

MINUTES

St Thomas of Aquin's Parent Council

Meeting on 22nd March 2017

PRESENT:

Jo Kennedy (JK) – Chair
Fiona Bradley (FB) – Vice Chair
Catherine Gray (CG) - Treasurer
Dee Armstrong (DA) - Secretary

Staff:

Christopher Santini (CS) – Acting Headteacher
Peigi Macarthur (PM) – Supporting Headteacher
Megan Gardner (MG) –Depute Headteacher
Isabelle Jean Pierre (IJP) – Acting Depute Headteacher
Sandra Murray (SM) – Teacher Representative

Parents

James Boardman, Angelo Deponio, Austin Flynn, Tamasin Gray, Colleen McCrone, John McFie, Catherine Midgley, Shona O'Brien, Stephanie O'Donohoe, Christine Rigouleau, Denise Simpson, Hilda Stiven, Joanne Thin, Yvonne Pryor

Guests Marianne Patrick

Apologies: Kitty Bruce Gardyne, Fr Nick Welsh

	ACTION
<p>1. Welcome</p> <p>JK welcomed everyone to the meeting and there was a round of introductions.</p> <p>2. Ethos and equalities working group presentation</p> <p>Teacher, Marianne Patrick (MP), attended to give a presentation on the work of the Ethos and Equalities Working Group which she co-chairs with Clare Kelly, Guidance Teacher. The group has been updating policies and procedures and MP brought along 3 documents for parents to see and discuss – the bullying flowchart, the positive behaviour flowchart and the council recording form for all bullying & prejudice related incidents. The bullying policy needed updating to take account of new issues around cyber bullying and to include issues under the Equalities Act 2012. The pupil council had met with MP twice to look at the 3 documents. The issue of cyber bullying and pupils' use of social media in particular was discussed after the presentation. IJP commented that guidance staff spend a significant amount of time dealing with issues related to social media bullying incidents every day at school. Staff would like parents to support the school in reinforcing the message that behaviour on social media needs to be responsible. Parents shared some ideas with each other about how they set boundaries around the use of mobile phones and screens at home and it was suggested that it might be helpful to share these ideas with other parents via the school website. Pupils also need to be involved in discussions around how to manage social media.</p> <p>3. Minutes of the last meeting</p>	

<p>3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 31st January 2017 were approved.</p> <p>3.2 DA reported that the Parent Council had written to Tesco Customer Services expressing concern about the queuing issue and had received an acknowledgment from them.</p> <p>3.3 CS reported that during exams it had been decided that pupils would buddy up to share lockers and that he and MG would help pupils to ensure their belongings were safe.</p> <p>3.4 CS still needed to follow up on the issue raised in the last meeting about lockers not being in working order.</p>	<p>CS</p>
<p>4. Communication - parent email</p> <p>CS had written to all parents inviting them to submit their email addresses to be added to the SEMIS system which would allow email to start to be used for communication with parents. The email addresses will need to be added to the system and there may be some delay to this because of short staffing issues in the office. New S1 families arriving at the school would be able to submit their email information from the outset when filling in starting forms.</p> <p>It was also noted that the business manager had been off sick for a few weeks. Gracemount and James Gillespie's Schools had supported us by allocating some of their business manager hours to us and CS and MG had picked up some of her roles.</p>	<p>CS</p>
<p>It was agreed that in the meantime parent council meetings would be notified to parents by text message and via Twitter.</p>	<p>CS/DA</p>
<p>5. Survey report</p> <p>The Parent Council had surveyed parents asking about issues that parents wished the PC to focus on in the future – Stephanie O'Donohoe had kindly compiled the responses into a report which will be made available on the school website. The PC would write a formal response to the survey at the end of the school year and the survey will be carried out again in the future.</p>	<p>DA/JK</p>
<p>6. Consultation on school governance</p> <p>JK and FB had been invited by officials from the Education Department at Scottish Government to a meeting as part of a consultation process on school governance and the role of parent councils. The government officials are interested in decision making and how parents get involved – they were interested to know why parents chose to get involved with parent councils and how this PC had experienced the recent changes in school management. JK & FB had an interesting discussion with them about the role of Edinburgh City Council. A copy of the response JK/FB made to the consultation is available to any parent on request from stthomasofaquinpc@gmail.com.</p>	
<p>7. Meeting with Councillor Melanie Main</p> <p>JK and FB had met with Melanie Main (Green Party) who is one the school's local councillors. They discussed issues around the difficulties the PC had had with City of Edinburgh Council, i.e. the continuing lack of certainty around the length of the secondment for the substantive headteacher, and also issues around the</p>	<p>JK</p>

accumulation of overspend due to a lack of action by previous line managers of the headteacher in the past. MM said she would take these issues back to CEC for discussion.

8. Feedback from subgroups

8.1 Faith subgroup -

Denise Simpson fed back to the PC on the work the members of the faith subgroup had been doing. A list of questions and answers had been generated and compiled into a table and members of the subgroup would be meeting 10th April to discuss the latest draft of that document. The PC had also been approached by the organisation, Healthy Respect, which provides sexual advice and relationships support to young people, as they would like to connect with the school. The faith subgroup would be discussing that at their meeting on 10th April also and were planning to compare the programme Healthy Respect delivers, which is called SHARE, with the Catholic church's programme which is called Called To Love. CS would also like to meet with the faith subgroup – DS will contact him to arrange this. The faith subgroup will feedback at a future PC meeting.

8.2 Curriculum subgroup –

James Boardman fed back from this group, which is continuing to meet with CS and MG on a 3-4 month basis. The major curriculum and timetabling issues from last year have now been resolved. There are changes to some national courses being introduced in response to teacher workload which will mean a move away from course work towards exams. CS reported that the school had been allocated £45k pupil equity funding for a 5 year period. He would be working in collaboration with other headteachers to discuss ideas for the best way to use this funding to greatest effect in reducing the attainment gap and learn from good practice at other schools both locally and nationally. There are few constraints on how the money should be spent but the funding is only for 5 years so it will not be able to be used to fund permanent posts. The funding is directed at S1 to S3 pupils in SIMD categories 1,2 and 3 - the school has 35 pupils in that category and the school will need to be able to demonstrate the impact the funding has had.

8.3 Constitution and sports subgroups – these groups will feed back at the next meeting.

9. Feedback from teaching staff

Teaching staff are periodically asked if there is anything they would like to feedback directly to the Parent Council. Staff are very busy at the moment with pupils' folio work etc and there were no pressing issues on this occasion. Staff had asked for support in organising duck race to fundraise for a school trip to Rome. CG would meet with Sandra Murray and the PE Department to discuss the detail of this.

10. Treasurer's Report

The treasurer's report is attached at Appendix 2.

**DS /
AGENDA**

AGENDA

CG

Various small bids for funding had been received from departments. Bids under £500 can be approved without full Parent Council involvement but CG had compiled a list of bids for the sake of transparency. One bid was for £700 for laser cutting equipment for the CDT club – this would be part funded by advertising revenue from the 2018 school calendar and the bid was approved. It was hoped that the hockey strips would be funded through sponsorship by a local company.

11. Senior leadership team report

The SLT report is attached in full at Appendix 1.

- CS drew attention to a recent spate of malicious fire alarms at the school. The pupils involved had been dealt with appropriately and CS was looking into ways of minimising this problem in the future.
- A programme of revision classes had been put together for the Easter holidays for pupils about to sit exams.
- CS reported that the process for appointing the pupil leadership team would be started earlier this year so that the team was in place before the start of the new academic year.
- The CEC is planning to implement a system called Parentpay which allows for online payments for meals, clubs, school trips etc. Parents expressed some concern about the transaction charges for this system and suggested that the PC discuss the issue with other schools' Parent Councils. (The transaction charge is approx. 1.5%)

12. Any other business

12.1 It was agreed that senior pupils would be invited back to a PC meeting before the end of the year.

12.2 A parent raised the issue of litter near the front of the school and suggested that a team of volunteers could organise a litter-picking session. The parent would get in touch with IJP to discuss this.

12.3 A request was made for volunteers to help with the S6 ceilidh on 26th April – Angelo Deponio volunteered.

11 Date of the next meeting

The next meeting is the AGM on Thursday 1st June 2017 @ 6:45pm

JK

CS

TG

1. Acting HT post

- I am pleased to report that I was successful in the Acting HT interview for St Thomas of Aquin's RC High school and I am looking forward to working hard with staff, pupils, and parents to continue the improvement agenda at the school

2. Fire Alarms

- There has been a spate of malicious fire alarms set off at the school. The pupils who set off the alarms have been identified, disciplined, and supported. The SLT have met with the parents and have put in place educational packages from the Fire Services to support the pupils' understanding of the consequences of their actions.
- I have a meeting with CEC H&S on Friday 24th to review the amount of fire points in school - 97 at present.

3. School improvement plan 2017-18

- I sent out the 4th update of the 2016-17 school improvement plan outlining the work being achieved in the school. Through the 6 weekly analysis and update process, a draft 2017-18 school improvement plan has been written and shared with the staff for their analysis.
- At the next Parent Council meeting I will share the draft 2017-18 plan so parents' views can be included in the final school improvement plan.

4. Easter revision classes

- Ms Gardner

5. S6 leadership team and S5 leadership applications

- This year's S6 leadership team have been very impressive:
 - S5-6 Ceilidhs
 - Awards Ceremony
 - St Aquinas Feast Day
 - S1-2 Discos
 - Parent evenings
 - Syria Relief - £1500 raised
 - Stay awake evening/morning
 - Fire Alarm support
- S5 leadership seminars will take place after Easter holidays with applications /vote /interviews for the S6 leadership team 2017-18 in June

6. Integrated Support

- Ms Jean-Pierre – questions from last meeting

7. French visitors – College Besson, Paris

- As part of the Erasmus scheme CEC invited 20+ French teachers to Edinburgh last week. St Thomas' invited 4 staff from College Besson last Wednesday sharing good practice on school planning, curriculum lessons, and meeting learners needs.
- This was a good experience for both schools and we all hope links between the schools will be forthcoming.

8. DHT self-evaluation learning and teaching/meeting learners needs returns

- Madame Jean-Pierre and Ms Gardner to update:

9. Senior Basketball team/Spring concert/G4set experience/Dodgeball

- A fantastic achievement by the senior girls' basketball team narrowly missing out on winning the Scottish Cup competition. Well done to the team and coach, former pupil Aiden Haughey.
- The Spring Concert on Monday 13th was a lovely event showcasing the talents of pupils guided by our music staff and visiting music staff. Thanks to Mr Lovett and Ms Patrick for this.
- Thanks to Ms Hamilton and Mr Rizza and the Sports Leadership team for putting on STEM and Sports events for pupils at the school.
- The Go4set experience allowed 5 of our pupils to create an island the size of the school building in which pupils planned for food sustainability and technology.
- The dodgeball event on Friday afternoon, won by a S4 group, was competitive to say the least. Nearly as competitive as the Staff v S6 football which was held on the previous afternoon – congratulations to the S6 on their win!

- Parent Pay

- All online payments are subject to a transaction charge of 1.275% plus VAT which amounts to approximately 1.53%
- Transaction charges for meals, milk, breakfast club fees, additional hours' fees in early years establishments will be paid centrally.
- Transaction charges for school fund expenditure (trips, shows, uniform etc) are the responsibility of the school. This works out to around 15p for a £10 trip. The establishment can choose to either incorporate this charge with the other costs into the amount charged for the trip or they can choose to pay from their general funds.
- The benefits to the school of moving to online payments are many, the main ones being:
 - Admin time saved from staff counting/recording/banking money
 - The security aspect – children no longer have to carry cash in to school
 - Schools will no longer have large amounts of cash on the premises

CEC are completing a template letter and tear off slip giving permission for CEC to share data with ParentPay and also a leaflet including a fair processing notice (requirement of Data Protection Act) will be sent out shortly for distribution to parents prior to the launch of ParentPay in your school.

Please continue to make parents aware that ParentPay will be launched in your school in the near future.

CEC are also finalising a Procedures document which should be used alongside the ParentPay User Manual and will give guidance on matters specific to Edinburgh.

Appendix 2 Treasurer's Report

Treasurer and Fundraising Update 22/03/2017

Catherine Gray (Treasurer)

email :stthomasofaquinfundraising@gmail.com

PC Fundraising and Bank Account	£
Bank account at 21/12/2016	£5,195
Calendar sales (21/12/16- 22/03/2016) £68 + £100 + £45	£213
Film night	£45
Teas & coffees at S4 & S1 Parents nights *	£40
Quiz sales	£20
Bank account at 22/03/2017	£5,513
Funds held for IT equipment	-£2,310
Costs Calendar & Wine	-£1,066
Small bid grants (see below)	-£946
PC Funds available at 23/03/17	£1,191

**We need Parent Council Members to help man PC table at Concert and parents nights.We didn't manage to cover S2=lost approx £80.*

Parent council Subgroup Catherine Gray, Nomi Neilson, Tamasin Gray & Colleen McCrone recommend PC grants for the following bids

Club	Immediate cost	Additional Cost
<i>D of E Maps *</i>	£0.00	£84.00
<i>Netball Club</i>	£163.49	£0.00
<i>Breakfast Club</i>	£50.00	£0.00
<i>Dishwasher</i>	£233.00	£0.00
<i>Social Subjects</i>	£200.00	£0.00
<i>CDT Design & Production Club **</i>	£100.00	£600 (Funded by 2018 Calendar Adverts)
<i>Board Games Club</i>	£50.00	£0.00

Library & Place2Be	£150.00	£0.00
Hockey Strips***		£540.00
	£946.49	£1,224.00

* PC will try to secure donation of Waterproof Maps in lieu of a mention on 2018 Calendar

** requires PC approval since >£500

*** PC hopes to secure funding via sponsorship and/or team fundraising & PC matching

Calendar & Fayre	£
Adverts	£600
Sales (270 mostly at £5)	£1,336
Special price of 3 for £10 to artists & sales above 10 (51 copies)	£170
Complimentary copies given to artists, advertisers, donors, school visitors & to support inclusion (100 copies)	£0.00
Copies still selling to parents at £5 at Concert/Parents nights and available to help secure future funding & equipment	TBC
Cost of Calendar	-£1,000
Christmas Fayre takings	£1,270
Fayre costs (wine)	-£66
Funds available for IT equipment at 22/03/2017	£2,310

Easyfundraising

Please help raise funds for school by registering with easyfundraising.

The school gets a % of your online shopping from John Lewis, Amazon, M&S, Vodafone, eBay, Booking.com & many more

Please register <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stthomasofaquins/>

Parent Council thank the 56 members who have already registered - We have raised £661.18 so far

Quiz night: Tuesday 28 March Adults: £5 / S5& S6 pupils: £2

Please put your name down or pay your £5 entry after this meeting.

Or by Bank transfer to PC account, Sort Code 80 02 83, Acc No 06002539

and email stthomasofaquinfundraising@gmail.com

If you are unable to attend please support this event by purchasing raffle tickets after this meeting.