

St Thomas of Aquin's High School
Minutes of the Parent Council Meeting
29 April 2021

Present:	28 in attendance Lesley Broadwood (LB) Chair, Andrew Gillies (AG) Vice-Chair, Alan Seywright (AS) Secretary. Parents: Josephine Beech-Brandt (JBB), Alasdair Proudfoot, Cara O'Brien, Gaye Cleary, Michael Gray, Lisi Black, Clare Mackay (CM), Griffin Manning, Deborah Hoyle, Jo Phillips (JP), Lisi Black, Shona O'Brien, Colin Broadwood, Fiona Bradley, Sue Widdicombe, Louise McSorley (LMc), Vives Magdalena, Jenny Lampropoulou, MG, Monica Pintado, Pauline Penman, Rhoda Morgan, School staff: Christopher Santini (CS), Stefania Mariani (SM), Isabelle Jean-Pierre (IJP).	
Apologies:	Catherine and Jonathan Midgley, Cathryn Broderick, James Boardman	
Item 1: Welcome and introductions		
	Lesley Broadwood (LB) welcomed everyone and parents introduced themselves in the chat area.	
Item 2: Minutes and actions arising of the last meeting on 16th February 2021		
	There were no comments on the draft minutes of 1 October: Accordingly, the document was approved as a true and accurate record. This was proposed by Josephine Beech-Brandt (JBB) and seconded by Louise McSorley (LMc).	
Actions arising:	1. Cllr Claire Miller (CM) is raising parents' concerns with the Education and Families committee with regards to supporting schools in the provision for work for pupils who are self-isolating. <u>CM to send an update to Alan Seywright (Secretary) after the meeting.</u>	Carried forward CM
	2. PC to write a letter of support regarding the zebra crossing. <u>Josephine Beech Brandt to action and write to Mark Symonds at the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC). Josephine Beech Brandt to action.</u>	Carried forward JB B
	3. <u>CS to send out timetable on Thursday 18th February re the school's plan to return S5's and S6's to normal schooling at the end of the month.</u>	Closed
	4. SM to share power-point presentation on the parent and pupil survey.	On school website. Closed

	5. Sharing good practices and areas of improvement on remote learning. Fiona Bradley (FB) and CS agreed to discuss this in a follow up session..	Closed
	6. Discussion on guidance on assessments. CS offered to meet with Clare Mackay following the meeting to provide advice on this issue	Closed
	7. Fund raising to support investment in IT equipment. It was agreed that CS and JR would meet with Louise McSorley (LMc) to discuss.	Closed
	8. LB noted that work was ongoing to refresh the existing Sub-Groups (SG) into the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SG1: Curriculum, SQA results, and Pathways group; SG2: Learning, Teaching and Assessment group; and SG3: Pupil Wellbeing and Relationships. Details will be circulated by LB.	Carried forward LB
	9. Any parents interested in participating in the above sub-groups or the new Communications sub-group can get in touch with Lesley Broadwood or Alan Seywright (contact details are on the Parent Council page of the school website).	Carried forward All
	10. If parents are interested in supporting the PC fundraising sub-group or finding out what is involved, please contact Lesley Broadwood or Alan Seywright (contact details are on the Parent Council page of the school website).	Carried forward All
	11. Plans to address delayed inoculations? JR reported that dates were being arranged. She will find out and get the information circulated.	Carried forward JR
Item 3 Areas for Discussion		
I. Chair of the Parent Council	1. LB announced that she was stepping down as Chair and that Andrew Gillies would be acting as interim Chair until the AGM in June. 2. Another change announced was that Tamasin Gray would be stepping down as Treasurer. 3. Expressions of interest in taking the position of Chair or Treasurer going forward were invited. 4. Thanks were given to both Lesley and Tamasin for their work and contribution to the work of the Parent Council. Both will be missed.	<u>All</u>
II. Study Leave for final assessments	1. CS clarified that under a Directive from CEC, pupil time in school is to be maximised. There is no study leave for assessments. 2. There was widespread concern expressed about this position. Many parents thought that given the large number of assessments, the absence of study leave would add to general stress and anxiety and was unfair. There was a general consensus on this. 3. CS confirmed that the decision had been made but offered to write to Darren McKinnon, Senior Quality Improvement Officer of the Education Team, to pass on the strong feeling of the ST PC on the matter.	CS

III. Information sharing on activities in the 2 weeks after the end of assessments and the start of the new curriculum on 15 June	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The school will be completing assessments and carrying out Quality Assurance during the 2 week period from 14 June. 2. On 25th June, all pupils will receive final grades after all moderation. 	
Item 4: Headteacher's update		
	<p>1. Renewal Plan next year There are 3 key areas.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Health & Wellbeing ii. Teaching, learning and assessment. It was noted that there is a healthy budget to support digital initiatives (including the i-pad roll-out). iii. Pupil Equity <p><u>The plan will be developed over the next 7 weeks and CS will be looking for comments from staff and parents.</u></p> <p>2. Budget 2021/22 The new budget process has started and there is a good foundation in place for the year.</p> <p>Questions There was a question on any news on excursions or the Duke of Edinburgh Award. The latter is being discussed at CCWA. <u>JJB to feedback to AS.</u> Post-meeting note - The CCwP has just finished and as promised I asked about when the DoE expeditions can start again. Lorna French (who is now acting Head of Schools as Andy Gray is off sick and due to retire in June so not expected back) said that further guidance would be coming out in the next day or so. From what she alluded to, I would expect the guidance to say that the expeditions will be able to start again. This seems like positive news so fingers crossed the guidance will be out soon and the pupils will be able to gain their awards fully.</p>	<p>CS</p> <p>JJB (actioned)</p>
Item 5: Parent Council Sub-Groups		
	<p>As noted, LB confirmed the revised Sub-Group (SG) remits as:</p> <p>SG1: Curriculum, SQA results, and Pathways group; SG2: Learning, Teaching and Assessment group; and SG3: Pupil Wellbeing and Relationships.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Details will be circulated by LB.</u> 2. LB is looking for interested parents to express interest in getting involved 	<p>LB</p>

	<p>3. As noted earlier, a new Communications Sub-Group is being established. Gaye Cleary outlined the terms of reference for this group is to develop an effective communication strategy to support the PC and to support the strengthening of relationships with the parent community and the school. <u>Volunteers to work with this group are invited.</u></p> <p>4. CS expressed his thanks and thanked parents for taking the time to work in partnership with the school. He noted the added value that effective sub-groups bring to the school. He emphasised that he was looking for input from any interested parent. Experience in the area is not a requirement.</p> <p>5. <u>Any parents interested in participating can get in touch with Lesley Broadwood or Alan Seywright (contact details are on the Parent Council page of the school website).</u></p>	<p>ALL</p> <p>ALL</p>
Item 6: Fundraising		
Fundraising events	<p>1. Louise McSorley gave an update on progress with fund-raising to support the ST IT budget and the provision of equipment to students to support distance and general learning. This was guided by a positive discussion between LM and CS after the last PC meeting.</p> <p>2. A Pay Pal account has been set up to receive donations linked to the fund raising bank account for ease of accounting. £150 has been raised to date.</p> <p>3. The PC group approved the continuation of this campaign which has already achieved a good response under LM's active leadership.</p> <p>Post-meeting note: the following message was included in the HT's Parental Briefing on 4 May: Parent Council Fundraising - IT accessories for St Thomas pupils <i>Please donate by using this link https://paypal.me/pools/c/8xUCbkxMMk for the school to buy IT Accessories like keyboards, mice, stylus pens to help pupils with their online learning/homework. The school and council are working on providing devices for every pupil in the next year, so we want to support this with accessories. To donate you don't need a PayPal account and can use a debit card if you wish. We are aiming to raise £3000 by the end of June and will start buying accessories as soon as possible to aid pupils. We will keep you all updated with our progress regularly on the school weekly briefing or you can see how well our fundraising is going, by accessing the PayPal link above.</i></p> <p>4. PC fundraising subgroup The Parent Council fundraising subgroup would like to welcome anyone interested in joining the team to bring some enthusiasm and fresh ideas for fundraising activities. Fellow parents.</p>	

	Catherine Gray, Colleen McCrone, Denise Simpson and Kitty Bruce-Gardyne have stepped down from the group having contributed enormously over the last few years. If parents are interested in finding out what is involved, please contact <u>Lesley Broadwood or Alan Seywright (contact details are on the Parent Council page of the school website).</u>	ALL
Item 7: AOB	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are plans to address delayed inoculations? JR reported that dates were being arranged. <u>She will find out and get the information circulated.</u> 2. It was asked if there was a still a wish list for PC funding support available to staff at ST. CS confirmed. 3. LB closed the meeting with thanks to CS and his staff for all their extra work in managing the challenges of the latest lockdown. She also expressed thanks for the excellent work carried out by members of the Parent Council and parents from across the school. 	JR
Item 8: Date of AGM and next PC meeting	POST-MEETING DATE CHANGE 15 June 2021, at 6.30pm on MS Teams.	