

# DOUGLAS EWART HIGH SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL

Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> of June 2019 at 7pm.

## MINUTES

### Present:

K Hagmann, M Byrne, F Simpson, D Chang, A McClymont, L McQuat, K McCormick, C Adams, H Smith, S Simpson, C Garrity, F McElrea, R Christie, Mr Robertson.

### Apologies:

G Plunkett, F Donald, L Moore, S Sneddon, J Cochrane.

1. Jill welcomed everyone and introductions to Mr Webb were made around the table.
2. It was noted that no further correspondence has been made since the previous Parent Council Meeting on Monday the 18<sup>th</sup> of February.
3. The minutes from the meeting on Monday the 18<sup>th</sup> of February were approved by Fiona McElrea and seconded by Marian Byrne.

### Matters Arising:

4. Due to the unsatisfactory response from SWESTrans, Douglas Kirkpatrick was contacted again, and a meeting was held regarding the bus transport to and from school. A member from the parent council (R Christie) and Mr Webb attended the meeting. The minutes from the meeting have not yet been circulated but it was noted that part of the problem was due to poor communication between the DEHS and Stagecoach and that parents have not been made aware as what should be expected by bus transport and a working agreement needs to put in place between the bus company and the school. Jill emphasised that any incidents or issues with the bus transport needs to be reported quickly and with specific details A member of the parent council suggested that perhaps a few senior pupils should be given the role of monitoring any issues on their own bus i.e. late buses, no seats or any other travel issues and reporting straight to the school office on that day. It was noted that Sean Dodds will continue to monitor all buses. The issue of parking buses drop off /pick up children was raised, and Mr Webb has asked the police to look at this situation. In the meantime, traffic cones are being used to prevent cars parking in areas designated for buses.
5. D&G Parent Forum letter inviting all any parents to join a New Involvement Forum has been sent out to all Parent Council Members.
6. There was no Treasurer report.
7. Jill expressed how further budget cuts are being enforced and drew attention to the paper which had been circulated prior to the meeting from the D&G Parent Forum simplifying the budget implications in parent friendly terms. The parents expressed concerns as to how these cuts would impact the school's teaching and learning and how best they could support Mr Webb, the staff and the school. Many ideas of how this could be achieved were discussed but with no real conclusion. Councillor Hagmann advised of a new fund which is going to be introduced (Borderlands funding), but it has not yet been utilised. It is currently on hold and only available for one year. She also advised of stakeholder events which are once again going to be held across the region to allow feedback to be given from parents/staff of the school regarding the best choices for the pupils and their educational experience. A parent praised the positivity of the staff at DEHS bearing in mind the impacts and effects the budget cuts may have on

everyone. Mr Webb will be attending upcoming meetings regarding the budget cuts and will continue to advise the PC of consequences.

8. Jill had been approached by a parent to discuss the 'Wood Foundation Philanthropy Initiative'. Mr Webb stated that he has previously had experience working with this initiative and the DEHS is already involved with this project with the pupils in the Junior Phase as part of Business Studies. This gives children in the school a great opportunity to get involved with the community and have a great impact on the local charity.

#### Head Teachers Report and Q&A:

9. A parent drop-in session was held by Mr Webb last week. It was noted that there was a greater turnout than expected so some parents had to wait for over an hour for their appointment. Mr Webb hopes to hold drop-in sessions once a term and he asked the Parent Council for ideas in how best to structure these sessions. The feedback given was that meetings could be taken in small groups and not individually as will be less time consuming and the sessions should be subject focused. It was emphasised that the expectations and the purpose of the drop-in session should be made clear. The next drop in session will focus on the new uniform policy.
10. Mr Webb explained that 4 new probationer teachers will be joining the staff team after the summer holiday, across subjects of; Physical Education, Drama, Geography and Biology. However, there is still a vacancy for a full-time history teacher. This will be worked around if the vacancy is not filled.
11. Mr McCann (Physical Education Teacher) is due to return in the middle of June on a phased return. This means that the physical education department will be fully staffed after the summer. A parent mentioned that her child enjoyed the extra fitness classes that were provided during the shortfall in PE teachers; therefore, this may be investigated as an ongoing activity.
12. Applications for Depute Head Teacher is due to close on Wednesday the 5<sup>th</sup> of June. Mr Webb said he is hopeful of filling the post with the right person with the skills and knowledge for this post. There will be a two-stage interview process with the final interview scheduled for Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> June and a member of the Parent Council will be present.
13. Mr Webb also discussed the 'short life working group' which promotes positive relationships between pupils and staff throughout the school and aims to give the school more structure. Mr Webb handed out a draft policy (Positive Relationships & Resilience Policy) to each member of the parent council and each aspect was discussed. The policy is split into 4 parts; in which positive and negative behaviour is recognised and information regarding each child's behaviour and success is tracked through the new SEEMIS system when it is brought into place. The question as to when a parent is made aware of a child's behaviour was raised and discussed. The issues surrounding use of mobile phones within school will also be reviewed as part of this working group.
14. A nurture hub/base will be set up and in place for August. Mr Webb explained the purpose of this is to allow pupils to spend time in a quiet and relaxed environment. This is a process to support each pupil as an individual. Mr Webb said Vivienne Bradley has volunteered to assist in the nurture hub and introduce art therapy to pupils. Staff and support teachers will monitor any patterns found.
15. Mr Webb discussed the issue of school uniform and expressed his intention to introduce a school uniform code for all pupils starting from the return to school in August. Mr Webb made clear only colours of black, white or red are suitable for wearing at school. Designer logos and denim are no longer acceptable. Black trousers or skirts would be acceptable with a white or black shirt and school tie. It is yet undecided as to whether school polo shirts will be allowed. Most parents were in favour of moving straight to shirt and tie. A parent asked what the plan was for enforcing school uniform and it was suggested that, if pupils do not follow the uniform rule, they will not be allowed to attend extra curricular activities, school trips or fun days. Fortnightly assemblies will be held to ensure that uniform is being

strictly followed. Councillor Hagmann reminded the Parent Council to make parents aware of the clothing grant that may be available to some families. Mr Webb will issue a uniform policy asap in order for parents of new S1 pupils to be organised.

16. Mr Webb told the PC that the issue of young people smoking is becoming a concern. An incident that day had seen as many as 40 pupils (from all year groups) having to be firmly spoken to by Mr Webb and PC Jackson, the school police officer. Smoking Matters have been contacted to try and inform and educate pupils of the long-term effect on their health. The youth services team were also recommended by a parent council member to try and rid the emergency issue of underage gang smoking. If pupils are caught smoking, Mr Webb explained that it will be reported into the behaviour system and parents will be contacted.
17. Pupil Captains will now be selected as being the best pupils for the role which may not necessarily mean one boy and one girl. There will also be house captains appointed and they will be nominated by the year group and staff through a vote. From this, the remaining candidates will be asked to give a short presentation. After the presentation, those successful will be asked to complete a final interview with Mr Webb and another member of staff. House captains and prefects will be decided after the 3 stages have taken place.
18. Mr Webb has decided to turn 'Pupil Voice' into 'Pupil Council'. This decision has been made to allow for a more formal structure.
19. The DEHS will be one of 4 pilot schools in the region to have a 'Digital Learning Hub' which will mean a room being converted with screens and cameras to allow teaching to be carried from another location. This will hopefully provide more opportunities for Highers and Advanced Highers and give pupils a wider range of subjects to study. A parent raised the concern that whilst digital learning has its place it, by no means, should replace a classroom teacher.
20. Update of the school improvement plan- due to Mr Webb recently joining as Head Teacher, principal teachers assisted in the improvement plan this year. An extension was given to evaluate the current year. Parents will receive an input which provides feedback for Mr Webb and the staff to develop.

#### Councillors Report:

Concerns over less nutritional school meals and fizzy juice being sold in the canteen have been raised. Parents feel that there should be healthy alternatives introduced. Councillor Hagmann has offered to take this issue forward. The parent council express their concerns and asked were happy for Councillor Hagmann to investigate this issue further.

#### AOB:

The DEHS Facebook page is up and running, all parents are encouraged to like and share the achievements and progress that is posted.

It was brought to the PC's attention that grants are available for secure bike stands outside the school. Each bike stand would roughly cost £600. Surveys will be held to ascertain the number of children cycling to school. A parent suggested that this may be a good project for the Pupil Council.

#### Date of Next Meeting:

Monday 16<sup>th</sup> of September 2019 – 7pm

Jill concluded the meeting by thanking those for attending.