

Kings Park Primary School Parent Council Meeting

21 September 2022

Present: Laurinda Renton (HT), Zoe Orr (HT), Aoibhe O'Callaghan (Chair), Karlyn Durrant (Secretary), Bianca Nicol (PT), Alex Redford, Jillian Tully, Marisa Macginnis, Katy Bryce, Val Easton, Katherine W, Emily Cairns.

Apologies: Leila Raeburn, Kate Bremner.

Actions: PTA were looking into naming of uniform. Kat is going to look into Stampstastic.

Sub group start-ups. Looking for class reps/year group reps. Anyone that would like to be involved, please email the Parent Council email address.

PTA Report:

Halloween Discos were a big success. Thank you to the school for supporting this. There was a small profit made. There were good lessons to be learned from these discos in our approach for next time.

There is approx. £7k in the bank and our current fundraising priorities are the library refurb and supporting school & families with Cost of the School Day.

We have received 2 grants, 1 from Edinburgh Airport, and 1 from Kate Bremner's employers. This was through a reward scheme that some businesses participate in (charity match funding).

There will be the Xmas raffle as always this year and we are looking at organising another Quiz night and hopefully also the Summer Fair.

We could utilise the Uniform shed better and it does need to be replaced or repaired.

We still have low numbers for the monthly PTA meetings but we did get 60 volunteers for the disco.

Homework Policy

ZO: Our homework_survey was sent out to parents, staff and pupils. The results were varied.

Zoe showed us a slide show of the survey results that have contributed to forming homework policy.

The overall feeling was that parents wanted homework to continue. They felt that it was relevant and meaningful to the children's learning. Homework should not be new learning,

this should be a continuation of what is happening in the class. It encourages independence also.

There is a 4 week running grid, this is in your child's homework jotter.

If you are facing challenges with homework then in the first instance you should contact the class teacher to talk this over. Homework should not be screen-based as children have the homework jotters.

The feedback from the parents is still in draft format.

BN: Homework was discussed at the Cost of School Day meeting, this needs to be equitable and if resources are needed then the school will need to provide these. Teachers need to be aware of limitations of access to materials and resources at home so that homework is achievable.

KD: Feels that Homework causes stress at times and we need to be aware of the mental health and wellbeing of children. Extra-curricular activities can also pose a barrier to homework but are just as valuable as homework.

ZO: School understands this and if there are any barriers or concerns, parents should talk to individual class teachers about their children.

ZO: Our afterschool, weekly **Homework Club** is also available to families and this seems to be successful and busy.

HT Report:

LR: Thank you to the PTA for the discos that were organised. We are happy to support these events in school. There were some challenges but this was the first time at a school disco for some of the children.

Having the 2 rooms available worked really well and this something we need to look at having in the future. There was children that wanted to be there but they found it a little loud so having these rooms or the soft seating was a great option and this was inclusive for all the children.

There is a potential industrial action planned of the 24th November. There was a letter sent out from Fiona Robertson to parents. There will be further communication coming from the school.

We are currently getting work done in the ELC. The garden is being extended, we are getting wooden structures put up and wigwams. It will be a great outdoor space.

P1's have been visiting the local library, this is part of the School Improvement Plan about attainment in reading & literacy. We are also undertaking a library refurb in school. We are doing a book audit and getting rid of books that are out of date.

Kerry Goodman is still working on the KP Carers initiative. A google form went out with regards to parental support. It was good to see what the parent body can offer. Parent helpers are going to be trained in providing Paired Reading support to pupils.

KW: The PTA will support the book drive.

LR: Concerns at the moment with regards to outbreaks of Headlice. At the moment this is only in a certain year group. It is a recurring seasonal issue in schools and we have asked the school nurse for guidance on this and information on inspecting and managing this is going to be sent out.

EC: Headlice treatments can now be purchased at the pharmacy under the minor ailments scheme.

LR: New SFL (Support for Learning) teacher has started, Mrs Graeme.

We are up to our full quota of LA's (Learning Assistants) now and it has been nice to see all the learning that they are involved in in and around the school.

LR: The big focus for SLT at the moment is the COSD. We have been brainstorming with regards to the winter and Christmas and what this can be like for our families. Bianca is leading on this. We don't want to pigeonhole families, but we realise there will be a lot of people feeling the impact of inflation etc. We want to use KPCARES to assist and support.

I am happy to review the School Improvement Plan process at an in-person Parent Council meeting. As a staff we will be looking at this on the in-service day also.

LR: Attendance

There are targets set by the authority to which we need to align. Families who remove their children from school for term-time holidays have a huge impact on these targets for us as a school. We are sometimes not even notified when a family removes their children from school for holiday purposes. The authority have letters that we can send out to families when attendance drops below 90%, this is the expected level set by the authority.

For children that are genuinely ill that is absolutely ok. By sending the letter out to families this can prompt further discussions around the health of the child and we can actually help families out that may be experiencing health concerns.

AO'C: Can we do a general school reminder on expectations for attendance?

LR: Yes we can communicate with the parent body around this.

KW: Can we be considerate of the tone of communication on attendance? There can be parents that struggle with anxiety and mental health or with children who struggle to leave for school in the morning because of social and emotional issues and they may take the letter as accusatory.

LR: Yes of course, we have a good system in place now and Bianca will also be involved for some of our families. The meetings that I have had have been positive.

COSD

BN: Meeting with parents went well. We looked at a survey that I have drafted, it was good to get parental feedback on this. This will go out this week to all parents to fill out. It will be confidential but there is a section that parents can request help if need be.

Met with LR to look at how we can support over Christmas, a letter went out to the parent body with regards to this. We have also been in contact with Cash for Kids, Dalkeith foodbank. There is a cut off for the foodbanks of the 29th November.

Jill in the office is going to help gather the family information together and we will contact the families.

PTA have also offered help with regards to trips etc. We have managed to put aside £2k from the PEF money as a contingency to help families.

A uniform swap was discussed and a Friday would be a good day for this. We would need some staff and/or parent/carer helpers to help with it.

Going to set up a rail of clothes at the main office and we also discussed making up packages. Within this we could include a blanket to help with warmth.

We have some funding for new coats, going to buy from Primark and the supermarkets.

It would be good to have a donation stall, this is where people can dip in and out. It would be good to do this for X-mas jumpers.

PTA said that they would be willing to help and we to encourage the families in most need to access clean, gently used uniform items from the school uniform shop at the thrift shed.

AOC: There is also a Facebook group for uniform swap in Midlothian.

ZO: School camps, we always try and keep this as low as possible. The winter months are slightly cheaper. Also class relationships are really good at this time of the year and we have good positive outcomes.

KD: Is the uptake on the breakfast club good?

BN: There is a good uptake. We are providing each class with fresh fruit baskets, and children can take from these as and when they are hungry.

AR: Will there be full ASG P7 camps?

LR: Not at this time. The Authority used to have these and then they were stopped. Emma Ormerod is now the new HT of Dalkeith High School and she is keen to look at starting these up again.

AOC: The National Education Conversation was published to gather the views of parents- with regards to education in Scotland. Can we please encourage as many people as possible to fill this in? The more people who fill this in the better the quality and range of feedback to those who analyse and include parent/carer views and priorities. The parent/carer support org. Connect also has an easy version of this survey for parents/carers to fill in.

There is a PC chairs meeting in Midlothian next week and Gail Currie is to be at that. There will be a focus around starting up groups where parents can join. Parent Consultations, ASN+Inclusion, Equity and Digital Learning.

Anyone that is interested in joining the groups please in contact with Aoibhe.

AOB:

AO'C: A parent has asked for clarification on the school's Spotlight awards.

LR: We introduced a house points system for the children, this is when the children will receive points for having carried out something good. There are recognition boards in every class room and also a whole class board in school. We celebrate as a school when all the classes are on the board.

We try not have lots of awards. Children who are ready to learn can be recognised. We have a Spotlight Assembly where certificates are handed out, children are then offered hot chocolate as we celebrate as individuals.

AR: The feeling is that the idea is right but it can cause a little discomfort with regards to for example siblings or friends, one child receives it more than once and their sibling never has. Not all pupils will receive a spotlight so this can cause a feeling of unrest.

LR: Spotlight awards won't work for every child. Individual things are sometimes too much for some and some children respond really well. It is very good to get this parental feedback and we will go back as a staff team and look at this.

MMG: Some children are aware that they are the only ones who haven't achieved a Spotlight award so far and so for them, something that is meant to be a positive can quickly turn into a negative. In theory it is a great idea ,and some children may not be affected by it, but overall children *do* pick up on it and it can affect their self-esteem.

KB: Agree with MMG. Can see the benefit but can see how this can cause disappointment.

LR: What we don't want is to give the children a negative experience and we don't want to devalue the system. We will bring it to staff to discuss and review the recognition approach.

AO'C: That concludes this evening's meeting. Many thanks to everyone for your valued contributions.

Next Meeting: 1ST FEBRUARY 2023 (Revised to 31ST JANUARY 2023)
