
Peebles High School

Parent Council

**JUNE 2020
E-NEWSLETTER**



**COVID Topics and August return
PC's vision**



School rebuild update



Support for Parents and Carers

Dear Parents and Carers,

Following the rapid and changing landscape about the return to school in August we, as a Parent Council, have been busy championing the questions and concerns coming from parents and carers in partnership with the school and beyond.

Firstly, we would like to thank Mr Wilson and all staff in the school for the incredible job they have done this session with the fire and Covid 19. We know you must all be very tired, thank you so much. We hope the summer brings some respite for us all and we start afresh with the normal Peebles High School ambition for our young people and we hope a much happier year.

Although the announcement from the Scottish Government is about aiming for 100% return and we are hopeful that all students may be in school as normal in August - it cannot, however, be guaranteed. So the points below are important now, in August or if we are unlucky enough to have a second wave.

The recent questions/comments we asked for feedback on about returning in August fall into the following categories:

- **Health and Safety for all** (now that the numbers of children going to school are far larger than hubs) n.b this includes mental health of young people and staff.
- **Additional Needs** for learning- equity of access- support online and returning to school.
- **Online learning & School learning** - Assuming blended learning becomes part of our landscape and if we get localised waves of infection, how can we continuously improve online provision with more live lessons and pupil engagement?
- **Timetables/Capacity** - Can all subjects and practical learning return for all learners in all years- we **do NOT** support a reduction on weighting in practical component for exams.
- **Reports and teacher feedback** (impact due to Fire AND Covid 19).
- **Equity of learning for all** - We must not leave vulnerable students behind.
- **Transition for P7s to S1** - Ensure a positive experience.
- **Exams - on/off** - What will SQA do if there is a local lockdown from Covid/- please apply allowances as they have done nationally but just on a local level.
- **Travel** - Challenges for working parents and family groups.

Our Vision as a Parent Council is therefore:

“Children return to school when it is safe to do so. When they do all students, all year groups, all subjects AND all practical subjects should have equal access to face to face school learning.

Live learning should meet the standard of face to face teaching as the aim for best practice in our school”

Nb It should be noted we need **MORE space** in our school, we DO NOT have enough classrooms since the fire with or without Covid 19- We need an Art modular building and one for Learning Support.

Options for blended learning

The Parents Council’s view is that we must ensure a positive learning experience for all. We do not want a return to school, as we did and quite understandably with the fire, where many students in senior phase do not have their own teacher and students in S1-S3 (Broad General Education) do not have electives. We have time now to plan. We also, as per our vision, expect students who chose subjects due to their talents in practical subjects should not have that part of the course weighted lower due to Covid 19.

**The pros and cons of different models must be shared with parents.
We are asking Scottish Borders Council to engage with Parent Councils in the authority before 13h July announcements**

Rebuild of school post fire

- Clearing work will recommence on site very soon now that the Consultation received.
- A good level of response and consultation with pupils was also positive.
- The Feasibility study expected to conclude in July.
- The Scottish Government Funding application expected to be open in September. SBC have declared £15m revenue shortfall predicted this year due to the pandemic costs. Peebles remains on the list for capital funding allocation; however, the revenue position may impact ability to borrow the value needed for all projects.
- Full community consultation will still be required before funding is applied for to demonstrate support for the project.
- Chief Exec (SBC), Director of Assets and Project Team are meeting over next few weeks but optimistic that timelines shouldn’t suffer too much.
- Planning application will not be able to be submitted until the full consultation has taken place.
- Drawings should be included in that phase of consultation.
- Impact of Covid-19 on school design hasn’t yet been fully considered as still unknown but it is on the project team’s radar.

What is the PC role in the consultation process?

Once more detailed proposals (design and phasing) are available, the PC will be invited to participate in the consultation alongside staff, community groups and pupils. Catriona Bhatia will consult with the PC on any news over the summer.

Ongoing support for Parents and Carers

As lockdown reduces in the coming months, can we remind parents and carers to enquire about free school meals and clothing grants as this triggered many resources during lockdown. Contact SBC for advice or see their website.

https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20014/social_care_and_health/1016/coronaviruses_covid-19_school_updates/3

Furthermore, we are working with school via Mrs Kinahan's in the school Swap Shop to offer a limited free (mostly second hand) school uniforms in drop off points in the community over the summer. More news to follow on that soon via email and our social media.

Mrs Moretta has shared an assembly to students this week on keeping safe on the holidays please have a look on their Ipads as it is open to all parents and carers.


Please know that we are here if you have any concerns or questions about what is happening – please follow information on the SBC website and an additional resource for parents is the Connect website, who will be available all summer too, to listen to parents questions and they have lots of information on hand, <https://connect.scot/>


It's been a tough session but, as ever, Peebles High School has risen to the challenge and we hope everyone has a wonderful summer- keep safe and hopefully if we play our part we will back to normal in August.

The Parent Council

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