

PC AGM 2020 report

I write this AGM report under these very unusual circumstances. I hope you are all finding new and interesting ways to get through this challenging time.

The last time the parent Council physical met was on the 27th of February and a lot has changed in the world in which we live in since then.

This report is going to give a summary of the work that the Parent Council has been involved in since our last AGM on the 20th of June 2019.

New P1 Summer (2019) catch up.

This took place on two dates in the summer holidays 16th of July and 8th of August In St Margaret's park. This was a great opportunity for new parents and children to the school to meet up and get to know each other before school started in August.

Unfortunately, this same event cannot be arranged for this coming summer.

First Event

Our first event that the PC (Parent Council) was involved in last year was the new P1 breakfast morning that was held on the 16th of August. We helped organise the event and set up and served tea and coffee. It was a great opportunity for parents to meet each and chat and ask questions to each other, PC members and staff.

Joint Meeting

We had our first ever joint PC and PTA (Parent Teacher Association) Welcome meeting on the 29th of August. It was a very informal meeting and we chatted about what a parent Council and PTA are, what the two groups are responsible for and how to get involved.

Planning Meeting

The parent council planning meeting was on the 26th of September, we discussed and agreed the work packages for the PC for the next year.

These were:

1. Communication
2. Writing improvement
3. Outdoor learning
4. Sexual health and relationships

1. Communication update - Gosia Drewa

After the initial communication group meeting was had, a meeting with Gail (Head Teacher) was arranged. All matters from the first meeting were discussed with Gail

It was decided that the survey would be prepared and distributed at school. The questions were agreed with Gail and the survey was going to be issued. Unfortunately, this wasn't possible due to lockdown beginning.

2. Writing improvement update - Kate Sher

- met with Laura (Principal Teacher) to ascertain the deliverables and understand the school's objectives

- Created a short questionnaire (3 questions) to send out to the parent community

- Had the questions agreed with Laura.

- unable to proceed with questionnaire due to Covid 19
- Send some emails to parents about helping with the allotment and put together a folder of outdoor nature activities for P2 classes.

3. Outdoor learning update - Ben Winger and Kerry Cleland

A questionnaire was created about outdoor learning to parents as guided by Mrs Iley. Within that questionnaire we put forward an initial request for parents to keep an eye out for items that could be used for loose parts play. We were also starting to discuss getting outdoor storage organised with Mrs Iley but things obviously cut short.

4. Sexual Health and Relationships - Rachel Kerr

A survey was sent out to P7 parents about how the new rshpe material went down in p6 last year so the school could draw on that experience for setting out the plan for the rest of the school. We had really helpful feedback from 13 parents, in general they were very supportive of how the school had approached it and there were a small number of specific items of feedback which the school have taken on board.

A member of the parent council fed into a meeting with Mrs MacLean and Mrs Iley when they were dividing the RSHPE (Relationships, Sexual Health & Parenthood Education) material across the year groups.

The decision to continue these work packages will be taken after the summer.

Homework - Kate Sher

At the Parent Council meeting a few members raised questions regarding homework, specifically what the children were bringing home. So, a meeting was scheduled with 6 volunteer parents spanning numerous year groups with Gail and Catriona (Depute Head). The meeting focused on the quality of what the children brought home, the main discussion points were:-

- lack of class reading books being sent home
- lack of writing tasks

- learning grid activities being out of date and not engaging the children. Parents couldn't understand how some tasks on the grid helped the children (e.g. Star jumps, writing words backwards).

The conclusion of the meeting was:-

- class reading books will be sent home, Gail agreed this is very important for children.
- writing work package was running but no specific writing homework was discussed and agreed
- the grids would be looked at and the frequency of the tasks on the grids.

There was to be a follow up discussion but no date was set and due to Covid19 this has currently been put on hold.

Facebook Update

At present we have 348 members in the group. There are 4 admins, myself and Kate for the PC and Clare and Kirsty for the PTA. As admins we approve or decline member requests, remove members who should no longer be part of the group eg after their children have left the primary school and we keep a close eye on what's being posted in the group to make sure that everyone is sticking within the group guidelines and rules. This isn't always as straightforward as it sounds and we have had some difficult chat situations to deal with. I do think that the admins in the group do a great job and thank you to them for being willing to help in this way.

Year Rep work throughout the year...

- Baking
- Helpers for a trip
- Parent speakers in
- Parent volunteers to talk about maths in the workplace for maths week
- Helping at school photo day
- Liaised with class teacher about assistance for year group teachers
- Built collections of small objects for loose parts play.
- Parents helping children with reading in small groups within the classroom
- Finding volunteers to help with allotment
- Regular classroom activities where parents participate in classroom craft activities with the children. Some examples of this included a puppet making afternoon and a storytelling and crown making afternoon.
- Planned several activities for 'my world of work' week and Easter but unfortunately we all ended up in lockdown.
- Set up a primary one parents Facebook group for help and support with the children's school work.
- Set up a WhatsApp chat so that the parents can keep in touch and get to know each other a bit better.

School Let's for our meetings....

Edinburgh Council changed the terms and conditions of janitor employment so as of from August 2019 any group using the school building beyond 4.30pm will have to pay to do so. This means that the parent Council will need to pay for the use of the school staff room. The amount that will be charged, is not clear. An invoice was to be sent to the PC at the end this term but due to our present situation, this will now be expected after the summer holidays.

School Uniform

Hopefully, by the time you are reading this, the ordering of Carrick Knowe school uniform is now available online. If it's not available yet, it soon will be.

Lockdown Survey

At the time of writing this, the parent council is working with the school on a survey to go out to parents to gather some feedback on home learning. The results of this survey will be shared at some point in the future.

People to thank

I would like to thank all the PC committee members for all the work that they have done over the year and I look forward to continuing our good work after the summer, in whatever form that is.

Thank you to Linda for her excellent minute taking & all her typing support she has given to me over several years. Linda is stepping down from her role as Secretary.

Thank you to Gosia, who is stepping down as Year Rep this year, thank you for all your contributions to the Parent Council over all these years.

Also, thank you to Kate Sher, as she steps down as Vice Chair, thank you for all your support and advice.

And thank you to Rachel for all her years of being a Year rep. I would like to wish your P7 daughter all the best for going to high school after the summer.

And thanks to Gail as well for all her help and advice. And we look forward to working with you and the school next year.

And thank you to all the PC committee members, the parent council could not happen without all your hard work. So thank you.

Next Step

At this time it is unclear if, when or how we will be able to meet up together, face to face. The option of using an online platform for virtual meetings will be looked into after the summer, when we see where we are in our ever changing situation.

I hope everyone has a good summer and has some fun.

Jeanette, Chair of the Parent Council.

