with the HT about their concerns/questions. This could be done over Zoom. LD said as HT she is more than happy to do that. VF said virtual meetings are often better attended.

AOCB

No matters arising.

Date of next meeting

AGM Wednesday 8th September 2021

Close

VF thanked the staff for all their incredible hard work over the last year.

