

DOUGLAS EWART HIGH SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL

Monday 18th February from 6.30pm

MINUTES

Present: M, Byrne, F Simpson, A Perry, K Haggmann, S Sneddon, C Adams, K Campbell, H McGeehan, K McCormick, K Hyslop, H McMiken, F McIlrea, H Smith, R Christie, D Chang, S Simpson, J McColm

Apologies: L McQuat, A McClymont, D Inglis, C Garrity, L Fisher, F Donald, J Cochrane, L Moore

Chairperson: Jill Sloan

1. Maureen Smith attended prior to our Parent Council Meeting at 6.30pm, to discuss the update on the Head Teacher Recruitment. Jill welcomed everyone.
2. Maureen discussed the first interview session which was held over 2 days on February 13th and 14th. Two applicants will go through to 2nd interview to be held at the DEHS on 1st March 2019. The interviews will be held in 2 parts over the day. In the morning each candidate will be asked to produce a 10-minute presentation for a stakeholder group on the most suitable curriculum to meet the needs of every child using the appropriate resources. There will be time for questions after the presentation and any parents involved are encouraged to think of questions prior to the day. The group will consist of a maximum of 18 people made up of parents, pupils and staff (both teaching and non-teaching). It was agreed that 6:6:6 was an appropriate divide. The afternoon will be chaired by Jeff Leaver and a maximum of 3 parents, 2 further elected members and 2 education representatives. Many parents expressed their interest in being involved in this process. Jill to advise Maureen as to who will attend in the afternoon.
3. The minutes of meeting held on the 12th of November 2018 were approved by Sarah Simpson and seconded by Ann Perry.
4. Matters Arising:

Transport (Bus) Update- Jill stated she had corresponded with Douglas Kirkpatrick and the feedback she received stated that should pupils be required to go on a different bus for any reason, a record of this change would be made and kept in the school office to ensure the whereabouts of every child is known at all times.

Jill also received feedback from 1 parent regarding buses not running on time and children being missed for pick up. Further members of the PC then expressed their negative experiences of the school buses. Issues such as; bus driver speeding, using his phone, not stopping, faulty brakes and unfunctional doors were all raised. It is agreed that each member with a complaint regarding the school bus system email Jill with a description of the incident as well as dates and times. At the advice of Elected Members, Jill will then write to Swest Trans and request these continual problems be raised at their next meeting. Elected Members to be copied in on this correspondence.

Promotional Video Update- Mr Miller is happy to continue with work on the school promotional video using the footage they already have. Jill thanked everyone involved for their help in putting together the video for HT recruitment.

5. Correspondence: Jill received the insurance confirmation from 'Connect' which means DEHS Parent Council is insured for the year 2019-2020. 'Connect' is the insurance being used across the board of Dumfries and Galloway Council.
The D&G Parent & Carer Forum issued a letter inviting parents to join a New Involvement Forum – letter sent to all PC members.
6. Statement of Account from Treasurer: Balance £383.30. £350 was paid for the promotional video.

7. Head Teachers Report and Q&A:

Bereavement of Librarian

After the loss of the school librarian who was a very special person to many children and staff in school, pupils posted kind and heartfelt messages on the library door which were then collated and passed to the family. The school choir are due to sing at her funeral and a mini-bus has been organised to allow pupils and staff to attend the funeral and pay respects.

Sustaining Inclusion

The Head Teacher explained the rationale behind and reasons for sustaining inclusion being the key driver in current school improvement developments. An increasing number of pupils with issues across the spectrum had resulted in a slight upturn in exclusion which had been addressed. A pictorial overview of the Sustaining Inclusion Plan was circulated.

The School Improvement Plan has both the theme and aim of sustaining inclusion. A nurture approach to inclusion demands recognition of the changing needs of the community in a proactive way.

The stresses on the Pastoral Support and Additional Needs resources of the school are ever increasing and it has been important to proactively identify where this stress is coming from and deal with it. The inclusion in recent years of the former Community Learning and Development staff, now Youth Work Services, provided the school with a period of grace before it took ownership of the lack of alternative resource and curricular provision to sustain inclusion.

To further support the core work of Pastoral Support and Additional Support needs one initiative is the provision of a core Sustaining Inclusion team consisting of a Personal Development Teacher [Mrs Bradley], a dedicated Looked After and Accommodated Worker [Mrs Hannah], a dedicated Social Emotional and Behavioural worker [Mr Grant [0.4] for the Senior Phase enhanced by the inclusion of the Opportunities for All worker [Mrs McCulloch] working with the whole school cohort. This group is further supported by the Principal Teachers of Support and Additional Support Needs and the two Principal Teachers dedicated to Developing the Young Work Force.

Key to the ongoing development of the above are many of the other initiatives planned for the year which have been issued to staff under separate cover. This development continues to enhance the supportive structure through the nurturing environment which is the Douglas Ewart High School. This has also been the focus for both Staff Collegiate Meetings and will be central to the upcoming February Inset Days.

Inclusion initiative was made available and was explained.

Pupils are being supported to leave with positive destinations which include; non-academic qualifications, higher attendance rates, referrals to CAHMS and social work correspondence. It was also noted that mental health problems are currently on the increase and this would require more attention and focus, part of which is the reason for the creation of nurture facilities within the school including the redesign of the former staff-room and interim school library. The relocation of Social Work to the school is anticipated as being of major benefit.

Money over and above equity funding has been directed to support the developments.

Pupil equity funding is still being recognised in the school as an issue as the amount the school receives is dependent on the number of free school meal applications. There are many parents who would be entitled to free school meals but do not apply. Jill felt a reminder to parents to apply for this is required and it was agreed that it will be raised in the next upcoming newsletter.

8. Councillors Report:

The main concern is budgeting. The council expressed they have limited funds which leads to making difficult decisions. We received the feedback that the council are currently looking into working with statutory and potential investments.

9. AOB

A parent raised the concerns over smoking near the school grounds. The Head Teacher stated that he is unable to do anything about smoking which is not on school grounds. No Head Teacher can legally take cigarettes from a young person. Information regarding the health risks of smoking and having respect for all has been delivered at all year group assemblies and any pupil who is caught selling cigarettes or smoking on school grounds is disciplined. The police are as proactive as possible in policing smoking in the environs of the school and using their powers to address the issue. The Head Teacher did make the point that given the cost of cigarettes it was surprising that young people had money to burn.

Date of Next Meeting:

Monday 29th of April 2019 at 7pm.

Jill concluded the meeting by thanking all members for attending and if anyone had any queries regarding the head teacher interviews to get in touch.

Meeting closed 8:40pm.