

Inverurie Academy Parent Council Committee Meeting – Minutes

24th November 2020

AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE
Welcome	Elizabeth welcomed everyone to the Skype meeting		
Attending/ Apologies	<p><u>Attending:</u> Elizabeth (Chair), Alies Bartelds (Vice-Chair) Simon Glazier (Secretary), Cara Hay, Ruth Kydd, Linda Barclay, Gail Winchester, Juliet Serrell, Lyndsay Aspey, Leanne Robertson, Samantha Tribe, Shona Strachan, Susan Weetman, Harri McGregor, Louise Anderson, Martin Misovic, Sheila Cunningham, Stuart Gregg, Karen Simpson, Charlotte Bathgate, Tracey Barclay, Susan Weetman, Mark Jones (Headteacher), Scott Campbell, Alasdair O'Connor, Cllr Neil Baillie, Cllr Lesley Berry, Cllr Marion Ewenson</p> <p><u>Apologies:</u> Kay Diack, Frances Swanston, Alyson West, Laura Simpson, School Captains, Cllr Judy White</p>		
Matters arising from previous Minutes/ Approval	<p><u>Updates:</u> Will be covered by Headteacher Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Daily Pupil Bulletin – will be published once extra-curricular activities are reintroduced. - S4 Work Placements – all week-long placements are cancelled for the remainder of this academic year due to the restrictions caused by the pandemic. - Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme – Mr Dair is making plans for programme to resume from January 2021. <p>Minutes approved by Alies Bartelds, seconded by Cara Hay.</p>		
Treasurer Update	<p>Balance: £1289.68. Defibrillator and training now fully paid.</p> <p>About to receive a sum from the Council, which will increase this balance. How should this money be spent? The Council have recently provided Parent Councils with</p>		

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	<p>guidance on the type of items their funding should support, and they plan to scrutinise our expenditure. Should we support something tangible or an 'experience'. The aim is to support anything that will benefit all pupils, not just one particular group. We asked Mark if he had any ideas. He will have a think and come back to us at the January meeting with any ideas that would benefit the whole school.</p>	<p>Mark to bring ideas to the next meeting for the PC to vote on.</p>	<p>Elizabeth/Simon</p>
<p>Parent Council Policies</p>	<p>Feedback requested on the Parent Council Social Media and Data Protection policies. Ruth Kydd commented that the Social Media policy only refers to Facebook, not Twitter and other platforms. She will look at this and update it ahead of the next meeting.</p>	<p>Ruth Kidd to review Social Media Policy for next meeting.</p>	
<p>Headteacher Update</p>	<p><u>Update:</u> See information on attached slide pack pdf. Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Term 2 (Nov/Dec): Getting settled in the new building and re-engaging pupils. - Foundation Apprentices: A level 6 (Higher course equivalent) taking up two columns, the theory and the practical. Placements are challenging so most likely virtual internships rather than physical. - College Link Courses: These are restarting, and NES College are starting to launch courses again. Some still due to start in Jan/Feb. Delivery is not normal yet. - Google Classroom: Trying to make greater distinction between homework and catch-up work. Teachers are all becoming more competent in this. Google Guardian is the parent/carer feedback system. <p>Some parents/carers receive notification of all-year homework, and not just their child's classwork. Mark reported that some faculties have set up a faculty Classroom rather than just one per classroom.</p> <p>The only faculty not using Google Guardian is Technical & Vocational Education, who are using MS Teams, but they have made a commitment to log homework on Google Classroom, so all items should be appearing.</p> <p>Not all homework that is handed in is being marked on Google Classroom as complete. Mark mentioned that teachers are all working on keeping on top of marking homework as done.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improvement Plan: This is available on the school website. The plan has been extended to a 2-year journey as much development opportunity has been missed in early 2020. 	<p>Investigate Google Classroom delivery and how classes/faculties deliver work.</p>	<p>Mark</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Website: New Covid section on the site and more learning content from various departments. - Parent Portal: This is a distinct Aberdeenshire Council offering, the school not having technical control, so often accessing the Council help pages is the best route to seek support. - Staffing: Covid-19 adds an additional layer of staffing uncertainty. To date we have been relatively fortunate (mostly due to geographical and low infection rather than just procedures). Happy with procedures to date. Additional £75,000 Recovery Staffing Funding has been allocated but given a class teacher onboarding cost is about £55,000, this has been used to provide new temporary promoted posts - Principal Teacher of Digital Literacy and a Principal Teacher Pathways (to support the most vulnerable pupils in terms of them reaching their potential). 	<p>Discuss with office about Parent Portal guidance which directs users to the school.</p>	<p>Mark</p>
<p>Head Teacher Presentation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The increase in S1 pupils from next year onwards is likely to lead to 6/7 more teachers joining the school in coming years. - Schools have to plan early. Timetabling and Column Structure choice is already well underway, and the calendar is also being planned. The working time agreement (WTA) is prepared and signed in June each year for the following year. This includes allocating time for parent's evenings, writing reports, continuing development and so on. This process had to happen during Covid-19, which meant projecting forward into the unknown. The school decided to replace each parent's evening with an additional Tracking Report to keep regular communication up, which went into the WTA, but he acknowledged this doesn't replace the quality of parent's evenings. This is the main reason the school cannot reintroduce parent's evenings this session. A Frequently Asked Questions document is to be published on the website to assist parents/carers interpret the Tracking Reports. - Mark acknowledged that the new campus adds a new element of managing parent evenings, so perhaps best to experience one in real time before making decisions on changes to future parent's evenings. <p>Question raised in terms of running a virtual parents evening. The main issue Mark highlighted is that the WTA prevents the school adding a parents evening. One</p>		

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	<p>moving into Highers this year. Is a similar proposal suggested for them in their S6 year? The curriculum model is that the current S5s will have 6 subjects this year and 5 next year. The next S5 cohort will opt for 5 subjects and also 5 in S6. Only 30% of schools in Scotland offer 6 columns at present, the majority offering 5.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alasdair confirmed that prioritising double periods is planned to make best use of time in the senior years. - S5s and S6ss will be able to study 5 subjects Higher, Advanced Higher, National 5 level or National Progression Awards, Skills for Work courses. <p>Course Choice Proposal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Historically Guidance teachers have let students choose subjects based on preference but going forward the emphasis will also include a discussion on achievement to date. Pupils will then be encouraged to take more Highers in subjects they already do well in. At present the national benchmark is that each pupil leaves with 5 Highers. More students will be recommended to take more Highers, pushing students to raise their ambition. This will likely be introduced after the Senior Prelims but before the Senior Choice deadline. Choices then being made towards the middle/end February (subject to comments made earlier about bringing choices to late January). <p>Mark commented that even reducing from 6 to 5 columns, given the size of the school, the new courses introduced in recent years can be maintained. This year another course, the Personal Development Award, has already been introduced.</p> <p>Question - Do the NPAs have the same tariff as Highers for University entry? They are equivalent to a Higher grade C, so will allow entry to a 2-year College course followed by transfer to a 2-year course at University. To target a full four-year University course, students should study Higher courses. At present about 45% of students go to University, so for the 55% who chose a different route need to also be well provided for in school courses.</p>		
Digital Literacy	<p>Continuation of the main meeting</p> <p>Scott Campbell – starts as Principal Teacher for Digital Literacy in a weeks’ time. Fixed term post until June 2021</p> <p>In 2015 the ‘How good is our school’ report was published. In 2016 the government produced a report focusing on Digital Literacy. Making the right choices for the right</p>		

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	<p>pupils at the right time. It's about upskilling students, teachers and parents/carers in digital skill. Beyond June, Scott is also focusing on the legacy that is left from his role. VLE – Virtual Learning Environments using Google Classrooms and MS Teams etc. A big focus in on closing the poverty attainment gap, no-one left behind, that all households are provided with digital access.</p> <p>25,000 Chromebooks were bought by the Scottish Government. 18 out of 25 local authorities applied for these. The school had to apply to the Council and in the end were given 150 in Phase 1, most of which have now been issued. Moving into Phase 2 of this Connecting Scotland project, the school have asked for 106 devices, both Chromebooks and MiFi Dongles (to allow WIFI access to households that don't have internet connection).</p> <p>The school has prioritised those pupils who borrowed resources during lockdown, of whom there were about 75, then using parent/carer surveys to target need.</p> <p>Scott's wider role is to upskill staff to make sure that teachers know how Google Classroom works and how best to use it to make sure that all young people can benefit from the new systems.</p> <p>The Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy was trialled for Senior Phase students but is soon to be extended to younger years (where teachers agree to their use in class). The Community Campus now has a dedicated BYOD WIFI network to access learning and teaching resources online.</p> <p>Scott is keen to develop a parent forum to get input and feedback on all things Digital Literacy.</p> <p>BYOD – Aberdeenshire Council control the access to the network (which was limited in the old building but is much stronger in the Community Campus). The ability to research in the classroom using BYOD and access wider information, which creates a new learning experience.</p> <p>In terms of devices, Scott felt that a tablet device which also works as a computer (such as a Microsoft Surface) is ideal. iPad not so functional. It's the pupil's responsibility to manage the device and they can't plug into the school sockets (without PAT testing) so a full charge and a power bank would be advised. One parent commented that a robust device is sensible, to cope with the wear and tear.</p>	<p>Details of parents willing to join a Digital Literacy Forum to be passed to Scott.</p>	<p>Simon</p>

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	<p>It was commented that early on in Lockdown, different teachers were issuing work in different ways, on different systems. A consistent approach was preferred using Google Classroom ensuring work was issued in the same way along with consistency of feedback. Also, the use of collaborative work could be very beneficial for pupils. Scott commented - Some students are still preferring to receive paper-based homework, to give them a sense of continuity, but more and more will be moving onto digital systems.</p>		
<p>SQA Update and Q&A</p>	<p>Facilitated through a separate meeting Rob Fraser – SQA Officer</p> <p>Exam Timetable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SQA is currently planning exam diet for Higher and Advanced Higher <p>N5 Evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scottish Government has taken the decision that there will be no externally assessed exams or course work this year • There will be a qualification model. More details on this will be shared soon. • SQA will quality assure and will engage with and support the schools to help make sure that the qualifications are in line with the national standards <p>Support for teachers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SQA is currently in the process of issuing guidance on evidence gathering. Some subjects have received this guidance already, other subjects will receive this soon. <p>Certification of Awards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As scheduled on 10 August 2021 <p>Questions/Comments and Answers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern about the speed at which Scottish Government decided to cancel the Nat5 exams <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ At introduction of Curriculum for Excellence originally Nat5 was not due to be externally assessed ○ Ultimately this was a political decision that the SQA will support the government in • How will the Quality Assurance work? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There will be a 2 to 3 months window for the school to send in evidence, which will then be sampled and discussed by the SQA verifiers 		

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will there be a plan B in case (Advanced) Higher exams are cancelled at the last minute? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yes, there are key health check points in place • Why was the project work for the Adv Highers cancelled? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work that was not touching the integrity of the course was removed to provide teachers with some breathing space • How much emphasis will there be on N5 prelim results being used towards evidence? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SQA is in the process of/has provided each subject with guidance on this. Teachers are asked for highly predictive elements in the broadest possible way. • Teachers have not received definitive guidance on course content, which seems unfair and is causing additional stress for teachers and students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Just before the October break high level document was sent out, but indeed some subjects are waiting for more detail. 		
AOB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ruth & Cara have taken the Social Media responsibility this session. Ruth was keen to engage more parents of younger pupils, as a lot of content has been around SQA. She suggested running a poll on Facebook to find out what topics are relevant to parents/carers. Also, as we are a Community Campus, the content can also extend to community users. - Ruth also suggested getting an Instagram page set up, which might include a wider range of parents (and pupils). - Martin mentioned that 2 Business and IT classroom lights did not switch off out of hours. As all classrooms are fitted with automatic sensors, this must be a fault. 	<p>Devise a Communication Strategy</p> <p>Report issue to Facilities Management team</p>	<p>Ruth and Cara</p> <p>Mark</p>
Date of Next Meeting	<p>Wednesday 20th January 2020, 6.30-8.30pm</p> <p>Venue: Inverurie Community Campus (room TBC), restrictions permitting.</p> <p>Headteacher topic: 'The Community Campus & Management of Resources'</p>	<p>Confirm venue</p>	<p>Mark/Elizabeth</p>

