



Forthill Parent Council Meeting

Held in the OOSC and via Microsoft Teams

Thursday 2nd November 2023 at 6.30pm

Meeting Minutes

Present:

Lorna Robertson (Head Teacher), Nikki Munro (Depute Head Teacher), Lynn Schofield (Chairperson), Nicola Dall (Clerk)

Parents

Kulsam Ali, Tracey Bayliss, Tania Beckham, Lesley-Anne Bell, Linda Fraser, Tony Jordan, Rachel Miles, Kris Stuart.

1. Welcome

Lynn welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies

Andy Swaine, Mark Woods, Councillor Craig Duncan, Councillor Pete Shears

3. Previous Minute

The minutes of the last meeting held on the 30th August 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

4. Updates

Head Teacher Update

Nikki Munro is in attendance tonight and will rotate with Sasha Devlin to attend meetings with Lorna. It was also asked if a teacher representative would be useful to the Parent Council and this will be considered.

A meeting has been arranged with Euan McKay the Active Travel Officer (Sustainable Transportation & Roads) at Dundee City Council on Thursday 9th November at 12noon on Teams. Kris Stuart is to attend the meeting on behalf of the Parent Council. Any other member who wishes to attend should let the clerk know and this will be passed on.

Useful dates for this term has been distributed. Bookings for parents nights being held this month will go live tomorrow. An overview of dates for primary seven parents will also be distributed next week with one date to be amended by Grove Academy.

During the in-service days next week there will be a focus on inclusive classrooms; learning, teaching and assessment and language development and regulation. There will also be some collaborative work with the other schools in the cluster to engage in moderation.

There may be industrial action being taken by support staff who are members of Unison on Wednesday 15th November. Dundee City Council will share their plan for the day as soon as possible.

A Strategic Leadership review was conducted in school on Monday 30th October with the focus on the head teachers leadership over the first 12 week period. The feedback received was very positive and the direction of travel for the school was confirmed as correct. During the review robust self-evaluations were shared and some practice was shared amongst other colleagues due to its innovative nature.

There will be some consultation with parents this term focusing on developing a class composition policy. There is also a provisional date of 17th November to invite parents of children with an additional support need to come together for a morning coffee and chat to establish a network and take the lead from them about the direction of the group.

House Captains have worked hard to consult across the whole school refreshing our Values, Vision and Aims – they will have information out at parents night for families to have their say before there is a final decision as to how these are moved forward.

A Facebook request was posted by the Parent Council asking for rugs, Kallax cube units (from Ikea / Argos) and plants. Some plants have been received from a member of OOSC staff and a few parents in attendance are to hand in more plants. The post is to be shared again on the Facebook page with a request to share with their own friends. It was commented not all families use Facebook and that sending a QR code with the information home to parents may be more effective.

Questions and Comments

Communication Strategy

It was asked how the changes made to the communication strategy since the last meeting, what the feedback from teachers has been and how success was being measured.

Lorna reported that the leadership team are tracking the number of parental emails and these are being dealt with as quickly as possible by the appropriate member of staff. It is recognised that the school is very large and both deputies have a 0.5 teaching commitment however all of the leadership are as responsive as possible to all communication. The feedback from teachers is that they are managing to prepare and plan their learning much better than they had been.

Lorna and the leadership team feel that they now have an improved overview and understanding of the issues across the school which allows all families to be supported within the school community.

School Handbook

It was asked if the school handbook would be updated in the near future as it is felt it is a bit out of date. Lorna has refreshed the handbook available on the Dundee City Council website and asked that if there is anything parents feel is out of date/incorrect to let her know. Lorna is also happy to go over the handbook with the Parent Council group at a future meeting to ensure it is up to date.

Homework Policy

It was asked if pupils must read the reading book given by school each night as a parent is struggling with the volume of reading given they are finding it difficult to read for pleasure. The homework policy following consultation previously with parents is that homework would not be routinely given to pupils however this is no longer the case and some, if not all classes are being given homework this session.

The teaching staff are currently being asked to feedback to the leadership team regarding the homework they are sending home and following discussion with the Parent Council a full consultation with the parent body will be undertaken.

Parents Nights

It was suggested by the Chair that the Parent Council have a presence at the parents nights and this was agreed by Lorna.

Director / Convener Meeting – 26th September 2023

Lynn attended the last meeting which was held on the 26th September 2023. The focus of the meeting seemed to be secondary school however there were some relevant updates which included:

Sharing the decision making process regarding the decision to open some schools and close others during the three days of industrial action of support staff in September. Some time was spent going into detail about the process and it was made clear that the main focus was to open schools to as many pupils as possible across the city. They appreciated that the late decision making wasn't helpful and would look to make decisions quicker going forward.

Data was presented on attainment in exams for secondary schools and Lynn is happy to share some information she noted with any member of the Parent Council who is interested.

The minutes of the meeting will be shared with the Parent Council once they are made available and the next meeting is to be held on the 21st November 2023.

Friends of Forthill

The Christmas Fayre will take place on Saturday 18th November 2023 and is currently being organised. Communication will go out on Monday regarding this.

The next meeting of Friends of Forthill is Tuesday 14th November at 6.30pm in the OOSC.

The total raised from the Summer fayre has recently been finalised and an amazing total of £4632.34.

5. Agenda Items

School Communication Update and Feedback

Lorna was thanked for the update given earlier in the meeting and asked if there would be a survey issued to parents/carers to ask for feedback about the changes made to the communication strategy.

Lorna welcomes feedback and suggestions for improvement and is happy to survey parents for feedback. It was agreed that doing this in February, half way through the school year would be most beneficial.

It was commented that the headings used in Seesaw at times make it difficult to find information and can also be impacted by who creates the post. This was noted by Lorna and will be investigated to see if changes can be made.

This topic led on to a brief discussion about the use of Seesaw. It was commented that one of the class teachers sent out a couple of sentences on Monday in a post which summarised this weeks learning and the parent enjoyed receiving this and used the information to chat with her child about learning at home. The baseline for teachers is that a termly overview will be sent at the start of the term and a summary at the end of the term however some teachers will share some of the learning in class throughout the term.

The Introduction of Political Ideologies into Lessons

An email from a parent who is unable to attend the meeting tonight was read out to members in attendance and talked about the recent topic undertaken by some of the classes in the school relating to Black Lives Matter and their concerns around the teaching of this topic.

One of the of the aims of the Parent Council is to ensure all parents/carers views are represented on the education provided by the school and other matters affecting the education and welfare of the pupils. Lynn started the discussion by ensuring that the statement from the parent was read out in full.

A video clip from Education Scotland was shown to provide context to the Parent Council and the link will be shared in the minutes:

Story of the Building Racial Literacy Programme - YouTube

Lorna commented that the parent has also been raised concerns with a similar theme to the school which has been answered in writing. Lorna invited the parent into school for a further discussion should they wish. Lorna has sought advice from other stakeholders regarding how this particular aspect of learning is being progressed and from the hierarchy within Children and Families Services.

It was noted that at more than one parent council meeting held over the last few years discussion had taken place initiated by a parent who felt the Parent Council and school should be more active in discussing topics with these themes.

Some of the parents in attendance received the email highlighting that there would be learning in class during the month of October as it was Black History month with the document attached from school and were understanding of the reasons for it being sent out and for the learning taking place in class. Specifically, one of the parents was delighted with the delivery of the lessons taught in school during the week and learning was extended at home with a lot of conversation at home. Mrs Munro also read out some other emails who were supportive of the content and she feels some of the work undertaken in school has made some of the children feel much more included and valued. None of the parents present at the meeting felt that the class teacher had focused on their own viewpoint. Resources such as Newsround were used in classes to ensure that there was discussion and debate in class about emotive subjects and this was evident when children were discussing such topics at home.

It was agreed that the expectation of the school is to teach our children to be kind, be respectful and empathetic to others. It is understood that parents/carers will most likely have different views on a wide range of subjects with the recent consultation on communication being one example of how much views differ.

It was acknowledged and has been discussed previously that the Parent Council would benefit from more diversity within the group and that ways in which diversity could be promoted is to be taken forward by the Parent Council.

6. Any Other Business

Eco Shop / Food Larder

The larder which was based in the conference room has been relocated to make it more accessible for parents and it is planned that the pre loved school uniform will also be placed there in the near future. The school have recently worked with a group who has a similar role across the city and made a large donation of excess uniform with supported 150 families across the city.

School uniform currently in stock will be available during the parents nights. It was agreed that a donation box would be added as there are parents/carers who would not take anything without making a donation.

It was suggested that involving the children in advertising the initiatives would make families more aware of the service and this is to be taken forward by the school.

P7 Residential Trip

It was asked if a plan was in place in the event that Dalguise which is currently closed until February 2024 due to the recent flooding issues was in place. To date the school had not been advised by Dalguise that this was the case and Mrs Munro will contact Dalguise about this.

School Lunches

Issues regarding changes to the lunch menu that were impacting on children eating lunch was raised. These issues included the menu being changed by Tayside Contracts and then the expected lunch not being served and similar issues with an adapted menu for food allergies both of which has resulting in children not being provided with or able to eat all of their lunch.

Nikki Munro noted that she is in regular communication with Tayside Contracts regarding issues raised and will again make contact. There was some discussion about how to move forward and suggestions included inviting a representative from Tayside Contracts to attend a Parent Council Meeting and also inviting parents in to have lunch with their child/children which happened with primary one families in the first term of starting prior to the pandemic.

The meeting was closed and Lynn thanked those in attendance for their contribution to the meeting. Lorna also thanked the Parent Council for their support and feedback.

7. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 24th January 2024 at 6.30pm in the OOSC and online using Microsoft Teams.