

## Parent Council (PC) Meeting

Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021 (via Google Meet)

Present: Jenny Neill (Chair), Kerrie Laird (Head Teacher), Suzanne Haviland (Secretary), Katie Hickson, Kath Fraser, Anna Lound

**1. Apologies** – Kath Jones and Mike Thorpe

**2. Minutes** – from the last meeting (24 November 2020) were approved.

**3. Treasury** – no change. The balance remains £2571 with a commitment to cover P7 leavers' gifts.

**4. Home Learning** – Feedback from the Google survey and other sources showed that overall home learning has well during the second lockdown and better than during the March 2020 lockdown. Children and teachers are now more familiar with Google Classroom. Staff have done an amazing job juggling needs and making use of the technology. In addition to posting work each morning and being online to help and respond to email during school hours, staff have been covering in the hub.

Successes were around Google Meets, seeing teachers, mixture of tasks being set, structured timetables, Hub working well, online work, extras such as BBC online tasks, resources, PE sessions, Science lessons, responsiveness to questions, and feedback from teachers.

Challenges were around technical issues, not enough work/too much work, too challenging/not challenging enough, too much online/not enough online, no printer, difficulties with Google Classroom, doing home learning with several children alongside own work, lack of social contact, not enough devices, lack of feedback, and registration.

Among the technical and logistical issues identified, Giglets was particularly hard to manoeuvre and to see where teachers' feedback had been posted. The Google Classroom platform also required a lot of scrolling to search for new work. Though the older classes P5-7 were more familiar with the platform having used it in school on their Chromebooks. There was now no one in the school without digital access as extra Chromebook distribution had targeted those in need.

Other issues included:

- Registration/emotional check-in is a legal requirement for safeguarding reasons to protect kids. There is no flexibility and GUPS is obliged to contact parents when children are repeatedly not "checking-in." There had been some issues around ticking the correct boxes in the system to mark attendance and submit wellbeing comments, but these were now mostly resolved.

- GUPS supports online learning by highlighting where to access a variety of further activities on the Family Learning website, on BBC bitesize, learning through play ideas and other resources.
- Teachers offer work in varying levels (mild, spicy, hot) to increase differentiation and present challenge. Parents may need to push children to go past the easier levels.
- Students varied in how they submitted work and it was a little unclear what format was expected. Some children were using their jotters and then taking images to submit, others submitted online docs.
- GUPS chose to focus on recorded lessons that can be viewed at any time instead of live lessons for a number of reasons both technical and practical. Earlier attempted live lessons had taken an inordinate amount of time to prepare for and attendance at the prescribed times had been poor.

**5. Online Parents' evening** – Feedback on the evening had been positive. For the majority, it had worked well and had been easy to access. There were some technical glitches and, in each class, about one or two parents struggled to make it work. Many parents found it easier to manage than face-to-face meetings as it was less disruptive to their evenings (no driving and no need to find childcare). The strict time limit kept meetings focused although the screen just cut off mid-sentence when the time was up. PC discussed whether it would be preferred for parents to do it again online even if meetings could happen in person in the future. This would have its logistical advantages but the more informal interactions and relationship-building that happens would be lost. PC agreed for GUPS to send out a questionnaire in due course.

**6. Phased return to school** – P1-3 were due to return to school on 22 February. At the time of the meeting, there was no further information on the return of P4-7. PC recognised how difficult the split return would be for multi-child families where one child would go to school and another child would stay at home. The Hub would continue for children of key workers. (Subsequently, P4-7 returned on 15<sup>th</sup> March).

**7. Plans for future lockdowns** – Arrangements would be similar to previous lockdowns. However, in the event of another lockdown, GUPS would consider making up packs for P1-3, although it is difficult to complete packs in such a way that they retain relevancy and GUPS would have to decide how to meet paper and printing costs.

**8. Tepee and outdoor learning** – GUPS updated the PC on outdoor learning plans. While the idea was exciting, it would not work and would not represent value for money as a tepee would not be big enough to accommodate a whole class and teacher. GUPS remains interested in a larger outdoor permanent structure but currently this is not a high priority and will be considered after the Gaelic nursery work is completed.

## 9. Other Business

- Transition – Limitations on movement and visits of teachers (and would-be students) makes arrangements challenging. There is a plan for P7 leavers which will start in March. For incoming P1s, Kerrie will meet with the nursery. (Subsequently, incoming P1 transition began in March online).
- PC Chair – PC discussed the work of the Chair and how we will likely require a new Chair soon. There were no immediate volunteers present at the meeting willing to take on the position. Although, Kath Fraser offered to provide additional support. The PC now seeks interest from parents in becoming PC Chair or Vice-Chair. Anyone interested should speak with Jenny Neill.
- New PC email address – Highland Council (HC) will set up new email addresses for local PCs through which they will communicate directly. The old address ([glenurquhartprimaryPC@gmail.com](mailto:glenurquhartprimaryPC@gmail.com)) will close down.
- Inset day 17<sup>th</sup> February – All staff will complete (from home) “Calm a Class” training which was purchased through the Pupil Equity Fund. It is a series of short sessions to help teachers manage children’s stress and anxiety.
- Gaelic Nursery – Classes have now moved into new areas and GUPS awaits an update on permission for the work to start. There will be an increase in Gaelic provision next year when four new P1s will join the primary Gaelic medium.
- Treehouse – This new resource for Health and Wellbeing is open to all students. Children work through modules themselves (although the younger ones may need support to navigate the site).
- Read and Write – This Chromebook app supports literacy through dictation and reading help. A new version is now available. GUPS will show students how to use and Highland Digital Hub provides training for parents.

**10. Next PC meeting** – our next meeting will be Tuesday 4 May at 18:45 via Google Meet.