**PEEBLES HIGH SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL**



**Parent Council Meeting**

**21 January 2021**

**Teams Meeting**

**Attendees**:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Glenda Barton, Chair, Parent Council (PC) | c. 70 parents attended |
| Campbell Wilson, Head Teacher (CW) |  |

**Apologies :** none

**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.

Our next meeting will include an SBC update on new school, so the date is TBC as we are moving our original date to accommodate this.

There is also an induction open evening for Primary Schools on 10 February.

**Online Learning survey issued to parents. Interim update:**

Campbell Wilson shared [slides](https://phsparents.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/January-2021-Feedback-on-Remote-Learning-1427-210221.pptx) on results so far.

Have received 11 written complaints & concerns from S3 parents about not enough work being set.

376 responses so far. Biggest we have ever had.

On balance with the complaints/concerns we’ve had and the results of survey, we can do better for our young people. So, there will be an enhanced offer of work for S1 – S3 from 1st February:

**Enhancements to PHS Home Learning Provision for BGE classes from February 1st 2021.**

The Extended Leadership Team at PHS have reviewed our provision for the young people in our Broad General Education (S1, S2 and S3) in preparation for an extended period of lockdown.

Listening to the parents we are proposing two adaptations to our current expectations. From February 1st we will add **clear lesson extensions** and an **enrichment library** to our PHS expectations.

Our new expectation is that all lessons will make clear what **‘must’** be completed, and this will be targeted at the 45mins time allowance. A record of young people who do not engage with this work is being created by teachers and where patterns emerge pastoral teachers may contact parents to support families in improving engagement. Most lessons will also include a **‘could or extension’** section that students may wish to undertake, or parents may direct their child to if they feel they would benefit from additional work.

The second enhancement to our home learning expectations will be that each department will create a folder of website activities that have been checked by PHS teachers and recommended on the basis that they are focussed on and enhancements to the appropriate topics and age group for our young people. These resources will be self-marking activities and games and may be more plentiful in some subjects than others but should provide a further relevant extension for those who would benefit from this. The folders for this **enrichment library will** be found in the files section of the S1, S2 and S3 Year Group TEAMs.

Jeremy Lee

We’re also considering making a list of young people who would like more challenge and what kind of challenge.

**Parents Open Forum S1 – S3**

**Questions raised:**

**I found it hard to respond to the survey as teaching is subject based – not the same across subjects.**

Yes, I accept the survey doesn’t cover that. Please use PHS enquiries email address (or Parent Council email) to contact the school - if a parent is dissatisfied, we need to know more detail. The survey has had a greater response than normal, and it may be because the survey was quick and short to complete.

**Unions have a strong say at all levels. Why is the school so dependent on unions and their views? Why do they have to be consulted on this issue?**

They will be informed – it’s not a consultation, but it’s right they have a place – I have a responsibility to my staff and their wellbeing and what I’m asking is within their T&Cs and also sensitive to fact that many of them are parents and home learning too. It’s right that their views should be sought.

**Are we on track to deliver the usual curriculum via home learning?**

The ‘lockdown gap’ has been much discussed. And the gap from the fire. Our young people have missed out more than any other child in Scotland. We’re constantly considering the gap. The majority or teachers are saying it’s not as good as being in school, but pace of learning is good.

**Why can’t the BGE (S1-S3) have the same %age of learning as the senior phase? Why is it only 50%?**

We have to strike the balance. It’s difficult because the most able will be frustrated and the least able could be overwhelmed. The parents survey shows the balance isn’t far out. I accept our hardest working will be frustrated but that doesn’t mean we should give that 100% that would swamp many – there is a mental health/wellbeing issue. It’s a balance and we’re adjusting it from 1st Feb a little.

Glenda: we raised at SBC Parent Forum today that this is a national issue. E-learning – we are tweeting etc. there is a whole resource of online learning from E-Sgoil on our website, West OS – over 600 lessons recorded – on Glow account. It’s all on our PC website. SQA have taken cognisance of this issue for this year/next year. [Click here for Parent Council Website Learning Resources.](https://phsparents.org.uk/online-learning-resources)

CW: Our enrichment & extensions library will benefit parents. I’m here to listen and if you think there are better things, we can do to get the balance right I’m listening.

**What’s in place at SBC for teachers who are parents?**

SBC are a flexible employer, and they have to take into account teachers who have children at home too.

**If teachers are occupied in school hubs, could other SBC staff supervise instead?**

We had 16 kids in school today. One snr leader (Mrs Moretta), 1 snr teacher, 1 classroom teacher, 2 ANAs in school. We’ve been able to run school, so most staff have been working from home, with a rota for covering the hub.

**Who backfills when teachers are in the hub?**

There is no backfill. The teachers who are at home are working from home. My staff have never been so busy and under pressure. I see concern about the power of the unions, but things have never been so hard for teachers and we’re lucky to have a staff who are doing the best that they can.

**The Chair asked to take back our grateful thanks to staff for the quantity and quality of live lessons as this has been much better this session.**

I’ve encouraged our staff to do more live lessons. A parent has asked for more notice for them – I’ve taken that point on board as a recommendation.

**I’m concerned my S3 will not be ready to move to S4 and the transition to Nat4/5. Some teenagers will not be motivated enough to look at extension work, how can we monitor that?**

Nat 5 are a discrete course. We’re confident our S3 will be ready to move onto Nat5 courses in June. They will get a full year in S4 (if we have an uninterrupted year).

**The ‘could’ section could be suggested to be tackled if they’re planning to do the subject for Nat5**

Good comment – I agree

**Could S3 drop subjects they are not taking forward and should the “could” activities be highlighted where S3 are planning to take it N5.**

No, we want our young people to stick with things and not give up but there’s no policy rule on that, and if you have a situation that you think is particular for your child regarding dropping a subject, please discuss with pastoral and subject teachers.

**Could teachers relay to pupils these resources – it will come better from teachers than parents!**

Yes, that’s part of the enhancements that I’ve outlined. Lessons will have the must/should and also a could section to take the learner further.

**Is there possibility of anyone repeating a year ?**

For the vast majority this is not advised, for social and mental wellbeing reasons

**What about the whole cohort of children in Scotland repeating the year?**

Anything is possible – e.g., a Scandinavian model for education

**How can we promote sport and physical exercise and also encourage communication with fellow pupils during lock down? Some instruction from PE would be great as many pupils are not active just now**

That’s not something we’ve considered prior to this session but I will look at this. **Action - CW**

**Could young people buddy together if problem engaging, or be more effective? (This was a popular idea and could be discussed more)**

It would have to be virtual, but I’ll take that idea too **Action - CW**

**Will S3 have a careers advisor interview? When?**

I can’t confirm that – I will check **Action - CW**

A parent commented that S3 reports have been received and were much more useful and very welcome in that format.

**Any kind of replacement for parents’ evenings?**

It’s proving really difficult – technically – to find an alternative. There is a lot of work going on at headquarters, unions regionally to overcome these issues. I can’t give you dates just now. I can give my commitment to make them happen if there is an opportunity to do so.

Kelso & Selkirk have had successful telephone evenings. We don’t have the telephone infrastructure (post-fire) to do that. I know the Heads at Gillespie’s & Boroughmuir, and I can ask them. **Action – CW**

**If you’re a working parent and can’t supervise, is there registration? We want to know if our young people are not engaging?**

Engagement is also being discussed a lot at our SLT meeting.

Kirsteen Robertson: in the Snr phase we’re monitoring engagement – each teacher is posting on a spreadsheet if young people are not engaging. We’re looking to extend this to S1-S3. We’re looking for young people who are not engaging in a number of subjects.

**Please can teachers refrain from posting info outwith school hours (up to 11.30pm for some - teachers need down time too), or back up with a line of text to say that the pupil doesn't need to address the information until the next school day?**

We were encouraging teachers to publish on day of learning, and that’s what’s happening nationally, to find out “on the day”. You’re right that’s not good for children late at night.

**Additional Needs – how are they being supported?**

If they have severe & complex needs, they are at school. If level below that, they may also be in school as they require support to engage in their learning. An appropriate education should be on offer so please pass me details of the parent … If you have concerns write to us or the school.

**Parents Open Forum S4 – S6**

Campbell Wilson shared the [slides](https://phsparents.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/January-2021-Feedback-on-Remote-Learning-1427-210221.pptx) (as in S1-S3 section above)

**Questions raised:**

**Have you asked students for feedback?**

Not as a whole school, it happens on a week to week with individual teachers.

S5/S6 would welcome a survey too please **Action - CW**

**I have no idea what my S6 is up to and what is being set**

At assemblies – S6 %age was the highest attendance of the week, and they had the most questions.

**Assessments:**

Glenda: Snr phase – a much improved picture, much more engagement. Real concerns on assessments. SQA looking for 2 – 4 exam-type assessments . They are extending assessment period to June. Putting everybody under a lot of pressure. New content

CW: Assessment windows alternative – (was Jan/Feb) are now 3rd & 4th week in March. That would give us 2 weeks (hopefully) of classes and consolidation of learning during lockdown and preparation time for assessments. We are not going to rush back into assessments when back in school.

Glenda: as soon as we know about that window, maybe one of the weeks online learning should be revision time. The course content has changed so much, can’t use past papers, so that has to be teacher-led. So, if 1-week online learning and 1 week in school consolidation.

CW: please don’t take that to mean that performance in those assessments determine the grade, it doesn’t.

**Could PHS reinstate the no-detriment approach similar to lockdown last year?**

CW: That is a big question that I need to consider - I can take that away . **Action - CW**

**Young People are in state of exam-readiness, every piece of work matters, now this extends to June – there is a contradiction in people’s wellbeing v ‘every piece of work can be used as evidence’**

I would reassure there, it’s true that assessment is a truly holistic thing this year, everything CAN count, but not everything WILL count. Remember, we want our young people to attain really positively, and will use the best piece of evidence, honestly and with integrity.

Paul Fagan is the SQA lead for the whole of the Borders. Yes, the wellbeing of our young people is in jeopardy because of the not knowing about these assessments. To any parent of snr phase in danger of not reaching potential (mental health reasons or otherwise) write to PHS email and let us know that your child would appreciate a mentor. I can’t guarantee you’ll get one, last year we gave 56 a mentor, we won’t be able to do that many this year.

**Snr reports – is there going to be a more detailed S4 report?**

Without knowing when schools will return, I can’t tell you when that will happen but there will be a report. Meanwhile pastoral can advise if there is a specific query

**S6 advanced higher students working on their dissertations, rather than being ‘taught’ coursework, so if they are back to school and immediately face assessments, when are they going to be taught the coursework for those assessments?**

They’ll have until mid-June to work on dissertations and any other work. All assessment counts, dissertations give a strong predictive value of what a student can achieve. But that doesn’t mean that coursework has stopped. Evidence of attainment should be for 70% of that course but we do feel we should cover that course for integrity.

**Have the students given specific advice on what they need to do to increase predicted grades? They are having university interviews etc and this would really help. (This was backed up by a few parents)**

I hope that’s not the case and students have been given specific advice to improve their attainment. If you have an individual concern or need for feedback that hasn’t been given, a parent/young person should contact the school/pastoral. **Action - CW**

**Is there a discussion between the heads of education – school and Further Education - about the issue of transition. Are the entry quals still fit for purpose**

CW: I will raise question at the School Leaders Scotland meeting next week **Action - CW**

**Parents nights – this is highly valued for parents**

Not able to run them before this recent lockdown due to infrastructure issues, capacity of phone lines in school (after the fire). SBC have not provided a solution over the iPads with teachers/parents at home. So, we are pursuing solutions and it’s a priority as soon as it’s safe to do it. I have no dates. I’m sure Inspire Learning team are the answer to this.

Problems were: Age & size of school, phones, teachers at home.

**What happens if computer goes down during an online assessment whilst at home during lockdown. Does the assessment count for others or would it be discounted for all?**

The teacher would take account of this. We understand this, it will not count against young people. It would have to be catastrophic technical issue to discount all. It would discount for the person who had the issue, but it could be more complex.

**I’d really appreciate grades submitted on Satchel one. It’s hard for parents to keep on top of it all as it is. This would help. The function is there, but teachers not completing it.**

Re subject choice – speak to Pastoral. Every young person making choices can have a 1:1 interview with pastoral – please request it.

W**ill S4 get 1:1 with pastoral?**

We will try to give everyone a 1:1 that wants one, but you have to request it.

**There are lots of channels of communication online – Teams, OneNote, SMHW….**

Staff should post all work on SMHW that links to Class Teams where there is more detail/materials. Teams is much more sophisticated, and we’d be mad not to use it too.

**S4 feel a bit left behind – not as confident and expectations not managed – making choices for S5**

I felt a lot more nervous this time last year after the fire with S4 than this year. This time I know how the SQA awarding will work, if we assume it is based on the last year’s system. I take on board that they may be feeling ‘in a vacuum’ and I’ll take that away.

**Child’s subject choices discussion with teacher – is it possible parent can join that online?**

Yes, it can be requested, I wouldn’t have an issue with that.

Mr Wilson confirmed that the framework for learning & teaching being worked on by Mr Noon & Dr Carvalho was launched to all staff and is ready to share.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm.

**Next meeting – TBC in late February/early March**

**E: phspc@outlook.com**

**W: phsparents.org.uk**

Twitter: @PHSparents @PeeblesHigh

**Data from parents’ and carers survey – breakdown by year group**

 **(interim view Thursday 21st January)**

**Question 1 Communication**

Most satisfied **S5 92%**

Least satisfied **S6 81%**

**Question 2 Quantity of work**

Most satisfied **S5 84%**

Least satisfied **S3 62%**

**Question 3 Quality of work**

Most satisfied **S5 89%**

Least satisfied **S3 79%**

**Question 4 Live Sessions**

Most satisfied **S3 89%**

Least satisfied **S6 76%**

**Question 5 Help / feedback from teachers**

Most satisfied **S5 84%**

Least satisfied **S2 74%**