

Crieff High School Parent Council

Draft minutes of meeting held on 29 April 2021

Virtual meeting via Zoom 6.30pm

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

Cathy Tilbrook (CT) - Chair, Betsy Vielhaber (BV), Aileen Turkington, Emily James, Rebecca Mackie, Alison Ritchie (AR), Fiona Perry, Lisa Barber, Gillian Rose (GR), Catriona Cunningham, Ewan Cameron, Helen McCrorie

Apologies: Morven Harrower, Billy Russell (BR), Sam and Clara Walker

1. Welcome and apologies

CT opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. Noted order of agenda slightly changed as some speakers joining later.

2. Health & wellbeing survey results

Morag Fotheringhame took us through results of the SHINE health & wellbeing pupil survey. This was a national survey and 200 schools opted to participate. It covered general health and mental health / wellbeing.

Survey was completed in November 2020, so attitudes may have been affected by Covid pandemic and concerns. Completion was optional but there was a good response (81%) from both boys and girls in CHS. On general health, the results show some age groups have a low feeling about their health. CHS has already committed to increase PE provision for next year which might help with this.

Mental health survey results give cause for concern. Many pupils indicated low mood and indicate risk of depression. Girls in S1-S3 indicated concerns around personal appearance. Overall, girls appear to be having more difficulties than boys. A question on self-harm was included and response was similar to national numbers. The middle years seem to be the time when pupils are most having issues.

MF indicated that school will analyse the detailed results and use this with Guidance team to target particular issues and year groups to work on and address the problems.

CHS already has strong support in place: House support, school nurse, school counsellor (in place since end of last year), educational psychologist, community link workers (S1,S2).

In addition, the following will be implemented: strengthen the House system, develop a Pupil Council Wellbeing Group, work with Pupil Council Equalities Group (e.g. on Rights Respecting Schools Award, anti-bullying policy), explore further S6 Leadership opportunities, develop a Mental Health Strategy for school including training opportunities for pupils as mental health ambassadors. PSE curriculum will work on self-esteem, sleep, body image, self-harm.

Discussion

Parents asked whether school could cover issues on body image and social media, also on street safety issues, especially for girls?

LC mentioned that she is a Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre (RASAC) youth ambassador and felt that visits from RASAC are useful but are infrequent so their message needs to be re-enforced. MF agreed and said school will explore this.

RK and LC commented that the proposed measures sound helpful but that pupil stress is also affected by pressure of schoolwork (especially during/after lockdown) and exams. Also some concern that covering these issues during PSE may not make a difference if pupils do not pay attention.

One parent mentioned that getting kids to seek help is hard as this suggests they have an issue. Need to reinforce the message that seeking assistance is positive, not negative. It was suggested that after school study skills sessions should be provided during school day (e.g. in PSE) as pupils are reluctant to be seen as needing this help.

JD concluded that the survey report was very hard to read and work on. To identify solutions, young people will be involved in focus groups to find the most effective way forward. CT thanked MF for this important update and asked whether parents could get further support and information / training on these issues.

AP1: JD/MF to provide updates on this issue to future meetings, including potential for parent info / training.

3. Head Teacher update

Detail is included in attached Head Teacher report. Summary is included here.

Attendance last term was much better than national levels and 93% pupils were engaging with live lessons and over 75% were completing course work.

Staffing update – levels were maintained at 49 teachers despite other schools having to reduce 2%. School roll is going up.

Staff changes: Ms Howitt (music) is leaving CHS.

Parents raised concerns about how this loss would impact on school music provision and extra-curricular music options. This was felt to have been a great strength of the school, with strong showing at music festivals, school shows, concerts, etc.

JD confirmed that Ms Howitt's part-time music post was being replaced to allow for the increasing PE provision. In S1, music will be reduced from two periods to one period per week (alongside one period of drama and two of art). Other than this, music provision to other year groups and SQA qualifications will not be affected – an existing teacher in another department will provide some music cover alongside Mr Griffiths.

CT suggested that, due to level of parent concerns expressed on school music, it would be useful to re-visit this issue.

AP2: JD to share curriculum map and CT to table a further discussion on school music at a future meeting.

SQA assessments

JD highlighted that this is a very busy period for senior phase pupils. CHS is trying to support students through:

- Delaying start of assessment period to allow time to re-adjust to school and prepare for tests;
- Providing extra time for core subjects;
- 6 week period of after school and lunchtime study support.

Assessments start next week and there are three blocks within a 5 week timeframe.

After 11 June, teachers will reflect on all evidence and produce provisional results for each pupil, and there will be cross-marking and moderation process. School will be sending group calls to encourage parents to discuss assessment results with pupils at end of each block. But school cannot communicate final results as this is SQA responsibility.

One parent asked if pupils know what they will be assessed on for each subject. JD said teachers are being asked to be very specific about what pupils need to do and know. Assessment schedules are being checked to ensure no pupil has any clashes and avoid overload on individual days.

Discussed the virtual parent evenings. Mixed response from parents – many found this useful but some had technical problems connecting and were not sure how to get assistance, which was frustrating. JD noted that school office staff were available to answer questions, but this could have been made clearer to parents. It was suggested that a hybrid approach of some in school and some online appointments might work well in future.

4. Discussion of self-evaluation survey results:

Circulated the results and people can review and discuss in depth at another date.

5. Assessment of curriculum options, including S1/2 subject choices

Will address this in term 1 or 2 next year. **AP3: CT to schedule discussion for next term**

6. Mobile phone working group update

Alison discussed progress so far and felt the work follows well from the discussion about mental health. The working group are keen to survey the wide views about the place of mobile phones in society and learning. They want to encourage staff and pupils to weigh up cost and benefits of technology. They will gather views and then help feed into the Mobile Phone Policy being revised next term by senior management. Draft survey was discussed (versions for pupils, staff and parents) and was agreed to be useful.

AP4: AR to liaise with MF about attending Parent Council Technology Group to discuss the survey

AP5: JD to coordinate sending out the survey during last 3 weeks of term after assessments completed.

7. Head girl/boy update--

LC mentioned that S6 Yearbook is ready and requested that Parent Council help to subsidise this for pupils. Cost is estimated at £25 per yearbook. Suggested a PC contribution of £5 per book (total cost approx. £350). Those attending agreed this sum, subject to agreement by Treasurer. **AP6: CT to discuss funding request with BR.**

RK gave pupil update. Said that return to school has gone well and most students are feeling happier. Senior Prefect team are working hard on SQA assessments and also working on Yearbook. Putting more focus on engaging the lower year prefects.

8. Minutes/action items from (11/03/21)

Action 1: JD to circulate self-evaluation survey results for discussion at next meeting.

---done with minutes

Action 2: LC to provide details of support sought for yearbook. Discharged during meeting

Action 3: Working group to provide full report to next meeting, including draft survey proposals. Discharged

Action 4: JD to investigate whether group emails/ messages to all parents could include a subject heading.

JD noted that clarifying the topic of school messages / emails in the title is not straightforward to resolve, so this action is ongoing.

Action 5: CT to liaise with GR to advise on contact for website.

GR confirmed she has been liaising with office staff and website work is almost completed. Domain name and host are sorted out and migration will be completed soon. Office staff changes have made the work more challenging. CT expressed thanks to GR for all her work on the website.

Action 4 – Carried forward from Dec: Proposed CHS masks – BV to work with LC and prefect group to review samples and decide on next steps.

LC reported that prefect group were not convinced about demand for school masks due to Covid restrictions changing, but LC agreed to discuss with wider prefect group.

Other business:

Parents wanted to thank all the teachers for continuing to do such an amazing job in such challenging circumstances.

9. Date for the next meeting – June 3rd 6:30pm (later postponed to 17 June)

Agenda to include - Review of SQA assessment process

Meeting ended 20:25