

Minutes of Marr College Parent Council Meeting

Wednesday 7th October 2020 (via Zoom)



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

Council Members: Ady Allan, Angela Malcolm, Clair Milne, Jackie Lennox, Katie Atkinson, Cllr Peter Convery & Cllr Craig Mackay, Emma Inglis, Laura Garrity and Susan Forsyth

Forum Members:, Carolyn Adams & Patricia Rowley

	Action
1. Welcome and Apologies Hilary welcomed those in attendance. No apologies were noted.	
2. Captains Report Calum and Robyn were in attendance to present an update from the Captains: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An overview of recent changes reflecting COVID measures within the school was presented including the one way system, wearing of masks in corridors and social areas, hand sanitiser stations, wiping down desks after use, quarantining class equipment, seating areas, staggered lunch breaks and start/finish times.• Sponsored walk – this went ahead on 17th September in small groups to raise funds for the Marr Malawi partnership. A JustGiving page was set up for donations and over £5000 was raised. This money will go towards building a classroom in Ntenjera.• Student Improvement Plan – different priorities have been set: <i>Priority 1:</i> focus on the school environment i.e. forming an Eco school committee, implementing recycling bins and litter picking around the school. Trying to encourage all students to have respect for the school and its environment. <i>Priority 2:</i> work alongside house captains to promote house spirit and encourage teachers to award house points with regular reminders to students all year round. <i>Priority 3:</i> social media and communication - introduce Instagram page for each house to increase effective communication across all school year groups. Include junior captains to help manage this and give them more responsibility.• Prom has been booked for 15th June at Brig O'Doon and deposits paid. A Prom committee has been set up consisting of 12 students who meet weekly. A photographer has also been confirmed.• Yearbook – a committee of 10 S6 students has been set up and the captains meet with them weekly. They are using a website called Yearbook.com which allows them to create an account and add information on their page.• Leaver hoodies – orders have been collected and a range of sizes delivered for students to view (cannot be tried on currently). The order form and payment was issued via iPay. Once all requests are in an order will be placed.• After school sports clubs - Marr is the first school in the area to resume after school sports clubs after being asked to pilot this. These are proving very popular and students have to sign up to be guaranteed a space.	
3. Approval of Minutes The minutes of the meeting held on 2 nd September 2020 were approved by Angela Malcolm and seconded by Lindsay Campbell. Matters Arising <ul style="list-style-type: none">• School buses – George contacted the bus companies again and asked them to arrive closer to the start time, which they will endeavour to do.• Blazers – Hilary confirmed that 21 blazers had been sold with 3 or 4 donated to the school. Everyone who donated a blazer had been paid.• Taxi waiting area – George contacted David Strang to ask whether lines could be painted in the drop off area for taxis. He is not keen for them to wait in the car park.	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning drop off – the council has erected a large sign advising parents not to use the car park. George will also add a section in the newsletter as a reminder. 	
4. <u>COVID-19 Update – George Docherty</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There had been another confirmed case in the school but this time it was somewhat easier to deal with as only one young person was asked to self-isolate. Public Health Scotland were satisfied that no further action was required. The local authority has requested that they issue the letters as there is a slight delay when this is done by PHS. • Staggered lunch breaks have started and, although the early lunch is quite early, students are rotating so they don't have this every day. The resumption of lunch time clubs has been discussed – students will have to sign up if they wish to attend. • George confirmed he will be on call over the holidays in case of any contact from PHS. He has access to Groupcall for contacting parents. • Hoping to issue a parent survey by the end of the week asking for feedback on the return to school, the measures put in place, etc. • HSE still doing spot checks on schools and one of the areas to be reviewed is the capacity in the staff base and ensure there is signage on the door with only a limited number of chairs. • Cllr Mackay was of the opinion that it is important for schools to maintain as much normality as possible at the moment and is concerned about further restrictions in the future. 	GD GD
5. <u>Senior Phase Exam Diet – Parent Consultation</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lindsay had e-mailed details of the parent consultation out to the parent forum, however a decision had already been made today by the Scottish Government, who felt that the full exam diet was too big a risk, therefore Highers and Advanced Highers will go ahead starting on 13th May (2 weeks later than usual). There will be no final exam for National 5s; instead these will be based on validated assessments. SQA released a document advising that grades will be based on teacher judgement with a fully transparent system for mediation. There will be no algorithm used this time. SQA will carry out visits to schools in terms of validation. There will still be a contingency plan in place for exams. • Lindsay advised that one of the biggest concerns she had received from parents is whether young people are aware which of their assignments will count towards their final grade, especially for Higher/Advanced Higher students. George advised that PTs have already been planning in the event of exams not going ahead in terms of gathering evidence and this message has been shared with young people. • Hilary also asked about changes to the syllabus. George advised that subject specific guidance will come out after the October holidays and he is not yet sure what this will consist of as there has been no confirmation what, if anything, will be taken out of the courses. • Laura asked whether the current S3 would be affected. For the vast majority of subjects there will be no impact on 3rd years. Any changes will happen in S4. • Tracking – Kate asked about the value of the estimated grade on tracking reports if this is not considered an estimate of the final grade. George advised that the tracking grade is where a young person is now. The objective of an early tracker is to identify if there are any significant concerns. Usually this would be discussed at parents' nights. Hilary felt there was an issue with consistency across different subjects. George met with a few PTs and they are going to take this issue forward as there is another tracker coming out in November. There needs to be more awareness about what the tracking information is based on and discussion with young people about how this is measured. 	
6. <u>Digital Technology Strategy Update – Sarah Wylie & Alan Simpson</u>	<p>Sarah and Alan are working on the implementation plan for a digital transformation strategy for the school. They presented the draft document to the meeting. They are looking at both a short term Covid recovery and contingency aspect and a long term implementation strategy.</p>	

- The key aim is to ensure all learners and educators have the standard skills and resources to benefit from digital technology in all aspects of education. Marr is hoping to be a pilot school in south Ayrshire for 'bring your own device' and is in a good position for this.
- The plan is to have a digital representative from each department who can share what they are doing in that department and look at having specialists in the school.
- They are also looking at working with primary schools in terms of transition and aim to forge closer links.
- There have been many improvements in digital technology across the school. Going forward they will be using Microsoft Teams as a one stop shop for all resources.

Short term strategy:

- Digital Fire Drill – in the event you cannot enter the school building for whatever reason, students and staff know exactly where they can continue learning the next day in order for learning to continue. An A4 instruction sheet for staff and students has been compiled to make sure everyone knows what they need, with links in Teams to Powerpoints, etc. Hoping to have a questions channel for asking staff questions, a folder for assignments which can be tracked and access to all files which helps when working at home or revising. The aim is for every Team to have a meetings channel so they can have live meetings to go over work, issues, etc.
- The October in-service day will focus on professional learning and digital skills for all staff. Training on Teams, on-line workshops and MEC courses to gain accreditation and be a certified Microsoft Innovative Educator.
- Help videos are available on the school website and Youtube channel. They will continue working with student digital champions which will include workshops for staff, lunch time drop-ins, links with feeder primaries, student and staff surveys.

Long term strategy:

- Marr will be applying for the Digital schools award which should be attainable within a couple of years. The aspiration is to become a Microsoft showcase school – only 100 schools across the world are showcase schools so it is an exclusive group. No other school in South Ayrshire has achieved this so Marr could become a centre of excellence. An education consultant from Microsoft met with the team to help and support their application.
- There are now 27 Microsoft certified members of staff and they are hoping to get more accredited. There are 3 experts in the school and one trainer (Sarah).
- SWOT analysis has been created with a route map across 2 years.
- Cllr Mackay was impressed with this progress and asked if there had been much discussion with other schools to ensure best practice and to ensure pupils have all the resources for home learning. Sarah advised that there were regular meetings to discuss best practice across Scotland and nationwide at which they could discuss problems and what methods are working. This group met every week throughout home learning to share resources. There is also a South Ayrshire group as well as meetings with other schools. In terms of resources, George advised the school had 71 Chromebooks to issue that had been provided through the Scottish Government's Digital Deprivation scheme. Associated primary schools also received their allocation today. The school does not have the resources to assist everyone but if they are successful in piloting the 'Bring your own Device' scheme it will be evident as to who has what. It may be possible to reduce other resources in order to be able to provide more devices. Mr McLean and the guidance team co-ordinated who would be eligible to receive the Chromebooks by taking into account guidance teachers knowledge as well as other data e.g. those who qualify for free school meals, clothing grants etc.
- Training on Teams has been refreshed for 1st-6th years in the event of a second lockdown or circuit breaker. There are no plans to close schools currently but it is important to be prepared in case that situation changes, hence the in-service day will be all about digital learning and gearing teachers up for any potential school closure. There is also a professional learning evening where those who are delivering on-line lessons share their experience and knowledge. The plan is that supported study will be also be virtual.

<p>7. <u>Reporting – George Docherty</u></p> <p>George advised that additional tracking reports will be provided for every year group and shared the proposed tracking calendar:</p> <p>S1 – end October; mid March; full report in May S2 – end October; full report in December; May S3 – end October; January; full report in March S4 – September; November; full report in February; March S5/6 – September; November; full report in February; March</p> <p>Option phone calls for S2/3 – January/February Early intervention calls for S4-6 – November Possible virtual parents' evening for S5 – February</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George advised that they need to work out the best way of making contact as they cannot use Teams with parents, nor can they use Zoom for students. • Patricia felt the additional reporting was very positive and definitely the right type of feedback that parents need. • Jackie questioned the prelim dates as currently these include National 5s. George advised these dates will need to be reviewed and could be pushed back so that 70% of the course can be covered. There will be no study leave for S4s, they will be at school the whole time. Prelim dates will change slightly but Higher/AH will be in January. 	
<p>8. <u>Next Month's Agenda Items</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George asked if there was any interest in having a training session for parents on Teams. Due to licensing issues parents cannot have access to Glow. Hilary asked Cllr Mackay if the Council could intervene on this issue and he agreed it would make sense to allow parents access. It would be possible to set up virtual sessions and guide parents through it but at the moment cannot allow them access. • Study skills night is at the end of October and this will be a live virtual event. It has not yet been confirmed which platform will be used for this. • Young singer of the year virtual night – Scottish Government not allowing singing in school so may not be allowed to sing in the hall. George will seek clarification on this. • George will be able to provide more detailed information next month around subjects in terms of SQA guidance, plans for May, plans for prelims, etc. • PT of English hoping to talk to the Parent Council about different approaches in English. 	CM
<p>9. <u>Next Meeting</u></p> <p>The next meeting will include the AGM and will be held on Wednesday 4th November 2020 at 7pm via Teams. Lindsay will issue invitation to all parents including information about AGM.</p>	