**PEEBLES HIGH SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL**



**Parent Council Meeting**

**16 December 2020**

**Teams Meeting**

**Attendees**:

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| --- | --- |
| Glenda Barton, Chair, Parent Council (PC) | c. 25 parents attended |
| Campbell Wilson, Head Teacher (CW)  Justin Noon (Depute Head)  Dr Kirstie Carvalho (Learning & Teaching Framework) | Donna Moretta (Depute Head)  Gillian Geddes (Support for Learning) |

**Apologies:**

Morven Smith, Rachel Beatton

**Minutes**

**Welcome, Apologies & Minutes Glenda Barton, Chair**

The Chair welcomed all attendees and presenters to the meeting and reiterated that this is a ‘safe’ space to speak freely, and is not recorded.

The previous meeting minutes were approved.

A request for funding has been received from the Music department and agreement is sought to spend £2297 of Parent Council funds on 2 x ¾ size double basses.

**Support for Learning and Neurodiversity Gillian Geddes**

Gillian Geddes presented a slide pack – see [slides](https://phsparents.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/PC-meeting-Dec-20-ALL-SLIDES.pptx)

**Main points:**

SFL Juniors: for S1 – S3 – literacy, numeracy & wellbeing

The Store: nurture net – alternative curriculum for those not coping with mainstream education

The Hive (previously called Motivate): Snr phase – for those in danger of not attaining 5 qualifications at any level. Work independently. Aim to get 5 qualifications and positive destination.

Pupil Support info – for all staff – those known to SfL – numeracy/literacy issues – strategies that can be used for them

SEEMiS – names are highlighted on register – summary of that pupil as a reminder of strategies needed – eg reading out loud etc. Key points only.

Pupil card – they take ownership of this – things that they find difficult – things that will help them - things they want the teacher to know about them. Now digitised so removes stigma (no handing out in class)

Neurodiversity Group recently set up – better communication between SfL and parents. Give you strategies to use. Use the same strategies - two way communication.

**Questions raised:**

**Will the children get access to the help within the padlet – Strategies for studying, using the technology in Microsoft immersive reader, essay planning strategies for dyslexics are all necessary for children particularly in the senior phase.**

At the moment it is for staff but if that is something children/parents would think is useful we could create one, we could definitely consider that. It could be bespoke for parents.

In the New Year – roll out to extended Leadership Team – end of January.

**Parents are asked to email the Parent Council if you would like to join the Neurodiversity Group – phspc@outlook.com**

**Update School Improvement Plan (SIP) Priority 2: Donna Moretta Pupil Support Structure & Nurture**

Mrs Moretta presented a slide pack – see [slides](https://phsparents.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/PC-meeting-Dec-20-ALL-SLIDES.pptx) from slide 7

**Main points :**

**Pupil Support Structure**

The Pupil Support Structure is under review as the current Pastoral system is overstretched and should be incorporated with Support for Learning under one system.

When looking at other schools, the role of Additional Needs Assistants (ANA’s) – called Pupil Support Assistants – focused on Health & Wellbeing, attendance, restorative work, liaised with families, triaged pastoral, which freed up pastoral PT to deal with pupils in crisis and look at attainment.

There is an Additional Support Needs (ASN) review by SBC now to cover all schools.

What can we do in the meantime? We will appoint 3 temporary Pupil Support Assistants (1 per house) and tweak the current ANA remit to include:   
Attendance, low level pastoral matters, restorative approaches, triage referrals to pastoral PTs. This pilot to run January to May then be reviewed.

**SBC Nurture Programme**

Bespoke package will be created for PHS.

**Questions raised:**

**How could parents support your work?**

In terms of pastoral support structure - PHS is a community school – I have some ideas – need to go to staff first - and I’ll be looking for parental support to run with those ideas and ‘sell’ them.

**How many pupils did each ANA /PSA look after (at the other schools you looked at)?**

The most I saw was 200, and that was Graham High – they were quite similar to PHS – different support interventions, their pastoral system not that different, but the others were very different and much more manageable case load. Eg Lasswade – there was a Head of House (caseload for YP in crisis), Assistant Head of House (smaller caseload, fewer YP in crisis), a PSA (Pupil Support Assistant) all in one House.  They also have 4 x Youth Workers based in the school who worked across the Houses.

**What support is there for staff training on Nurture so they can model this?**

Staff working group for Nurture. We want to start with the staff feeling nurtured, who can then model that. That’s where we will start.

**An ambition of creating a truly nurturing and inclusive culture is great. What are your thoughts around how to deal with unconscious biases so that relationships are truly tailored to young people’s different learning styles?**

Yes, that’s what Nurturing approaches is all about – learning is developmental – there has to be professional learning. One part of the training that was positively evaluated was the professional dialogue and challenging our own values.

We want our teaching staff to recognise they are in that privileged position to have that positive lasting effect on our Young People.

**I like the idea of pupil support incorporating SfL, pastoral, Enhanced support, SDS, etc. Presumably a greater link with Learning & Teaching will support all?**

Yes, they all go hand in hand. Our priority is L&T but you can’t have that without positive relationships.

**Learning and Teaching update Mr. Noon / Dr Carvalho**

A slide pack was shared (see [slides](https://phsparents.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/PC-meeting-Dec-20-ALL-SLIDES.pptx) from slide 25) of the L&T pupil & parent survey results.

**Questions raised:**

**At what stage in education were the pupils who were asked?**

All young people in all year groups engaged in the survey.

**Maybe success criteria and intention is more useful for parents (to support them at home?) as pupils aren’t thinking about big picture. Maturity issue?**

I’ve spent time at primary school – it’s something I see at a very young age – our Young People were all involved, all year groups. I don’t think it’s a maturity issue, I think it’s that eclectic practice and not having a consistent approach in how we use these success criteria.

**Not surprising that pupils didn’t rate highly ‘the work isn’t too easy and makes me think hard’. How does the teaching team interpret this? Pupils need to recognize that being challenged is good for them**.

Interestingly I think that was middling to bottom in the parent feedback as well. We know from research that “ making young people think and think hard” has the biggest impact in what teachers can do – the most successful learning is when you’re right at the edge of your comfort zone, not way out, just slightly. We may find is that they were thinking it meant way out of their comfort zone. That’s why continual feedback in lessons is so important so teachers get to know the tipping point.

**Perhaps starting to ask pupils for teacher feedback would develop this – do the pupils appreciate they should have a voice? Difference between asking for feedback and teachers acting on that feedback.**

First – their voice – one of the things we want to do in January is go back to them with the survey results and how their voice is influencing the framework. We will ask our YP before we’ve made changes, give staff time to embed this in their practice and then go back later. I’d love to be a school where we really listen to everyone and our whole process is open, honest, transparent, not do anything anonymous, everyone on board to do everything as well as we can. Customer service is as important in teaching and that is a mindset shift and it’s something we need to work on. How do we have a young person being able to feed back on a lesson, a learning structure. We absolutely value their voice and make changes on the basis of that.

**Is there too much of a culture of ‘not failing’ UK wide that increases the motivation to avoid challenge?**

That’s the bread & butter of what teachers do – we generally know where pupils are going to find challenging. That comes through relationships. Continuously improving our mindset. The power of failing. If we don’t fail, we don’t improve, that’s the bottom line. Not everyone knows everything, that’s a key message for our young people.

**Open Forum S2 Campbell Wilson / All**

**Questions raised:**

**At the end of S2 will the pupils review the subjects they’ve picked and if they are uncomfortable is there an opportunity to change?**

No, there is not a choice point at the end of S2. It’s a 2 year elective. S2 is the only year where there isn’t a choice point. In terms of changing a subject, they’ve already missed most of it, there’s isn’t that change normally, of course if there is a significant issue then we take a case-by-case consideration – you can speak to pastoral - but it’s not something we look to do to retime-table.

**General Q: there is no study time – will that be reconsidered ? I’m assuming there won’t be much new info being introduced in lessons and a lot of pupils are very worried about their future as this is part of their predicted grade.**

Because of the cancellation of exams and the extension to the deadline to submitted grades, we want to give our Young People the best chance they can have, so to give over whole weeks to study leave would significantly cut back Learning & Teaching time and we want to strike the right balance of that time so we don’t award grades based on how they’re performing at end of Jan when they haven’t done the whole course.

**Jan – Feb when notionally doing prelims – I wouldn’t expect new work at that time**

No, I understand. The lateness of the final estimates allows us to carry out later assessments beyond the Jan/Feb dates that have been communicated.

**To get the best outcome on these assessments, it’s hard for young people not to think of them as a proper exam, so this is causing anxiety, particularly if you do a later one, could you build study leave around this?**

The Snr Leadership Team (SLT) will absolutely reflect on this. We’ll be using all the time we have to get the best out of our young people. We don’t want to overburden them with lots of assessments. I hear that parents want study built in to that plan and I will raise this with the SLT when we’re back from holidays and discuss it:

* Providing study leave during assessments
* Assessments well spaced so not back to back
* Reassurance that new teaching won’t continue during assessments (as wouldn’t normally happen during exam time)

**What happens to young people who have interviews during assessments? Is there flexibility?**

Yes, interviews can take place at that time and we’ll work with young people to accommodate. We can’t have assessments on different days as they need to be integrous. We’ll work with students on that to make it fair to all.

**Because of the different subject combinations, surely pupils will completely miss new content that is taking place when they have an exam for another subject?**

No, I can give reassurance, that won’t be the case. Because we have doubles & trebles, they are sitting examinations when they have that subject.

**If young people have neuro diversity issues like concentration, eg a triple period, and taking their test on the third period, what support is in place for these challenges?**

For all our young people who require additional arrangements we’ll be putting in place whatever is required. SQA do not want evidence of additionality requirements. But where we know it’s required, that will be in place.

**Additional assessment arrangements not confirmed until end January? What support will these young people have in place, by end Jan?**

We have a huge task still to complete. We have over 300 requests for additional support (for different courses). Will it be clarified by the end of Jan? I’d need to check with SfL to clarify but in time for the assessments of individual young people that will be decided by then.

**Will S5 be undertaking assessments the same time as S6?**

Yes

**Doing a prelim/assessment after several periods of lessons will be stressful, esp S4 who haven’t done exams before**

Yes, that’s a fair point and I’ll feed that back to staff. Sitting assessments in classrooms they are taught in, we view that as beneficial for students. Some pupils have required separate accommodation as they find the exam hall stressful, we envisage less requests for that as they will be in familiar surroundings.

**Head Teacher update and Q &A Campbell Wilson**

**Covid:**

With only two days to go before Christmas, we are all hoping for no more positive cases before the holiday not least because any instructions to self isolate now would jeopardise plans for Christmas gatherings. Thank you to everyone for supporting your children’s attendance so well. We know that other schools in the Borders have faced a significant number of positive cases in the last two weeks and attendance has been impacted significantly as a result. Our attendance remains robust at over 90 %. Thank you. Our staff have redoubled their efforts to implement our control measures relating to Covid in order to see us over the line. Thank you for the support with face-masks too. 4 or 5 being issued a day now which is a huge reduction on the hundreds a day of a few weeks ago.

**Lockdown learning gap filling lessons:**

I have extended the deadline until the last day of the first week back (Friday 8th January) to generate more offers to fill any perceived gaps in learning. I will publish the offer of lessons before the end of January and lessons will be available for S1-3 students to join. One interesting offer has been from Drama as they feel the gap for learners was the loss of practical lessons during lockdown. I am seeking advice on whether after school lessons in school will be allowed but don’t expect an answer this side of Christmas.

**Staffing:**

Not meaning to tempt fate, and with everything firmly crossed, I can’t’ remember a term that has been so settled in terms of staffing nor has there ever been such high staff attendance over the traditionally difficult months of November and December. It speaks to the indomitable spirit and fortitude of our staff that this is the case during a global pandemic and given the experiences of the last 13 months. That said, there are a few developments to inform you of:

Paul Regan extends his stay with us in the Social Subjects after successful interview for the maternity cover post for Mrs Thornborrow in History.

Pastoral PTs: two of our Pastoral PTs are moving on to new challenges in different schools: Mrs Gess is joining Plockton High School; Mrs Jackson is moving to Carnoustie High. Adverts will be on myjobscotland soon.

Kate Angus will join our P.E team from Preston Lodge after being the successful candidate in competitive interview last month.

Jane McIver will join our Additional Needs team from Earlston High School at the start of the new term.

**Peebles High School rebuild:**

As was seen on social media last week, the school build projects are being discussed by SBC councillors on Thursday at their full committee meeting. Part of this discussion is an update from officers that a further feasibility study is being carried out to consider whether a full new build would be a viable option.  The assumption to date had been that this option was not viable due to financial constraints however, due to the desire to limit disruption to pupils as far as possible and the rising costs of a rebuild option, it is recommended that all options be considered.  It is important to note that this is a process the council are expected to go through with any project of this scale and reflects the complexity of our situation and the site.

Architects are only looking at the current site and this option will include all facilities already being considered for the rebuild and refurbishment option as per the vision the parent council put forward earlier this year.  A paper on the final options is expected to be presented to councillors in late January/early February for them to make a decision on which option to take forward into the consultation stage of the process.

The formal consultation process would then take place, with the architects and project team sharing details of initial concepts with the parent council virtually.  It is still expected that details of the option being taken forward and how the consultation will be carried out will be ready to be shared at the parent council meeting in February.

**School of Rugby:**

I signed a new contract with the SRU today bringing over £4000 to support the development of rugby in the school over the next calendar year.

S1 classes

I wanted to say to S1 parents – they have been an absolute joy and I’ve enjoyed teaching all of their classes. I have great expectations for them.

**Merry Christmas:**

Thank you, everyone. We know things have been challenging for students, teachers and parents since last November. Merry Christmas! We couldn’t have done it without your support.

**Questions raised:**

**Bus to W Linton P15 - – bus broke down and 2 buses of kids ended up on same bus – not very Covid safe. That’s not SBC policy. There’s no checking that masks are being worn on the bus.**

I wasn’t aware but I’ll look into it.

**Additional Assessment Arrangements – the more time people get before a formal assessment that they know what support is going to be in place for them, in plenty of time before it – the longer the better would be great.**

Absolutely, Gill Geddes will lead on that

**Action: Gill Geddes to feedback to young people who need that support.**

**We’ve not had a bulletin posted since March on the website. Caroline (in the office) removed pupil names and shared the bulletin - could we have this again?**

Bulletin is shared on pupil Teams page ipads at the moment – it’s updated every morning, a live document – they can read it anytime. The admin team can look into how to share this with parents.

**Action: give a brief on how to find it on the ipad (for pupils) .**

**Will there be a choices evening for S3 in February?**

Yes, either in person or virtually. Not in the calendar yet but expect some communication the first week back in January about all the different evenings.

**Action: PC to progress funding request for 2 x double basses for Music department as no objections received.**

The meeting closed at 9.10pm.

**Next meeting**

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Twitter: @PHSparents @PeeblesHigh