

**Earlston High School Parent Council meeting (via Zoom)  
Thursday 20 August 2020**

**Agenda**

Welcome  
Attendees  
Apologies  
Approval of previous minutes  
Head Teacher's Report  
Chair's Report  
Treasurer's Report  
AOCB  
Date of next meeting

**Attendees**

Mel Brookes  
Justin Sinclair  
Gavin Tweddle  
Jess McBeath  
Alison Cameron  
Gordon Craig  
Claire Karr  
Erin Reid  
Jacqui Millar  
Graham Hastie  
Karen Wexelstein  
Annie Jones  
Shaad Mehdi  
Lynne Graham  
Pooee Pitman  
Mariana ?

**Apologies**

Annabel Howell  
Fiona Donaldson  
Damian Hayes

Mel welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Minutes from the previous meeting on 17.06.20 were proposed by Mel and seconded by Gordon.

**Head Teacher's Report**

Justin welcomed Mel as the new Chair.

He updated the meeting on various items, including: -

- Weekly meetings with the Chair
- New EHS Parent Council (PC) Facebook page to help engage with parents
- Thank you from Head Teacher to all staff, pupils, parents, carers and friends of EHS for the support in returning to school
- SQA results: did not run smoothly this year. EHS working with pupils and parents, results now based on estimates. EHS has a solid set of results across the board

- Justin meets with Leadership team, senior pupils and Parent Council regularly. Number 1 priority this academic session is safety: minimise risk, health & wellbeing, progress in learning. Not every pupil has found the return to school easy. Job is to work out where pupils are and build learning around that. Golden thread is Inspire Learning programme, plus upskilling staff in use of technology
- Decision making: SBC is enacting guidance on reopening schools. School making improvements at a local level e.g, allowing sixth years to go home for free periods etc. It's an evolving picture, responding to what the school sees/hears on a daily basis
- Everyone has a responsibility to keep themselves and others safe. EHS encourages social distancing where they can; keep right in the corridors; sanitise hands on entering the building; clean your desk using wipes provided; cover your mouth/nose when sneezing
- "Soft" start for 2 weeks, with homerooms for S1-3, but pupils & staff not very keen on this
- Virtual assemblies with Head Teacher
- Year group bubbles at break/lunchtime to minimise pupils moving between year groups
- Split lunchtimes to give a calmer environment for those who've hardly been out since lockdown
- New Head Team: outdoor space project
- Troubleshooting Tuesdays for any iPad issues
- No bells: teachers dismiss pupils from each class. Reduces number of children moving around in corridors at the same time. Working well so far
- S1 use tables in canteen; S2-6 eat outside (tables under shelter/extensive grounds)
- S6 "non contact" periods: pupils must socially distance using canteen, reading rooms, library, assembly hall. Can also go home if they are free
- New timetable coming - double and triple periods will enable a socially distanced timetable. Will be given to pupils on Mon 24.08. Full curriculum offered with no subject changes. Thanks to Judith Weston for all her hard work on this

### **Suggestions from PC**

- Wearing face masks during the school day? Refer to SBC guidance/policy, which does not currently require the wearing of masks. HT says wearing masks is a personal decision for children and teachers
- Annie Jones: she's a teacher, it's up to teachers/pupils whether to wear a mask. She works between two schools
- Eric Reid: can you insist pupils wear face masks on school transport? HT refers back to SBC guidance (doesn't currently require wearing of face masks, except on non-school transport)
- Gordon Craig: use of outdoor space – what happens in winter/bad weather? HT wants to get marquee-type tents for extra outdoor space. He already has funding for extra chairs and tables, but looking for PC to support funding too
- Lynne Graham: concerned about length of time pupils will be sitting for double/treble periods. HT emphasised the need to reduce movement around the school. Teachers will be encouraged to take pupils for a walk, have breaks, especially during the afternoons
- Extra funding for staffing: HT raised this with Michelle Strong at SBC and has asked for extra funding for EHS
- Shaad Mehdi: concerned that many pupils would like to wear masks, but feel embarrassed/afraid. Can the school make sure pupils don't feel embarrassed? HT will highlight this at the next assembly. He can't actively encourage mask wearing, in line with current SBC/Scottish Govt guidance

- Eric Reid: more seating at lunchtime needed. His son is in S2 and has to sit on the ground (a concern echoed by Pooee for her S5 daughter too). HT will move more tables & chairs outside to help address this
- Eric Reid: issue with weight of children's backpacks, as they need to carry books, jotters, iPads etc. HT looking to zone lockers for different year groups and can then allocate them to pupils in the coming weeks
- Lynne: no experiments for Biology? HT says they are waiting for risk assessments to come through for this. The school has already bought safety goggles for every pupil in S3-6

### **Grab 'n' Go vs. hot lunches**

Mel raised this issue, as it had been discussed at the recent SBC PC Chairs meeting.

- Gordon: Grab 'n' Go not popular with his children, as the menu seems to have changed since last year
- Lynne: meals are dreadful, her children have gone back to packed lunches
- Mariana: daughter not at school at the moment, but hot meals important for some children, particularly those with free school meals entitlement
- HT: mixed response from pupils, they also realise hot meals will make the canteen more crowded
- Lynne: could you alternate hot meals on different days?

### **S4-6 leavers from last term**

HT spoke to leavers via WhatsApp group and is hoping to have some sort of event/ceremony at Christmas, ideally with speakers, presentations etc. This will be virtual, if it can't be done face to face.

### **Parents' Evenings**

No parents are currently allowed into the school building, due to COVID-19 restrictions. Can we hold virtual Parents' Evenings instead? SBC is already looking at this, using MS Teams.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Bank balance is £7,326.00.

### **Zoom Quiz Night**

Annabel: could we do this to help raise funds? Gordon has attended a Zoom quiz night before and it worked well. Jess has helped run one of these for Scouts with her husband and would be happy to do this for EHS PC.

### **200 Club**

Can we highlight this again to remind parents this is a great way to help raise funds for the school? Could also highlight easyfundraising website, which enables you to raise funds directly every time you shop online.

### **Next meeting date**

Next meeting will be on **Thursday 29 October at 7.00pm** (via Zoom).

HT will invite the new Head Team to the next meeting. (The new Head Team will be announced on the school Facebook page on 20.08.)

(NB Head Team is made up of S6 pupils, voted for by S6s and comprises 2 Heads and 2 Deputy Heads.)

Claire: could we record the meetings instead of sending out messages? Potential data/child protection issues here, especially if the Head Team attend the meetings.