**Inverurie Academy Parent Council Committee Meeting – Minutes**

**Thursday 10th Sept 2020**

| **AGENDA ITEM** | **DISCUSSION** | **ACTIONS** | **RESPONSIBLE** |
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| **Welcome** | Elizabeth welcomed everyone to the Skype meeting |  |  |
| **Attending/ Apologies** | Attending:Alies Bartelds, Amanda Stevens, Amelia Davis, Cara Hay, Charlotte Bathgate, Elizabeth Watt, Frances Swanston, Gail Winchester, Gregor McIntosh, Juliet Serrell, Kay Diack, Laura Simpson, Leeanne Robertson, Lyndsay Aspey, Ruth Kydd, Sam Grant, Samantha Tribe, Sheila Cunningham, Shona Strachan, Simon Glazier, Stuart Laird, Susan Weetman, Tracey Barclay  Mark Jones (HT), Alison Drysdale (DHT), Scott Campbell (Teacher)  Cllr Judy Whyte, Cllr Lesley Berry, Cllr Marion Ewenson, Cllr Neil Baillie  Apologies: Emma West, Louise Anderson, Louise Liddell, Martin Misovic, Valerie Napier |  |  |
| **Matters arising from previous Minutes/ Approval** | Minutes approved by Alies, seconded by Leeanne.  Updates:   * ***Defibrillator*** - now installed – many thanks to the community for their support. Special thanks to Keiran’s Legacy for their support and advice, and to the council for installing at no extra charge. * ***Pull up banner***: word cloud to be created at next (in person) meeting so we can gather people’s ideas. * ***Re-uniform***: uniform items are being collected and distributed by Catalyst Vineyard church in Inverurie. Unwanted items can be handed in to the school reception. Reminders will be issued on Parent Council Facebook page. | Include activity in Nov Agenda  Promote on Facebook | Elizabeth/Simon  Cara & Ruth |
| **Treasurer Update** | Balance: £1289.68. Defibrillator now fully paid.  Suggestions for spending included something to commemorate the move from the old to the new building, and funds to support school counsellors if needed. (Mark reminded the committee that with PC support, the school paid £12,500 p.a. an ACIS counsellor for two years. She has recently retired but Aberdeenshire Council is now putting measures in place to attach centrally funded counsellors to schools. | Include on Nov Agenda | Elizabeth/Simon |
| **Headteacher Update** | Update: See information on attached slide pack pdf. Key points:   * ***Campus:*** After the lockdown delays, the campus has now reached practical completion and snagging is being undertaken. Groups of staff and students have been visiting campus this week. * ***Equalities Policy –*** Positive response to request for involvement in a staff steering group. Mr Anderson will lead the Group. Parents/carers will have an opportunity to share their views as the policy develops. * ***Improvement Plan:*** The timescale for the current plan has been changed from one to two years due to four months’ learning and teaching development being lost this year. The planned Learning and Teaching pilot event for parents will still be held, but in May 2021. Google Guardian has been rolled out. It was noted that the return to school is likely to bring additional difficulties - distancing rules and a lack of activities outside school creates isolation among staff and students, so there will be ongoing challenges in maintaining staff moral and supporting students with anxiety. System being developed to capture and celebrate Achievement. * ***Inspection:*** The school was due a follow-up visit from the inspection team to check attainment ambitions were being met, but there has been no update yet so it’s not clear what will happen next. * ***Staffing:*** currently fully staffed. There are 15 new members of staff due to the increased roll this year; this is expected to continue in the next academic year. | Invite Mr Anderson to a future meeting  Update at next meeting | Elizabeth/Simon  Mark |
| **SQA attainment** | **1) HT presentation:** Mark summarised attainment in the 2019-20 session, which was very positive. Key points:   * National 5s: quantity and quality of attainment have both improved substantially. * Highers: there has been a three-year steady improvement in quantity of Highers achieved. There is also substantial improvement in quality. * Advanced Higher: there is significant improvement in quantity and quality of passes over previous years (also many more students were presented for Advanced Higher). * New awards (foundation apprenticeships, etc) resulted in more L4/5/6/7 awards being achieved than would have been possible previously.   There is some frustration that It was clear from student performance that this was going to be a good year for attainment anyway, but changes to the grade calculations mean that it may be considered a one-off so patterns are difficult to interpret. However, the committee noted that student attainment is clearly improving, and that these are fantastic results overall. Increased presentation rate doesn’t seem to be negatively affecting quality, but this will continue to be monitored.  NESCol courses will continue to be offered but classes will be impacted by COVID restrictions (although nobody should be disadvantaged). There is a desire to offer more of these options in school in future, so they are under school control rather than relying on other institutions.  **2) SQA update:** Alison presented an overview of the SQA processes past, present and future, following cancellation of the May exams (see slide pack pdf). The school had to react quickly to SQA announcements to keep up with changing arrangements. When estimate grades were processed, many staff undertook training to make sure they could robustly moderate qualifications. Following the DFM’s announcement of grades being changed in line with teacher predictions, 24% of Inverurie’s awards were increased (consistent with the national average). There was support for teachers, but the extra workload has been significant. |  |  |
| **Communication** | **1) Google Guardian:** 80% of parents have signed up, which is good. Staff are still developing skills and adjusting from lockdown use, so it will take time to get right. The system is currently being used by some staff to list classwork as well as homework - parents raised this is as an issue because students are getting confusing/overwhelmed. Staff are being encouraged to make deadlines realistic so as not to overwhelm students. If there are any technical issues, parents should contact the school office who will pass them to Alison.  **2) Parent portal:** there are some technical issues at the moment, and not enough parents have signed up to avoid issuing paper Data Update forms this year. The system is controlled by the Council, not the school, but if parents are having issues, they can contact the school office in the first place  **3) Tracking and reporting/parents’ evenings:** due to current restrictions the school might need to replace upcoming parents’ nights with an extra tracking report. This could be augmented with Skype calls for individual pupils who need to be contacted. Parents expressed concerns about this, noting the value of verbal contact with each teacher. One suggestion was to use video conferencing software like ‘Near me’ used at Inverurie Medical Practice, which is being considered by another local school. However, a firm decision will need to be taken soon. Julian Shepherd is heading this planning; any suggested solutions can be passed to Mark to share with the planning group. | Request staff to reduce confusion between classroom tasks and homework  Sign up for parent portal  Suggested solutions to be passed to Mark | Alison  Parent forum  All members |
| **Mentoring** | Update provided by Mark (see slide pack pdf): For the past two years each S5/6 pupil has been mentored by someone in the community linked with their vocational aspirations. However, it’s impractical to run this with current restrictions so has been paused; after a review year it will be picked up again in 21/22. In S4, the academic mentoring volunteer members of staff will continue. S6s will be mentoring S1s to support skill development and build relationships. Mentoring for vulnerable students through MRC Pathways is ongoing; Shona Lees will come in later in the session to give us an update. | Invite Shona Lees to a future meeting | Elizabeth/Simon |
| **AOB** | * Daily bulletins have not been posted regularly. There may be technical issues affecting visibility; Mark will investigate. * The opportunity for S4 work experience was queried; Mark will look into this. | Follow up and update at next meeting | Mark |
| **Date of Next Meeting** | **Tuesday 24th November 2020,** 6.30-8.30pm  Venue: Inverurie Community Campus (room TBC), restrictions permitting.  ***Head teacher topic***: ‘Learning and teaching: Systems used to share students’ progress with parents/carers’ | Confirm venue | Mark/Elizabeth |