

King's Park School Parent Council

Zoom Meeting Minutes Wednesday 28th October 2020

Present: Emily Cairns (minutes), Teresa Docherty, Karlyn Durrant (Secretary), Aoibhe O'Callaghan (Chair), Zoe Orr (Depute Head), Robbie Pearson, Warren and Sara Scott, Leila Raeburn, Laurinda Renton (Head Teacher), Laurent Yahi (PTA Treasurer).

Apologies: Barbara O'Loughlin

Previous Actions: No actions. Previous minutes approved.

Welcome and Introductions

PC Updates:

Recycling initiative: **AOC** explained that parent Lisa Hodkinson is communicating with Caledonian Recycling regarding recycling of milk cartons. 3 other local primary schools have already signed up to this pilot service. **ZO** said she had not yet received an email from Lisa but once she does, she's happy to discuss as there are logistical issues around organising this.

LR said she was under the impression that the milk cartons are already recycled at a council level. **ZO** said she would investigate this and include KP Janitor Mr Burt in the conversation.

AOC said funding has been secured to reduce the cost of this to £85 per year. **AOC** suggested this could be funded by a fundraising activity from pupils (eco-group?) or by the PTA?

As part of this initiative or to generate the £85 cost for the school and any surplus funds as a top up, Caledonian will supply bags of Compost and kindling to pupils or PTA to be sold to school community at reduced rate.

ACTION: **ZO** to investigate whether recycling is currently done and speak to Mr Burt & LH to progress.

Instrumental Tuition: **AOC** advised that the Midlothian Council instrumental tutor Alex Knox is the Acting Instrumental Music Service Co-ordinator (in place of Jake Herriot who is on sick leave). Instrumental music tuition will be delivered via a pilot programme of a blended model with a mix of online and face to face lessons. Due to Covid restrictions, tutors are limited to 2 classes in 1 school each day so this limits frequency of tuition and size of groups. Face to face or online teaching will alternate every 2 weeks, interspersed with google classroom support via Glow where students will be encouraged to upload their recordings to their tutors each week. All existing pupils from last term will be enrolled on the blended lessons pilot this term. There will have no charge for tuition via this pilot model this term, and from January onwards, cost will depend on service provided.

LR explained that there is a location/space issue specific to King's Park as the only two available spaces are already used either as meeting rooms or extra classrooms should a Covid isolation case arise. This has complicated the identification of a usable space but school are working on it.

AOC said some pupils and parents/carers have had password/access issues with GLOW and are unfamiliar with the platform which will hopefully be addressed once pupils interact with their tutors again in person. Tutors work across Midlothian Schools at Primary and Secondary levels and don't have the capacity to be trained on all the individual learning platforms in use at each school so GLOW is the common platform to all schools even if some use it less than others. **AOC** is the current parent link for the instrumental tuition service.

ACTION: ZO to continue to work with music tutors to identify usable spaces for tuition.

Bus Transport: AOC (supported by Robbie Pearson and Julie Sutherland) is leading ongoing communication with Director of Education Fiona Robertson (FR) re. home to school bus transport. This will affect current P7 pupils come June/August 2021 and future P7s each year until the Public Consultation promised in June 2019 is carried out by the Council and the current system is reviewed. **AOC** has been working with the DHS Parent Council Chair to keep this on the Council Education team's agenda. FR recognises frustrations and has said it will be discussed when there is a new Council Parental Engagement Officer in post (currently recruiting for this new role) in early 2021 as it will fall within their remit. However there is a current issue which is inequity in how passes were allocated for this academic year 2020 and AOC and CP are going back to FR to ask for this to be addressed by the council ASAP. The main issue arises with Non-Entitled Pupils who fall within 2mile walking distance not being informed of transport allocation until the last minute and if the service is over-subscribed, as it was this year (Aug 2020) then no one receives a bus place, or a haphazard method is applied.

ACTION: AOC to email FR to outline the current problem and keep in contact re consultation.

PC Chair Meeting with Fiona Robertson: AOC said this was scheduled for earlier today (28th Oct) but has been delayed until next week so as to allow new announcement from Scot Gov and implications for current guidance to be assimilated. FR has informed us that moving within Tiers 0-4 will have no impact on schools remaining open. FM and Govt is committed to keeping schools open. FR will put out a letter on Friday (30th Oct) alerting parents of any updates, even if that means no changes. FR fully supports the school community and has urged the government that any move to a Blended Learning Model will need sufficient notice.

ACTION: Ongoing. **AOC** to attend next week's PC Chair's meeting and report back.

PTA update: AOC read a report on behalf of PTA chair Diana Challands

c. £7900 in account, which is tightly managed due to limited fundraising capabilities this year.

100 Club: c. £800

PayPal Fundraising button: c. £300

King's Park Parents & Carers are encouraged to support the school when shopping for Christmas and throughout the year by selecting King's Park PTA as their selected charity via **Amazon Smile** and downloading the **Easy Fundraising App** which has raised over £300 for the school so far, with thanks to our supporters. Check FB page for recent posts on how to sign up for Amazon Smile and Easy Fundraising.

On request from school, improvements to IT are the primary focus of PTA spending this year.

Successful Junior **School Virtual Halloween Disco** on was held on 27th October. Senior School one scheduled for tomorrow eve, Oct 29th.

As our annual Christmas Fair cannot take place this year, we will be hosting a pop-up virtual King's Park Primary Marketplace on Facebook where local sellers and crafters can advertise their products with a % donation of profits going to our PTA. Please go to our FB page to keep updated on a link for this virtual marketplace.

Christmas fundraising plans include a virtual raffle and the Christmas card designs which were due today, Weds 28th October. **AOC** is investigating Christmas tree purchase through Dobbies where a % of sale goes to PTA, or acquiring from a supplier and managing the sales "inhouse".

Head Teacher Report:

LR thanked the PTA and staff for their organisation of successful and creative Halloween Discos.

LR reinforced the need for Chromebooks to be purchased. **LY** (PTA) in support of this.

Seesaw was used well during lockdown but **LR** is keen for the platform to be used for more class work and homework (to be discussed at staff meeting on 30th October). The aim being to use Seesaw to build a profile of the children's learning, track progress and target areas which ties in to its original intended use a reporting tool to parents/carers and platform for supporting learning at home. Seesaw would then evidence and inform Parent Consultations.

LR: Use of Seesaw as a communication tool needs to be addressed to reduce pressure on teachers to reply to parent enquiries or comments sent ad hoc. LR understands this reflects times of day/evening when parents are free to message or remember, however some staff then feel they must respond immediately.

KDurant said that it should work both ways with staff also adhering to good practice as parents can be disturbed by notification alerts etc if messages/updates are shared at night or early morning.

AOC suggested school advise staff of appropriate response times and perhaps draw up good practice guidelines to ensure the correct routes of communication are used, including times etc. PC can share on FB to remind parents of correct channels for communications.

LR confirmed that if staff send a seesaw message directly then a reply from parents is completely acceptable but better for general queries from parents (meeting requests or messages re. for example absence/illness) to go via main office email or phone.

LR acknowledged how hard it must be for parents not being able to come into school. Good learning and teaching remains at the heart of the school day and creative ways of displaying the children's learning were discussed at IST.

A video will be produced showcasing the topic of "Writing" based on the Talk For Writing programme (see below).

A P1/2 Christmas Story video will be produced (without singing, owing to Covid restrictions).

Children will continue planning and leadership tasks such as they would for events in King's Park Church for instance.

LR informed us of the success of Talk For Writing which encourages the children to develop their own story from a model text. The original text's characters and events are progressively adapted by the children, until they have their own story. Cold assessment vs Hot showed huge impact on vocabulary and creativity.

JF (Julie Findlay) and ZO have been looking at "What does an excellent lesson look like?" in 1st and 2nd levels (P3-7), discussing challenges and difficulties, to support teachers who are unable to provide their ideal class lesson at present.

JF has produced a Numeracy Policy which outlines different methods for mathematical problem solving. This increases confidence in the children and provides alternative methods for those with different learning styles. An abbreviated policy/parent guide is hoped to be produced.

ZO discussed a recent focus on "What's Consistent" so all children get the same learning experience, and Assessment Strategies. Formative Assessment Strategies include in-class, oral and peer feedback. ZO expanded on the work on "What an excellent lesson looks like", and although teachers acknowledge limitations because of a lack of groupwork, the lessons

are going well. **ZO** also reiterated that Seesaw should be used for displaying learning with variety from the curriculum.

LR informed us of the change in classroom layouts to straight lines, or a horseshoe format which allows the teacher to come into the middle of the group while remaining socially distanced. P1 and P2 do not have their Numeracy, Literacy and Discovery rooms but they move around workstations in their own classrooms.

LR reports that the senior team have written Covid contingency plans and submitted to the Authority in the event of:

- A blended learning model (although Scottish Government plans to keep schools open)
- Outbreak in school/class/part of a class
- Insufficient staff despite non-contact teachers and support staff teaching

LRaeburn asked what happens in the event of one child testing positive, does the whole class isolate? **LR** answered that the decision lies with the Health Protection Team who will investigate events/exposure and parents will be contacted.

Parent consultations are currently underway, slightly later this year as the outside lines had to be opened up to allow teachers to call from their classrooms. Teachers were given the option to call parents/carers from their homes or school.

LR reported that **FR** is committed to ensuring schools are fit for purpose. The proposed extension and adaptations to KPPS have been approved which is very exciting and welcome news. Further details remain confidential and work may still be a few years away.

AOC asked if changes to The Early Years facility would begin earlier but **LR** informed us that an interim measure is likely as two rooms are required to accommodate the numbers.

Social Media Concerns:

LR and ZO had already briefed **AOC** of the issues around the use of phones and social media apps that may originate outside of school but then spill over into school and cause disagreements and fallouts amongst pupils which then affects their peer relationships and performance during their school day.

ZO said that the management and disentangling of these fallouts is becoming very time consuming and taking up a lot of resource time and some of the impact of cyber chats/comments between peers has caused significant distress to the children.

LR stressed that in the first instance, school has a duty to address each and any safeguarding/wellbeing concerns that are raised and that this is school's obligation and would be done as a matter of course.

SScott enquired if the immediate personal impact of social media targeting/bullying is discussed in school as part of how they talk about Internet Safety, rather than just the impact of the digital footprint on their future?

LR responded that children are encouraged to consider the wider aspects of their online activity, from feelings to job prospects. Online safety education takes place in school lessons and in assemblies but acknowledged that the focus is very often on keeping themselves safe from strangers online, perhaps more emphasis on healthy and respectful peer-2-peer interactions is required.

Parental guidance on legal ages for Apps, and the responsibility of the parents to manage and supervise conversations and activity on platforms that are not age appropriate was discussed. **LY** stated the availability of free Parental Controls.

AOC informed us of the top-rated Quostodio App which charges a small yearly fee giving bespoke parental controls for up to 5 devices. O2 phone providers also give free advice on this in-store.

LR said Jamie Dougal hosted an NSPCC-led education session for parents last year which was successful.

AOC asked should school make this event annual (for example held in August, with parents alerted/invited in June) and become part of the yearly calendar and ethos of the school? Aim to strongly encourage parent/carer participation and also grow engagement on the topic from parents & carers on a yearly basis to enable and support their supervision of children online.

AOC had previously shared guidelines and resources with parents via the PC FB page for internet safety week, this could be done again and online training/info sessions via outside agencies for parents could be hosted via ZOOM facilitated by school or Parent Council. Also suggested a resource bank of links and supports to be hosted on school website under PC tab.

LR requesting Parent Council input and assistance to produce guidance.

LY stated that he felt this wasn't ultimately the school's responsibility and that there should be a council-led awareness campaign for all Midlothian schools. **LY** suggested a Zoom info session for concerned parents.

AOC suggested an in-house charter or pledge could be created and upheld by the children, meaning they have buy-in to expectations for how to relate in online interactions. Exposure begins P4/P5 so education for parents and children should ideally begin in P4.

ACTION: LY, EC and SS offered to carry this forward.

School Website:

AOC asked for parent/carer support in developing a Parent Council resource section on the website which can also be added to the Scot Ed App. **ZO** said that any changes/updates to the website go through Phil, and the App go to through the software manager.

ACTION: Anyone interested in researching Website Links please contact AOC.

Parking:

There are safety concerns regarding the Abbey Road access, and Croft Street. LR confirmed that residents around Croft Street regularly contact the school with concerns about children's safety on the street when coming to and leaving school and nursery (multiple times per day).

AOC said that while there are often council parking wardens on the Morrison's side of Croft Street, the Abbey Road side of Croft Street and rear Council car park by the football club is very busy and choked with cars at morning drop offs especially in poor weather. It's unsafe for children who walk to school via this route, or even crossing to school from their own cars in front of a constant flow of incoming and exiting traffic.

ZO made a note to reissue statements on Scot Ed App regarding Safer Routes to School and Park Safe guidance. Traffic Wardens to be directed to the Abbey Road entrance.

AOC recommends investigating an idea she's seen used successfully by other schools where pop-up bollards with cartoon children on them are placed along illegal and unsafe parking hotspots. This could be a targeted intervention for fundraising by the PTA. Running out of time so this will be discussed again at the next meeting.

AOB:

No items. AOC advised **next meeting date Wednesday 9th December, 7pm virtual ZOOM.**