

Minutes of Marr College Parent Council Meeting

Wednesday 2nd September 2020 (via Zoom)



Present: Hilary Ramage - Chair, George Docherty – Head Teacher, Graeme Hobson – DHT, Lindsay Campbell - Secretary & Katherine Woodhouse – Minute Secretary

Council Members: Ady Allan, Angela Malcolm, Clair Milne, Jackie Lennox & Katie Atkinson

Apologies: Cllr Bob Pollock

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| 1. <u>Welcome and Apologies</u> Hilary welcomed those in attendance and apologies were noted. | |
| 2. <u>Approval of Minutes</u> The minutes of the meeting held on 3 rd August 20 were approved by Jackie Lennox and seconded by Clair Milne. <u>Matters Arising</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Contact details for PTs – George confirmed that the contact details for PTs haven't changed and are still on Teams for young people to access. There is an Extended Leadership meeting tomorrow evening which is all about how to continue to work with Teams and George will ask each department to make sure their details are up to date.Transfer of Expressions app from Primary – this ties in with Satchel One and George confirmed both apps were transferred through from Primary schools as well as the iPay system. | |
| 3. <u>School Return Update – George Docherty</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Staff returned on 11th August to make preparations for students returning on 12th August. The induction day for S1 and S6 went well and included a procession for the new S1s. The next 2 induction days were really helpful in terms of settling students in and reducing anxiety levels about returning to school.All year groups returned on Monday 17th August and have settled well into the new routine in terms of staggered start times, sanitising, etc. The response to wearing face masks has been positive and staff have only had to remind a few about this. Students are being encouraged to bring their own masks. Those students who are exempt from wearing a mask will be provided with a badge to signify this.Unfortunately not all college courses have been able to run. Some students have started college links courses this week. Marr is running more Advanced Higher courses instead of young people having to go out within the consortia to try and keep them in the school. At the moment there are only 3 pupils who go to Belmont for PE. Pupils who are receiving on line sessions from other schools are being allowed an extra tutorial session.There are 17 new members of staff including 4 school assistants and 2 temporary posts. The current school roll is at 1014 which is 23 above predictions so this should entitle the school to additional staffing. The hope is that the roll remains above 1000 over the next few years.There have been 12 Covid recovery teachers appointed across the Authority. Marr has been allocated Mrs McHaffie who taught Geography previously at the school. She will free up other staff to carry out recovery work.Attendance started high for the first week but has taken a downturn with a lot of students going home with cold symptoms (attendance at 84% on Monday). This is to be expected and should start to increase again going forward.For anyone having to self-isolate there are some materials available to access on Satchel One and Teams is still set up. Webcams have been set up to allow teachers to record tutorials. This works well as tutorials can be accessed at any time. All staff have been issued with new laptops and can access all files at home so they are | |

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| <p>better placed for home working. It was established that maths and science were the subjects most students struggled with during lockdown and these departments are working hard to ensure young people catch up, i.e. Physics did a re-cap on all June topics; Maths have started doing Wednesday night tutorials at 7.30 pm for Higher students. This provides a new way of thinking about how Supported Study could run in the future and would eliminate the problem of sessions clashing. George will be asking all departments what is being done to ensure young people are getting back on track. Fiona McHugh, Maths PT, will share her teaching methods at tomorrow night's ELT meeting with other PTs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Scottish Government has provided 49 Chromebooks and iPads and Marr has been put forward for a pilot scheme to 'bring your own device to school'. • The school was contacted on Friday by Public Health Scotland advising that a small number of students had been in contact with a positive Covid case. This was a new situation for the school but was handled very professionally by PHS. A letter went out to all parents on Saturday advising them of the situation. When this small number of people return it is important to monitor their wellbeing. • Staff are constantly checking that everyone is hand sanitising and socially distancing therefore it is difficult to make any strategic plans at the moment. The main focus is on the recovery and finishing off outstanding tasks from last year. • Jackie asked how the outdoor break and lunch time is going. George advised there is a wet weather plan so that if it starts raining the younger students go to their Personal Support class, S4 congregate in the reception area and senior students in the dining hall. • Ady advised that the school bus from Dundonald arrives early at school so the children are left standing out in the rain until school starts. George has already told the bus companies they do not need to arrive so early but will pick up on this again. • Katie pointed out that despite the increase in Covid testing following Scotland's return to school there had only been a small number of positive cases. George confirmed that 2 weeks ago there were 49 positive tests from a total of 17.5k. There were 29.5k tested last week and only 37 positive (0.12%). He also advised there is a fast track testing system for staff and, as an authority, they are trying to add immediate family members onto this. | GD |
| <p>4. School Calendar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graeme shared a copy of the school calendar on screen which showed some events still to be confirmed, and some events being held virtually or on YouTube. This will be reviewed monthly to confirm what can go ahead. • The sponsored walk is still going ahead on 17th September and students will go out class by class. • S1 settling in interviews will be done over the telephone. • Young singer of the year will be held virtually. • As there will be no Halloween party or Christmas dances the school is considering holding themed events instead. • February holiday now extended to a full week. • SQA exam dates confirmed for 26th April 2021. • Photos for S1, 3 and 5 were cancelled following advice from the authority but will be rearranged as soon as possible. • No parents' evenings scheduled. <p>This is now ready to be shared on the website and will be sent out to parents via GroupCall.</p> <p>Jackie asked about DofE. George advised that students will be eligible for an achievement certificate which Mrs Maxwell will be organising. S3 DofE is running on a Friday afternoon currently and the school will go ahead with expeditions as soon as they are allowed.</p> | |
| <p>5. Reporting</p> <p>As there are no parents' nights scheduled, George asked what information parents would like to have and when, taking into account the Working Time Directive and staffing levels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For younger students it was agreed it would be helpful to have ratings as to where they are, if they have completed homework, test results, etc. | |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For seniors Hilary felt that the tracking report is not always consistent across all departments with teachers approaching the scoring in different ways. There will be a tracking report but the focus in October/November will be on how to make sure the information is clearer. • Graeme advised that heads of house and guidance conduct an overview for their house and if there is a cause for concern relating to a particular student the usual process would be to invite the parents to school to discuss. This will now have to be done over the telephone or Zoom and that usually happens in the Autumn. Hilary asked what triggers a cause for concern. Graeme advised that this is based on the tracking report that would come out at the end of September which compares target grades with how a young person is doing and looking overall at their reports. • SQA have provided subject specific alterations to the curriculum but at the moment they are advising exams are going ahead as normal. There will be more information issued on 14th September. • Ady asked whether young people have been made aware that they will be continually assessed. George confirmed they are well aware given what happened this year and that assessments may have to be used again. | |
| <p>6. <u>Update from Parent Council Chairs Meeting – Hilary Ramage</u> Hilary provided a note of the meeting held on 25th August. Some of the key points discussed included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council’s focus on escalation planning and contingency plans. • SQA exam results and consultation. • Results of the parent consultation on Recovery to which there was a good response across the Authority. • NFPS – part of the education recovery group who will be taking part in an internal SQA review. • Consistency across the Authority about how to teach PE as there is no official guidance so schools were making their own decisions. George advised he had met with Kevin Brydon, PE PT and there is guidance being issued on 14th September. The risk assessment has been done and Marr has the necessary space so this should not be an issue. • Non-contact time and how it can be managed for teachers through funding for Covid recovery teachers • Cost of providing face masks for all children would be £1.2m so the expectation is that children will purchase and use their own. Marr has been allocated 3000 masks for any children who do not bring their own. | |
| <p>7. <u>Blazer Sale Update – Hilary Ramage</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are only a couple of blazers left which will be purchased by the Parent Council as school stock. • Money has now been given to everyone who handed a blazer in. • Hilary will provide a further update at the next meeting but there are a few things that could be done differently next year including reviewing the cost. Katie felt that Covid had probably made parents reluctant to take part and this should prove more popular next year. • Lindsay advised that a positive outcome was that the number of members on the Marr Parent Council Facebook page had increased. | HR |
| <p>8. <u>Next Month’s Agenda Items</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George hopes to have a reporting template from the Council to discuss at the next meeting. • New captains will be invited to introduce themselves and provide their report. • Covid update will be a regular agenda item. • Lindsay asked if future meetings could be opened up to non Parent Council members in order to encourage new members as there is a shortage of parents of younger pupils in the group. This was agreed. | |
| <p>9. <u>AOCB</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Saxton had made contact to ask if there could be a designated area for taxis in the school car park when picking children up as they are no longer allowed in the car | |

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| <p>park. Graeme advised that some taxi drivers used to abuse the disabled spaces and park there. It may be better if they parked behind the bus spaces – George will follow this up.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ady advised that the morning drop off is chaotic as some parents still use the car park. George has already asked parents not to drop off in the car park and put up big signs, but this needs to be reiterated. • Phase 1 of the council’s School Street Scheme is starting in Ayr and this could be rolled out to Troon in phase 2. This is a temporary measure to support physical distancing on the main road at/near school entrances by introducing part time road closures, one way systems, parking restrictions at school start and finish times. This could affect Wallacefield Avenue and other roads surrounding the school. • After school lets should start happening next week – the initial advice was that it would be October before any after school or Saturday morning matches could take place. Scott McElnea is hoping to get hockey started as soon as possible. • Lunchtime clubs may be able to resume but it is difficult at the moment due to the shortened lunch break. | <p>GD</p> <p>GD</p> |
| <p>7. <u>Next Meeting</u> The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 7th October 2020 at 7pm via Teams.</p> | |