

# Crieff High School Parent Council

**Draft minutes of meeting held on 24 August 2020**

**Virtual meeting via Zoom 6.30 – 8.15pm**

Present: John Donnelly (JD) - Headteacher/Campus Leader, Lily Cannon (LC) – Head Girl, Rooney Kilgannon (RK) - Head Boy

Cathy Tilbrook (CT) - Chair, Morven Harrower – Vice Chair, Billy Russell - Treasurer

Gillian Rose (GR), Lindsay Lennie (LL), Fiona Perry, Suzanne Harvey, Helen McCrorie (HM), Catriona Cunningham, Angela Logan, Andrew Philip, Alison Ritchie, Aileen Turkington, Emily James, Emma McIntyre, Linda Sterry, Murdo Campbell, Julia ?

Apologies: Betsy Vielhaber (BV), Nina Stenhouse, Cathie McKay

## **1. Welcome and introductions**

CT welcomed all attendees.

## **2. Update on return to school and any issues arising**

John Donnelly provided an update. Phone call was received today from Education Scotland and H&S – both bodies were content and signed off that all the required Covid measures are in place at CHS. Pupil attendance 94% lowest in last 2 weeks (up to 97%). Vast majority of pupils have accepted new arrangements and are complying well.

Feedback from parents and pupils was very positive and instructions considered clear. S1 pupils seem to be settling in really well.

Face coverings in corridors – now expected to become mandatory (Scottish Govt announcement today). Up to now, pupils can opt to wear them. New rules will require their use in communal areas and corridors but not in classrooms. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-53888479>

## **3. Questions from parents:**

*Many parents are concerned that face-coverings are not being required on school buses, even though some are shared with public and buses are crowded with pupils from different year groups. Noted that this was not within CHS control but hope that school can help to change the policy.*

JD response: CHS sent a request to parents for pupils to wear face coverings on 15/15A bus but have since been informed by Stagecoach that these buses are classed as 'school transport' rather than public transport so face coverings optional. School staff have spoken to Stagecoach bus drivers and asked that they give consistent advice to pupils. All agreed that it would be helpful for this to be clarified and that pupils need clear instructions and enforcement.

**AP1 - HM to draft a letter to PKC and Stagecoach and CT to send.**

*As PKC are advising daily laundering of school clothes, should the uniform be relaxed slightly as blazers, (and perhaps ties,) are not items of clothing that are usually washed every evening?*

JD response: Some Scottish schools are requesting daily clothes washing and have relaxed their uniform rules, but national advice has made clear that normal laundering is fine. CHS is therefore retaining normal uniform rules and pupil compliance has been good so far. S1

parents sought clarification on uniform rules... JD confirmed that black jeans are not part of the uniform, and school will now begin to clamp down on jeans, tracksuit trousers etc.

*When the gym, pool, library etc re-open, how will the school ensure the safety of pupils? Will the public be kept separate from pupils?*

JD: Live Active and PKC have now confirmed that when the Recreation Centre opens it will only be at weekends and evenings to ensure no overlap with pupils. Can only re-open fully if there is separate / self-contained access.

*Current lack of instrumental music teaching provision is a concern, especially for SQA pupils. Can CHS do anything to help resolve the barriers?*

JD response: Wind, brass, singing – not approved yet. Other instruments, usually attend multiple schools in one day. Now looking for members of staff to be in for one full day (delivering some lessons online to other schools). Expecting phone call this week to look at capacity to house this – would provide this space.

*When will lunchtime and after school clubs be able to re-start?*

JD response: Active Schools (Nick Keiller) has communicated that this is likely to after October break.

**AP2: CT to confirm with Nick Keiller to provide update at AGM.**

*What would happen if any pupil or staff test positive for Covid?*

JD response: in the event of an increase in background absence (suspected Covid cases) or 2 positive cases, CHS must communicate with Tayside Health Protection team for analysis and then an Incident Management Team including JD would be formed. May require testing of year groups etc.

For pupils in exam years, some have not yet received any homework and there was a plea for increased homework to help instil good study habits early in term.

**AP3: JD to discuss homework provision with teaching staff.**

#### **4. Timing of S1 subject choices**

The following question was received from a parent:

*I'd like to hear if there is any further consideration given to S1 choices being delayed to the end of S2. S1 choices are so early in their school career, they can't have a decent impression of subjects if they have only had a few weeks of each - particularly when there is only one class period per week - that's not many weeks/lessons to get enough information about the subject to make life direction choices, and there's a great risk of it being dependent on whether or not they like the teacher. The first two years should be about breadth of education, with narrowing down done as late as possible.*

There was broad agreement with this view from those attending. Agreed to have a longer discussion, including a recent report from PKC (David McLuskey) at next meeting.

**AP4: CT to schedule a discussion on S1/2 subject choices for next meeting.**

#### **5. Feedback on SQA exam issues and any concerns regarding 2021/22 exam process**

There was discussion on the recent SQA exam results issues. As anticipated, it appears that CHS pupils had suffered significant downgrading from the algorithm used, due to past school performance. However, the subsequent change to teacher estimates resolved this issue, which was a massive relief for pupils, parents and teachers.

JD confirmed that SQA is about to release exam timetable for next year and expect that normal exams will be able to go ahead, but this will remain under review. There is also a consultation taking place on how some subjects can change and adapt to new situation, e.g. reducing amount of curriculum that will be tested in exam.

**CHS exam results:** JD displayed a series of graphs comparing CHS performance for SQA exam results against PKC average in 2020 compared to previous years. This showed a significant improvement this year in the position of CHS relative to other PKC secondary schools.

**Prelim dates** – a decision on timing of prelims will be taken in term 2 (after Oct holidays). Question about whether exam pupils are ahead or behind where they normally would be S5/6 – probably about the same, but S4 likely to be slightly disadvantaged due to slow start in lockdown.

**Supported study nights** – these will be held in weeks 5 and 8 with teachers available after school to provide extra help to pupils and help to identify and address any gaps in learning. Teachers will prompt pupils, but the onus is on pupils to attend. Parents will be informed in advance.

There was a comment that Youtube videos (e.g. of maths equations) were useful as they could be watched repeatedly. JD suggested that this feedback should be provided back to specific teachers to see if they can provide links etc.

## **6. Head boy/ Head girl update**

RK and LC reported that they have been meeting the large prefect team and are sorting out rotas. They welcomed the chance to attend Parent Council meetings.

## **7. Arrangements for Parent Council AGM**

Suggested date Mon 28 Sept.

**AP5: CT to liaise with rest of committee over preparations for AGM, provide 2 week notice of meeting and clarify any vacant committee roles.**

LL agreed to provide Zoom link for AGM.

**AP6: CT to add AGM agenda item on purchase of Zoom (or other online) account for Parent Council**

## **8. Update on actions from 29 June**

AP1: School to circulate resource list to parents. – discharged

AP2: JD to feed back to Laura Fraser that Parent Council is happy to offer help over holiday to progress work on website – ongoing.

**Update AP7: GR and CT to meet with JD and LF to discuss website next steps.**

AP3: JD to send new head boy/girl email details to CT and BV and lists to be updated. – discharged

It was suggested that the Parent Council should organise something to thank the teachers for all their hard work during the crisis.

AP4: JD to provide ideas on what teachers might appreciate

AP5: BV to lead on organisation when clearer plan exists.

**Update AP8: JD suggested donation for cakes at regular staff event. Decision deferred to discuss with BV.**

AP6: School to post annual Merit and Excellence Awards Criteria on school website – discharged

AP7: CT to liaise with LC and RK over future agenda items - discharged

AP8: CT / BV / JD to liaise in August over dates for next meetings - discharged.