

Crieff High School Parent Council

Minutes

Thursday 5 May 2022

Via Zoom at 6.30pm

1. Welcome and apologies

Attending: Cathy Tilbrook (Chair); Clara Walker (Secretary); John Donnelly (Head Teacher); Eve Kilgannon; Alison Ritchie; Nina Stenhouse; Emily James; Morven Harrower; Fiona Perry.

Apologies: Billy Russell, Rebecca Mackie, Anita Spurway; Betsy Vielhaber

2. Headteacher's update, including brief update on curriculum choice review.

- Covid – easing restrictions. Ventilation and hand sanitising still on-going; asymptomatic testing no longer being handed out. Parents now able to access the building – awards ceremonies and transition visits can now take place in person and S1 parents and carers will also be able to come in to the school to get to know it – Morag Fotheringhame will be organising this.

- Face covering no longer needed – less than 5% of pupils currently wearing them; Covid cases in staff and pupils very low.

- SQA exams have started with a new chief invigilator. Exams have been smooth with few pupils failing to attend.

- All schools must share estimates to parents and pupils – the school has decided not to do this until after the exams. If estimates are higher than examination result – appeals can be considered.

QUESTIONS:

- CT asked about use of keyboards in exams – JD responded that this was being used by those pupils who have found this valuable – assessed on a case by case basis.

- CW asked for an update on staffing – JD responded that 5 probationers have been asked for – Science, Maths, Social Subjects, Home Economics, English.

Mrs Russell – Head of English is leaving; Mrs Russell – Social Subjects – also leaving; Mrs Basford – Retiring; Mrs Marchbank (Biology); Mrs Craig (English)– returning from mat leave.

PT Guidance – soon to be recruited.

Parents were concerned about loss of some very popular teachers, and worried that it may be hard to retain provision of specialist subjects like Sociology. CT asked if there was anything that the school or Parent Council could do to better understand the reasons for staff leaving or to help with retention.

Action: JD agreed to keep the PC updated on recruitment issues

Action: JD to consider if headteacher updates can be provided in advance of meetings to allow more time for discussion of issues arising.

3. PKC review report into bullying allegations and actions arising

JD provided an overview of the action plan developed as a result of the report. This will be circulated within the next month.

CT reported that Morag Fotheringhame was looking for PC representation on the development of the Bullying Policy.

CT suggested there might be an interest in setting up a working group on this.

CW offered to be the contact for Morag Fotheringham initially. Eve Kilgannon also offered to support.

CW raised RASAC ambassadors and the emotional burden they are facing with some conversations they are having. JD acknowledged this and would consider ways to address this issue.

Action: CT to respond to Morag Fotheringhame to confirm input to Bullying Policy

4. Mobile phone policy

Alison Ritchie updated on the sub group meeting held on 04/05/22

Key question from that meeting:

1. How do staff feel – consultation feedback?
2. Consultation with other schools/areas

Minute of the meeting in Appendix 1 below.

There was an extensive discussion around this based on the sub group meeting options.

EK asked about the internet capability of the school – JD responded that it was insufficient.

JD recorded that option recommendation will be implemented in June 2022.

Action: School to re-circulate Mobile Phone Survey to all parents with option to comment on composite options.

5. Head girl / boy update

No update due to SQA exams.

6. Minutes and actions from previous meeting

Approved and matters arising actioned.

CT sought clarification on approval around Summer school uniform, specifically black shorts for girls and boys – JD has agreed to this being an option and all relevant documentation will be updated.

7. **AOCB** Question over phased lunch meaning limited choice for second sitting – JD said there would no longer need to be a phased lunch.
School trips – consultation would take place with staff around possible options for next year.
Curriculum choice issue – staff consultation feedback indicates that every department has their own view on this. Christmas 2022 is the deadline for decision-making.
AR – reflected on the careers support and how/if this could be enhanced. This discussion would be carried forward to the next meeting.
8. **Date and topics for next meeting:** 26/05/22

Appendix 1: CHS Parent Council - Mobile Phone Working Group Discussion - 3rd May 2022

Present: Cathy Tilbrook, Alison Ritchie, Fiona Perry, Nina Stenhouse, Sam Walker, Emily James

Apologies: Andrew Phillips

Here are the key points from the discussion:

Request for more background information about consultation process

- Has the survey and scenarios been shared beyond Parent council? This week we can re-send around parent council mailing list and encourage responses.
- Low response to the survey suggests low visibility of the email. Could this be sent out again and flagged/ labelled more clearly so parents know it is influencing mobile phone policy? Quite a few parents have expressed interest in this area and will want to respond.
- The group felt they would like to hear more from consultation with staff: what has been their feedback and what were the issues raised?
- More info on policies in other schools and LAs? (Eg Schools in Clacks where S1-S3 don't get access to their phones during the school day. S4-S6 can use them only as part of their learning and at all other times they are in bags.)

Slides with scenarios and suggested management issues were clear and helpful. Feedback on each scenario:

Scenario 1:

- This was very popular with parents present who favoured a bold approach to limiting phone use; It's also clear and unambiguous.
- It also cuts out time for teachers to spend managing phone use in classes.
- However there was a recognition that not all parents would support it and pupils would not be keen.
- It was also noted that for some children using phones during social time was supportive.

Scenario 2:

- Use of phones in class using signposting seem tricky to police and exposing teachers to on-going hassle eating into teaching time.
- Mobile free areas a good idea but may be hard to enforce that.

Scenario 3:

This was felt to be a slightly more consistent version of the status quo and therefore a missed opportunity to create a more positive learning environment for the young people.

The discussion drew out the following priorities for parents:

- a bold policy which would bring in change to status quo and be clear and implementable,
- a policy which is acceptable to wider parent and pupil community,
- a policy which would protect children from the distraction of mobile phones during learning and teaching.

To this end it was felt perhaps a hybrid of the scenarios shared would be required:

- Focus of policy on keeping phone use out of the classroom.
- Different rules for junior and senior age groups. (Apparently this is currently the case in schools in Clacks.)
- No phones in class at all for S1-S3.
- Traffic light system for S4-S6 for use of phones in class.
- If teachers feel they are needed in class for learning then suggested we should be trying to get better access to ipads and laptops.
- Some mobile free areas in social and breakout areas.