



# Minutes of Marr College Parent Council Meeting

## Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020 (via Zoom)

**Present:** Hilary Ramage - Chair, George Docherty – Head Teacher, Kate Dunn – Treasurer, Lindsay Campbell - Secretary & Katherine Woodhouse – Minute Secretary

**Council Members:** Ady Allan, Clair Milne, Emma Inglis, Jackie Lennox, Katie Atkinson, Susan Forsyth & Cllr Bob Pollock

**Forum Members:** Jacqui Hillan, Kirsty Broadfoot, Morven Lee, Sharon Johnston & Susan Abbott

**Apologies:** Carolyn Adams

	<b>Action</b>
<p>1. <b><u>Welcome and Apologies</u></b> Hilary welcomed those in attendance and apologies were noted.</p>	
<p>2. <b><u>Captains Report</u></b> Jay and Calum provided an update from the Captains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children in Need on 13<sup>th</sup> November raised £900 through having a dress down day, tuck shop, S6 dodgeball competition and other activities.</li> <li>• Virtual assemblies have taken place to improve communication during the restrictions. This allows essential information to be passed on such as SQA updates and supported study timetable.</li> <li>• In terms of Christmas activities, each house is going to organise different activities including an odd spot competition in the school, escape room, tuck shop, Christmas jumper days and Christmas lunch.</li> <li>• Other events included Kindness week where each house encouraged students to perform a random act of kindness and write about it on cards which were displayed at the entrance. New recycling bins were installed in line with the environmental targets in the Student Improvement Plan and school value meetings were held to ensure students are aware of what the school values are.</li> </ul>	
<p>3. <b><u>Approval of Minutes</u></b> The minutes of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2020 were approved by Kate Dunn and seconded by Clair Milne.</p> <p><u>Matters Arising</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a follow up to the AGM, Kate confirmed that the annual accounts had been audited.</li> <li>• Cllr Mackay had provided an update to his enquiry into parents' access to Glow through Teams. It appears that Dundee City Council have a different agreement regarding their use of Teams and use Google Classroom instead of Glow which has a different tenancy. Unfortunately this is not possible for schools on the West Coast.</li> <li>• George advised that nothing has yet been issued about the careers event. He will follow up on this with Mr McLaughlin.</li> <li>• Carolyn and George have been in touch with the Ice Cream Factory to arrange Christmas treat bags for the S1s.</li> </ul>	GD
<p>4. <b><u>COVID-19 Update – George Docherty</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Another two contact tracing exercises had taken place since the last meeting, however there was no risk to students as the people who had tested positive were not in school.</li> <li>• The wording on the letter has changed and now advises that, if you have not already been contacted, you do not need to do anything else.</li> </ul>	

- SAC meet twice a day with Public Health so contact tracing letters from school will not be issued before 3pm.
- Since August there have been 5 cases that were linked with the school. Of those 5 a total of 48 young people and staff had been asked to isolate; 18 out of 23 asked to isolate recently were due to friendships at lunchtime and not class contact. This equates to 0.04% of young people who had tested positive out of the number of pupils at school.

#### 5. **BGE Literacy – Sally Law, PT English**

Sally outlined the English department's approach to literacy for BGE year groups.

- During lockdown, the decision was made to teach the same literature across all the year groups as it was originally thought school would be returning on a blended learning basis. This worked particularly well as it has meant a lot of sharing and developing of resources and made the process smoother.
- Staff have enjoyed the teaching time and S1/2 enjoyed sharing their views in class and the literature that was chosen. Sally is happy with learners across the department and in particular feels that S3 are well prepared for next year. They are reading a book called 'Welcome to Nowhere' which focuses on a current topic exploring humanitarian themes.
- More focus was placed on increasing the familiarity of the language used in the BGE year groups so they know what to expect in National 5.
- The department has worked hard to ensure high quality resources for young people. Media has not been included in any of the courses as the focus has been on moving forward with literacy. Consideration is being given to changing English classes to banded classes, but these changes would be made after Christmas and pupils would stay in their classes through National 5.

Diane Russell and Catherine Owens outlined the Accelerated Reader scheme.

- The focus for the Accelerated Reader scheme is on reading for enjoyment and the library plays a huge part in this. The library is currently closed due to its size and also the issue of touching the books. There is an order and delivery service up and running via Teams. The Order form can be found on the dedicated library Team. Books are selected by library staff based on pupils' performance and delivered to their English class. S4-6 order via a QR code and their books are delivered through their PSE class. The library stock can be viewed in the window and on the South Ayrshire library catalogue on their website. Also available on Good Reads page and Accelerated Reader book finder. All Marr books uploaded on to this website so pupils can search for the books they want.
- Accelerated Reader is an on-line system to help students to choose books that are going to support them in their reading journey. Pupils complete a simple literacy test and are given a 'ZPD' number (Zone of Proximal Development) which correlates to a colour that is given to books in the library. The system is very useful for finding out what pupils' reading experience is like and if they are struggling.
- All S1 pupils should have completed a Star reading test. This can be completed at home or in school. They are given an opportunity to take part in quizzes on the completion of books (within 24 hours of finishing the book) so that they do not have to rely on their long term memory as much. It is recommended to have 3 Star Reader tests per year.
- Accelerated Reader articles are generally given a higher ZPD number because of the language used, but they are shorter. Particularly useful for those who have completed their library books or prefer shorter texts.
- Accelerated Reader works with Immersive Reader (Microsoft Edge) and Read and Write on the school system. Audio is available on some quizzes.
- Pupils will receive 2 letters in English – an introduction to Accelerated Reader with login details and Home Connect which allows parents to login and check their child's progress. Logging in is available on Glow, via link on Teams and school website. A QR code will be created and displayed in classrooms, the library and on Twitter. The focus will be on setting personalised target to aim for each term (pupils receive points towards their target).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are a number of different ways to use the Accelerated Reader system going forward, e.g. leader boards, certificates, etc.</li> <li>• Within ZPD pupils will get a range within a colour code system. The range may include 3 colours. Not every book has an Accelerated Reader quiz so not all books have a colour code.</li> <li>• Katy asked why this system has been brought in. Catherine advised it has been proven to be an excellent system for pupils to engage with reading. When pupils come to secondary school there is a drop off with their reading for enjoyment and this does help them to engage again.</li> <li>• George added it will be linked in with house points, but it is mainly about improving reading.</li> <li>• Sally advised that, in English, the better the literacy is the more understanding students have across all subjects so the introduction of this scheme should hopefully generate an improvement.</li> <li>• Hilary asked if there would be some information going out to parents. Diane advised that the letters will be sent out very soon. There will be an article on the website news desk which can be shared on Twitter, etc. It is hoped this will be in place after Christmas.</li> </ul>	
<p>6. <b><u>BGE Reporting – George Docherty</u></b></p> <p>Last year saw the first roll out of the new levels of reporting within BGE. There had not been any evaluation of it by the authority. A tracking report went out mid November which provided information as to what level students were at, and George asked whether there was any feedback from parents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharon commented that there was no definition of the levels on the report therefore it is difficult to understand how your child is progressing. George suggested that some kind of visual representation of the levels would be helpful.</li> <li>• Lindsay did not understand the progress between levels, i.e. 'beginning to learn'. Also with regard to homework, it was unclear what some of the comments mean, i.e. 'always makes a good attempt'.</li> <li>• George felt that a communication document for parents would be useful. Reports for S2 are coming out in a couple of weeks so he will need to send out a letter with those, however going forward a one page explanatory document should be issued with further detail provided on the website. George will speak to Mr McLean about working on this.</li> </ul>	GD
<p>7. <b><u>Next Month's Agenda Items</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Careers Event update.</li> <li>• Update from NQ Teachers on their smoke free schools project.</li> </ul>	GD
<p>8. <b><u>AOCB</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• George advised that there had been a suggestion about closing schools early at Christmas and extending the break, i.e. closing on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December and re-opening on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January. A meeting took place today and John Swinney will be making an announcement tomorrow about this, however this might come down to a local authority decision in liaison with Head Teachers and Douglas Hutchison. If the school does close early there must be focus on the senior phase with regard to the provision of revision aids and access to a teacher. They will also make sure S1-3 have got work on Teams ready to access.</li> <li>• Confirmation had been received from the SQA that there is to be no National 5 prelim diet. Prelim timetable for Highers/Ad Highers will still be going ahead. Prelims have not been done in class before so it will take a bit of time to work this out. Hilary asked if everyone will sit their prelim exam at the same time. George advised that the exam can be split and young people can access it at different times however there is minimal opportunity for anyone to benefit about knowing what is in the exam. Maths and English will be done on one day each and all pupils will sit these on the same day. Prelims will be marked and reports written by the February holiday.</li> <li>• Morven asked if S4s will be aware which key assessments are going to contribute to their grades. George confirmed that PTs have provided a document as to what they</li> </ul>	

<p>see as their 4 key pieces of evidence and what weighting each one carries. They are currently trying to work on an assessment calendar. Class teachers will be talking to young people about what their key assessments are so that they know that will form part of their evidence. The other language being used is 'your latest and best work'. This is also being done for Highers/AH just in case the situation changes regarding exams. There is a Head Teacher's meeting tomorrow at which National 5s will be discussed and clarification given on Highers/AH.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Christmas concert will be virtual and a link sent out via Groupcall and Xpressions. Seagate Church have offered their premises for the Music department to use for the recording.</li><li>• A few members of staff are taking part in Decembeard to raise money for Bowel Cancer UK.</li></ul>	
<p>11. <b>Next Meeting</b> The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 7pm via Zoom.</p>	