**St. Andrew’s Primary School**

**Parent Council Meeting**

**Tuesday 15 September**

**In attendance:** Helena MacLeay, Clare Black, Diane Nicholas, Isla Hunt, Kirsty Jackson, Joanne Hunter , Jess Wilkinson, Audrey MacDonald.

**Apologies:**  Hannah Jones, Katherine Malone, Nikki Laing, Laura Burnett, Aga Biel.

**Minutes of last meeting:** Minutes agreed as a true and accurate account of the meeting.

**Chairperson’s report**

Helena thanked Joanne and all the staff for their support throughout lockdown.

Helena stayed in touch with the school regularly and offered help and support from the parent council.

Connect have run various information sessions for parent forums and Clare, Helena and Kirsty attended some of the sessions and found them useful. It’s apparent that there was a lot of inconsistency in support offered by schools during lockdown.

Midlothian council have also been running engagement sessions for the Chairpeople of Parent Councils. Helena has shared the slides from these with the group.

Going forward all our Parent Council meetings will be online using zoom.

Helena highlighted that we need to find new ways to engage with parents at this time. Fundraising will be extremely challenging and we’ll need to be creative in our approach to this. But we’re also aware of the financial pressures lots of families are facing at the moment and need to be sensitive to this. Connect are running sessions on fundraising which we’ll tap into.

Helena asked everyone to encourage new people to join the Parent Council. She thanked everyone for their continued support and asked everyone to stay involved.

**Headteacher’s report**

Joanne thanked the Parent Council for their support over this challenging time. She highlighted that the staff feel very lucky to have a supportive Parent Council.

**Health & safety**

In June the staff carried out a full risk assessment. The original plan was to return to school using a blended learning model. However, this changed at the end of June.

Children should now remain in their own cohort (class) as much as possible. They don’t need to social distance within their own cohort.

Children access the building through their classroom fire doors. The only time they are in the atrium is if they are going to the toilet. In the toilets, there are designated cubicles and sinks for each class.

There is a designated play area for each class each week and this is rotated. Each class has their own set of equipment they can play with.

PE is taking place outside as we’re not able to use the gym hall. The exception is the P1s who are using the gym hall as it was difficult to teach them outside.

Parents are encouraged to socially distance at the school.

There was a fire drill last week which went well. The fire evacuation plan hasn’t changed too much because we can use the external doors to exit the building.

Health and Safety Executive of Scotland are carrying out spot checks of the risk assessments in school.

**Staffing**

There have been a few staffing changes in school.

In the nursery, Mrs Stevenson left at the end of last term and has been replaced by Miss Murdoch. Mrs Miller is back from maternity leave. Mrs McCallister and Mrs Kane are leaving and there will be new members of staff joining soon.

Mrs Richmond is taking up a secondment at Burnbrae and her replacement started this week.

Mrs Thom has joined as a PE specialist. She can only work with 2 cohorts each day. She has also taken on some of the health and wellbeing curriculum.

**The children**

The children have generally settled back into school really well. The focus has been on health and wellbeing and this will continue to make sure children have the support they need.

Assessments have started in class in literacy and numeracy. Results will be shared with parents in the next few weeks. This will allow teachers and parents to understand where children are in their learning following lockdown and what support they need.

The school group manager, Julie Fox is visiting on 8 October. Her focus will be on the health and wellbeing of children and staff as well as the results of the assessments.

**Denominational schools review**

Joanne advised that she received an email from Nicola McDowell last week giving an update on this. The council are awaiting guidance from Government on whether they can carry out statutory consultations during this time.

**Sacraments**

P5 should have made their First Communion in May. This will now be held on 10 October at St. Matthews. The parents have had a letter home to decide whether they want to go ahead. The number of family members permitted to attend would be limited to around 6 per family. Parents have been asked to contact Father Allen directly if they want to make alternative arrangements. At the moment we have 4 children confirmed. Joanne agreed to confirm final numbers so we can organise gifts for the children. **Action: JH.**

**Chrome books**

We ordered 30 chrome books however 60 were delivered and we are able to keep all 60.

Audrey agreed to arrange a bank transfer to the school for £1,712.70 for this.

P1 and 2 will keep the ipads for the moment. Each class from P3 – P7 has 12 chrome books in class all the time.

**Playground**

The grass around the MUGA has grown back and is able to be used. The boards and barriers are gone and don’t need risk-assessed any more. Joanne is pursuing the option of getting the MUGA re-laid. She’ll get a cost for this and bring it back to the PC to consider. **Action: JH.**

**Parent consultations**

The parent consultations will go ahead in October but the format is still to be agreed. A number of formats are being explored.

**Treasurer’s report**

The current balance is £5,272.85.

This will reduce to £3,560.15 when the cost of the chrome books is deducted.

Audrey will have the accounts ready for the AGM. **Action: AM.**

**Parish rep**

There is now mass on most days over at St. Matthews however numbers are limited and there isn’t a booking system in place.

Helena asked about preparation for Confirmation and Joanne confirmed this will begin at the end of January.

Joanne also confirmed that preparation for first Confession will begin after the September weekend.

**Lockdown plans**

Joanne confirmed that there is a week of work for each class ready on Google classroom in case we go back into lockdown. If kids are absent, work is being sent home or posted to Google classroom so they can keep up. The school have also carried out a digital audit to make sure all children have access to technology that they can use for home learning.

**Homework**

Clare asked if homework could be provided to help children to catch-up once the results of the assessments are available. Joanne advised that Midlothian Council want to take a consistent approach to this across all schools and this will be considered.

Audrey also felt that homework for the P7s would help them to prepare for high school next year. Joanne agreed to speak to Mr Paterson about this. **Action: JH.**

Joanne confirmed that they are also working closely with the high schools to find out their plans and how we can best prepare our children for the transition.

**Fundraising**

Helena asked the group for views on our approach to fundraising currently. Everyone agreed that now is not the right time to do this given the financial pressure families are facing right now. We agreed to keep this under review.

Clare asked whether we have a Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) and Joanne confirmed this is in place and can be used to support families in need.

Diane suggested that we could consider using some of the Parent Council funds to support families in need. We agreed to keep this under review.

**Halloween**

Clare asked whether we could organise something fun for the children to do in class for Halloween given that we won’t be able to run the usual party. Joanne agreed to discuss this with the staff at the next staff meeting and let us know what we can do to help. **Action: JH.**

**Parental engagement**

Helena asked the group for ideas around how we could engage with parents at this time.

Audrey suggested a zoom quiz or bingo for parents. She did this with Gorebridge Cduring lockdown and it helped people to feel connected to the community. Audrey will explore this further. **Action: AM.**

Isla suggested a class newsletter so the children from different classes can connect with each other. Joanne said that St Mary’s have done a virtual assembly using Google Meet and she is planning something similar.

The P7s are preparing their house captain speeches. They would normally present to everyone in their house. But this year they will be recorded doing their presentation and this will be shown to the other kids in their classroom using the white boards.

**Next meeting:** AGM: Tuesday 29 September, 7.00pm.