



Parent Council Meeting

Wednesday 31 May 2023

Present:

Sarah Scott – SS (Chair), Ros Ingle – RI (Treasurer), Kirstin Leighton (Secretary), Neil McCallum – NM (HT), Ian Porter (DHT), Nigel Cotter (DHT), Tania Peters (SDO), João Reis (PSO Attendance), Cllr. Margaret Graham, Cllr. Steve Burgess, Aileen Nimmo, Lisa Sutherland, Bruce Crawford, Tiziana Basciani, Laura Bird, Nicole Hennessey, Patience Benetton, Christiane Kerlen, Fiona Dow, Penny Tarsia, Orla Hobson, Kate Pinault.

Apologies:

Hilary Snaith

1. Welcome

SS welcomed everyone to the meeting with a special welcome to Tania Peters and João Reis who were here to talk about attendance.

2. Attendance/Pupil Equity Fund

Tania Peters and João Reis made a presentation on school attendance and the use of the Pupil Equity Fund.

ATTENDANCE

The presentation showed a table of attendance (s1-4) for those pupils who have less than 85% attendance (which is what the Council focuses on), specifically looking at those in areas of deprivation. Last February, our percentage of pupils at less than 85% attendance went down to November and then crept back up again sticking at around 12%. The aim is for it to be under 9%. All schools in Edinburgh showing a poorer attendance since covid.

A parent survey was carried out, and received a high response, with one of the main issues raised being frustration when inaccurate text alerts about absence were received.

Attendance and lateness systems have been put in place. Approx 5-6 children per year group are “emotional based school refusers”, with some pupils on a flexible timetable and making use of the wellbeing hub. It can be harder with those children without identified additional support needs. The school has a new tool to track attendance by PSL/Community head, which reveals the weekly lateness numbers. Pupils are given a pink slip which takes burden away from teachers and lessens disruption of late arrivals in class. The system has received positive feedback from teachers saying kids are less late. Working group has been set up with parents, staff, and pupils to look at the evaluation.

If a pupil has three lates a week, then a text alert is sent. It can be followed up by a letter. Persistent lateness consequences will be decided based on individual context and could include community service. Group call is the new contact system and now allows parents to text in when child is late.

PUPIL EQUITY FUND (PEF)

Every school in Scotland gets additional funding for those on free school meals. This equates to £73,500 for JGHS which has to be spent on closing the poverty related attainment gap. The equates to 332 pupils are living in poverty or struggling with money. These are identified through SEEMIS using the postcodes of deprivation. However, some families will be SIMD 10 but we know they are nonetheless struggling. There are pockets of SIMD 1 around Dumbiedykes, Quartermile and Rankin Drive. This doesn't just mean those areas are the only ones, but it is how the

government measure the quality of poverty related education. This is a crude but helpful measure.

We have spent some of the PEF money on breakfast club to improve attendance. This is open to everyone with 10-15 attending every day. 22 staff help on a rota basis. This costs £25 a week. Targeted support, mentors via an outside agency, Maths tutorial group, English reading groups, some school trips are other ways the funding is spent. Attendance in poorer families not going down which is good.

A Parent cost of living survey received 201 responses. This helped with prioritisation of how money is spent. The most popular response was 'none of the above', followed by help pay for trips, help my child study at home, 1:1 tutoring and group tutoring.

Further responses and the analysis of the survey is available on the Parent Council website: <https://jghsparentcouncil.org/2023/06/02/reports-from-parent-council-meeting-on-31-may-2023/>

3. Minutes of last in person meeting (1 February 2023)

Minutes are only available for in-person meetings, as recordings are available for online meetings.

Matters arising

CAPACITY: SS wrote to Joan Griffith, Convenor of the Education, Children and Families Committee (ECF) on 1st Feb. No substantive response had been received yet, although the letter had been acknowledged. The projection going forward is the roll will rise to 1950 in 2027/28 then will come down. The capacity being worked to is 500 for Darroch and 1450 for the main campus, including humanities.

Cllr. Steve Burgess advised that he would follow the issue up at the next the ECF. Cllr. Margaret Graham indicated she would take it up with Councillor Griffiths the next day. Neil McCallum will also arrange a meeting with Crawford McGhie.

TOILETS: A working group has been set up with pupils regarding accessibility to toilets. Young people are keen to survey the school body, to link in with various working groups, to have suggestion boxes, and gender specific toilets in some areas. This work will go on past summer with the survey taking place in the next few weeks. There is currently a day ranger for whole building between 10am-2pm to try and keep the toilets as clean as possible, and there are cleaners after school and a night cleaner. NM will update at next meeting.

Minutes approved.

4. Parent Council Finance

Since the March meeting, RI has paid in refreshments proceeds of £90 and £370 from March and April. This is a good funding stream, and which has been doing well since the school events started again. Thanks were given to Aileen and her team. We have spent £60 for card reader (which currently does not work in the Main Building due to the lack of internet connection but does work in Darroch). The fourth and last payment of the year from Easyfundraising was £84.34 which brings the balance on the account on 26 May to £2,635.24 which includes the £109.86 remaining from the collection for the DJM Kindness Award. £2000 from that collection has already been sent to the school.

RI and KL had had meeting with Business Manager Laura Black and the Admin team to discuss the way the small sums fund is dealt with. We have tightened up rules around applications to focus on extra-curricular activities and supplementary activities in the classroom, rather than core items, such as text books, which the Council should be funding, We now ask all teachers to discuss the application with the Curriculum Leader before applying. The deadline for spending will be 31 December unless there is a good reason for the delay, and we also now insist on feedback.

Connect SPTC guidance on PC Finance is available on the Parent Council website:
<https://jghsparentcouncil.org/2023/05/>

5. Report from the JGHS Trust – PC representatives

A written report from Vikki Plant, PC representative on the Trust was noted. It is available on the Parent Council website at: <https://jghsparentcouncil.org/2023/05/>

6. Chair's Report

SS thanked everyone who had helped with refreshments and Aileen for leading the team. Parents were invited to volunteer to help, as further assistance was always helpful.

SS reported that the Council review of policy on excursions abroad seemed to be coming to a conclusion and that an Integrated Impact Assessment was being carried out, on which SS would be taking part, as would NM. There was going to be a meeting the following week.

SS also noted difficulties with how some of the regular Council parental engagement meetings – such as Locality meetings and the Consultative Committee with Parents – were being run, including regular changing of dates of meetings, not advertising them on the Council website, papers not being circulated and not put on the Council website. It was hoped that these would be ironed out for after the summer as this affects engagement by Parent Council representatives and makes it a less transparent process. These are worthwhile meetings and Council officers often make very useful and interesting updates on changes.

The Council had made an appeal for parents to take part as members of the Appeals panels which consider appeals where a child has been refused a place at their preferred school. The panels have to have a parent member and they do not have enough people. Any interested parents could be put in touch with the relevant person at the Council.

7. Headteacher's Report incl. staffing and digital updates (Neil McCallum)

See document uploaded on the Parent Council website at:

<https://jghsparentcouncil.org/2023/06/02/reports-from-parent-council-meeting-on-31-may-2023/>

8. AOCB

A request by Aileen Nimmo for insulated flasks or an urn to support PC refreshments was agreed.

9. Dates of next meetings:

5 September 2023 (online) and 11 October 2023 (in person; AGM)