

**PHS Parent Council**

**30 August 2022**

**Teams Meeting**

**Attendees**:

Sarah Duncan, Chair Susan Jarvis, Vice-Chair

Judith Ackerman, Communications Officer Dee Hollingsbee, Events Coordinator

Elodie Sellar, Events Coordinator Campbell Wilson, Headteacher

c. 30 parents attended

**Welcome Sarah Duncan, Chair**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced herself to any new parents in the meeting. She then provided an overview of the structure of parent engagement at the school and how to get more involved. She also shared ways to support fundraising activities and dates for future meetings. Attendees were reminded of the Parent Council social media channels and [website](https://phsparents.org.uk/), including how to find previous meeting minutes.

**Upcoming School Events Sarah Duncan, Chair**

As all restrictions had now been lifted, the school were bringing back in person events this term. The first event would be a Fresher’s Fair on Wednesday 14th September aimed at S1 pupils during the afternoon but open to all families in the evening. There were also plans for an open evening on Wednesday 28th September for parents to meet teachers and learn about each subject’s curricular offer. Finally, a Careers Fair is planned for Wednesday 16th November with local businesses and partners showcasing a range of career sectors.

**Update on new school Sarah Duncan, Chair**

The planning application was approved on 4 July which was a great step forward for the project. Enabling works are due to start in September (3G pitch, running track and games hall extension) and there will be a public drop-in event in Peebles soon to share the final plans for facilities. The architects held several meetings with staff in practical faculties before the summer break and will be meeting with non-practical faculties this term. Internal plans will then be finalised and shared with the Property Working Group. Construction of the main building is expected to start in Spring 2023 and complete Winter 2024.

**Rector’s Update Campbell Wilson, Head Teacher**

**School Improvement Newsletter**

Early next week, I will be sharing a Newsletter with all parents outlining the improvements we are aiming to make in our school this session. I will also provide a summary of our examination results which were better than we forecast and a significant relief for all. We knew there would be a National dip in results post-Covid and the fact that our own dip was negligible suggests we will look to have done very well when comparisons are made with other schools in Spring 2023. Tonight I will summarise the key areas of school Improvement before continuing the rest of my update.

**Staffing updates**

Theo Andreou joins the Physics team

Bethany Collins and Amy Milton have joined the Biology team

Emma Thomson joins Health and Life Skills team

Megan Brady McDonald has joined the Support for Learning team

Donnie Marsden and Eilidh McColm have joined the PE team

Peter Saville and Nathaniel Holden have joined the English team

Megan Maciver will be joining the Maths team (awaiting confirmation of start date)

Robbie Shirra-Gibb and Emma Ferguson are now permanent Principal Teachers of Pastoral

Mary McIntyre is covering the vacancy in Music allowing Jenny Campbell to take on Acting PT Expressive Arts

Paul Fagan’s secondment to Jedburgh Grammar has been made permanent so I will be seeking to advertise for two new permanent Depute Heads this term

Karen Mooney will continue in her role as Acting Depute Head this term with Simon Charles acting PT for English

Expecting to appoint new Principal Teachers of Support for Learning and Complex Needs this month

**Senior Student Council**

Interviews for the SSC are taking place in school this week and we will hold an election for Head Prefects in September.

**School Motto**

With our new vision decided, we will be conducting a poll in the community to decide a new motto for the school. More information will be shared with pupils via assemblies and a letter will issue to parents. Options being considered are:

Mente et Manu (current motto)

Mente Manu Corde

Heids Haunds Hairts

With Mind, Hand and Heart

**School Events**

Please come along to our upcoming events in the school:

Wednesday 14th September - Fresher Fair to find out about extra-curricular activities and local community clubs

Wednesday 28th September - Open Doors Evening to meet teachers and learn about subjects/courses on offer

**Overview of School Improvement Plan Campbell Wilson, Head Teacher**

**Priority 1: Curriculum**

Audit of current Broad General Education provision (subject content in S1-3)

Development of skills framework and aiming for SCQF Ambassador status

Rights Respecting School Silver Award

Calendar of family learning events and develop partnerships with community organisations

**Priority 2: Pedagogy (Teaching & Learning)**

Common language of learning, more inclusive use of Learning Structure (infographics)

Develop pupil and parent knowledge of Learning Structure

Develop pedagogy to enhance teaching practice and offer high quality CLPL for staff, including digital approaches

Create lesson evaluation tool to support self-evaluation and develop QI practices (open doors, observations, self-evaluation, in-house support for PRD)

**Priority 3: Wellbeing, Equality & Inclusion**

Develop understanding of PHS Learning Context and implement Phase 3 of SBC Nurture Programme

Introduce Equally Safe at School (programme to support staff understand gender based violence)

Reintroduce Mentors in Violence Prevention (peer mentoring programme for gender based violence)

LGBT Scotland Gold Charter Award (working towards being a more inclusive school)

**Priority 4: Assessment & Communication**

Pilot new approaches to engaging with parents on learning progress and develop a parental engagement and communication framework

Review current structure of parent evenings and tracking & monitoring reports

Reinforce language of Learning Structure in reporting of progress

Develop new approach to reporting in line with school vision and curriculum rationale

Working Time Agreement reviewed to create a more collegiate approach

**Questions on School Improvement Plan**

*Will there still be normal parents evenings this year?*

Yes there will be a parent evening for each year group this year, some might be virtual and some might be in person. Staff views are split between preference for virtual or in person events. The school calendar is due to be published by mid-September which will share dates for all parents evenings and reports.

*Will the review of BGE provision look again at the subject choice points and number of subjects taken in senior phase?*

There is no intention to review the previous decision not to change choice points or increase the number of subjects pupils take in S4. The curriculum review will consider content of each course offered to ensure it meets national requirements and consider whether we have any gaps in subjects offered.

**Open Q&A session Campbell Wilson, Head Teacher**

**School transport issues had been experienced already this term (particularly those servicing Cardrona), what can be done about this?**

It was confirmed that Mr Lee had hopefully resolved the particularly issue being referred to, however the school actually have no control over school transport arrangements. Parents with concerns over particular routes should contact the SBC school transport team.

**Has there been any progress in considering introduction of Higher Application of Mathematics?**

*Action: Mr Wilson will check with Mrs Sheridan and confirm at the next meeting.*

**If pupils sign a home study agreement in S6, can the pupils come in during that time on occasion?**

Yes, there are QR codes available at main entrance for pupils to use to sign in and out of the building but they can also speak to the office reception staff to register that they are in school if unable to access the QR codes. Pupils have been advised of this before and will be reminded.

**What areas of the school can senior pupils use during study periods?**

The canteen and atrium are available most of the day and provide around 150 spaces for group study and socialising. There has been feedback that these are not suitable spaces which the school don’t accept, however there are also plans to open up an area of the former library for independent quiet study for around 25 people. It won’t be a silent space as a classroom adjoins the space, however it will be a good option for independent study. The assembly hall will also open for study over the winter period as the atrium becomes too cold for regular use. It was confirmed that SBC had not yet agreed to provide additional space at the school but the issue of space is under discussion as we are approaching 1400 pupils which is the highest our school roll will have been. Mr Wilson offered for parents with concerns about the study space available to come in and see it in use. Some parents were not satisfied with the study space on offer and reported that staff had been moving senior pupils on from the atrium as it was required for another purpose. Mr Wilson was not aware of any incidences when the atrium was required for any other purpose as it had been dedicated for study space.

*Action: Parent Council to check SBC policy for senior study facilities and continue to speak to education officials about space requirements at the school.*

**Can senior pupils, particularly S5 who are required to stay on school premises, use the gym during their study periods?**

Mr Wilson confirmed that pupils can request an induction to be permitted to use the gym in their study periods. Pupils should speak to Mr Chang-Leng or Mrs Wallace to arrange an induction and find out when the gym is not timetabled for use.

**There have been issues reported with vaping in girls toilets, can this be tackled by the school?**

There has been action taken recently after reports were received and some senior girls are undertaking detention this week. No further action has been taken on vaping, however Mr Wilson has spoken to the local shop about supplying pupils with energy drinks as they are supposed to be restricted to over 18s. There were suggestions that a parental communication advising of the dangers of vaping and energy drinks may help to reduce the issue and inviting partners in to discuss these issues with pupils may be effective.

*Action: Parent Council to report concerns to SBC and request additional license checks on local retailers, particularly around school break times.*

*Action: Mr Wilson to consider issuing a communication advising parents of the dangers of of e-cigarettes and energy drinks and that as sales are restricted to over 18’s they are not permitted on school premises.*

**Has there been any progress in considering introduction of Higher Application of Mathematics?**

Mr Wilson believed the course was now available, however would check with Mrs Sheridan and confirm at the next meeting.

**Is there a toilet pass system to monitor who is circulating he building?**

Yes a purple slip is required for pupils leaving class so that duty staff can identify whether a pupil should be out of class. However this does not apply to senior pupils on study periods.

**Pupils have reported to parents that those on the 3rd lunch sitting don’t have time to eat and there is often very little choice left, is there any opportunity for the process to be revisited?**

Mr Wilson confirmed that the Student Parliament had also raised the issue but no better option has been suggested. It was noted that the number of pupils staying at school for lunch has significantly increased this term with over 1,000 being served per day. It was noted that school meals offer great value and more families may be encouraging greater use of the canteen due to recent cost of living increases.

**Will the food truck be returning to the school?**

Mr Wilson confirmed that there was an outstanding request to SBC for this to be considered and perhaps parents could contact SBC to support this request.

*Action: Parent Council to contact SBC catering to discuss options for increasing food options at the school*

**There were concerns raised about the level of support being offered to Ukrainian pupils**

Mr Wilson confirmed that around 12 pupils had recently joined the school and all staff received training on bilingual support for pupils with language support needs at the start of term. He was unaware of any issues with variable support as the universal offer had been to provide a free school uniform and offer support at lunchtime with queues and ordering meals. It was shared that some teachers were not translating resources into Ukrainian or appearing to make an effort to make

*Action: Mr Wilson to carry out an audit of the experience of the Ukrainian pupils.*

**There was also concern that a fire drill could cause Ukrainian pupils distress if they are not prepared and one usually takes place in first few weeks of term.**

Mr Wilson confirmed that a fire drill was planned soon and pupils would be prepared so as to limit any distress.

**There was a suggestion that the Parent Council return to face to face meetings**

Chair confirmed that the preference before the summer had been to continue with virtual meetings due to travel, childcare and accessibility considerations. The postholder group would be considering the value of having some meetings face to face during the year. There was a suggestion that hybrid meetings could be a way forward, however it was noted that this can present its own difficulty trying to ensure everyone has equal access to the meeting. Attendees were invited to share their preference in the chat and again the majority preferred virtual meetings.

**There were concerns that some S2 classes had not had PE for several weeks**

Mr Wilson was unaware of any issues in PE as the department was fully staffed, however it may have been a timetabling issue.

**Parents asked when S1 residential information would be issued**

Mr Wilson confirmed that bookings had been made at Aberdovey in Wales and Ullswater in Lake District for the trip in May 2023. Information will be shared shortly and a parent evening will be arranged once it had been agreed which staff would be taking forward coordination of the trip.

**Parents asked when the new school website would be ready as it was difficult to access information about the school, especially sports fixtures etc**

Mr Wilson confirmed that the new website was live, however the old website had not yet been removed as the administrator is a former parent. The new website was still a work in progress but will have a live calendar on it which should include sports fixtures. The parent council had submitted comments on the new website, particularly around accessibility, which were still being considered by the school but it was hoped that some of the suggested improvements would be made this term.

The meeting closed around 20:30.

**Next meeting: Wednesday 5 October 2022**

**Helpful Information**

**Parent Council Meeting dates 2022/23**

Tuesday 30 August 2022 (virtual meeting)

Wednesday 5 October 2022 (virtual meeting)

Thursday 10 November 2022 (potential to be held in person)

Tuesday 17 January 2023 (virtual meeting)

Wednesday 1 March 2023 (potential to be held in person)

Thursday 27 April 2023 (virtual meeting)

Tuesday 6 June 2023 (AGM - potential to be held in person)

**Post Holders**

Chair - Sarah Duncan

Vice Chair - Susan Jarvis

Secretary - Claire Barrett

Comms - Judith Ackerman

Taskforce - Rachel Beatton

Events - Dee Hollingsbee & Elodie Seller

**Working Group leads:**

Friends of Peebles High School SCIO representative - Eric Nightingale

Property - Sarah Duncan

*Other working groups to be finalised for 2022-23*

We welcome interested parents & careers on the Parent Council as general members or working group members. We simply ask that you try to attend meetings regularly. If you would like to be considered an ordinary member or join a specific working group, please email your details to**:** **phspc@outlook.com**

**Website:** www.phsparents.org.uk

**Twitter:** @PHSparents @PeeblesHigh