

BLACKWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL

Minutes of MS Team Online Meeting – Wednesday 20th January 2021

Present: Janie Campbell, Gail Hutchison, Louise Grattan, Jenny Bowman, Vivien Colquhoun, Kirsty Gray, Christine Forbes, Cllr Mark Horsham, Erin Illingworth, Lorna Laird, Cllr Colin McGavigan, Emma McGeachie, Jo McGuigan, Christine McMillan, Kay MacPherson, Ashley Meldrum, Emma Murray, Donna Neeson, Angela Norris, Pamela Paterson, Marianne Stewart, Carol Strom, Tori Summerville, Wendy Thomson, Susan Wayt

Apologies: Fiona Soper, Jane Hall

Welcome & Apologies

After a slight delay due to 'technical issues' at Louise's side, Christine welcomed everyone to the online MS teams meeting.

Head Teachers Report

Christine provided an update since the last meeting.

The Christmas carols on the school gates had been a great success, with many positive comments being received from member of both the school and local community. The Christmas jumper month of December and remote Santa activities had also been very popular with staff and pupils and may be something which is repeated in 2021.

Although pupils have not returned to school after the Christmas break, the school is still completely operational with all staff still working in various roles to support online learning and the hub for keyworkers and vulnerable pupils. Between 20 and 40 children attend daily from across the school roll. Christine thanked all staff for their continued professionalism and dedication to the school in these very difficult times. Around 94% of pupils are now logging into Google classroom to access their work from home, which is noted to be different from the last lockdown which focused on revision whereas new work is being issued for pupils to advance learning.

Input from parents was invited and Wendy Thomson intimated that she feels the Google classroom setup is better this time around and that the scheduling of work is very helpful, although she and other parents would prefer if work could be uploaded on a Friday afternoon/Sunday evening for the following week, if possible, to allow parents to print and plan for a Monday rather than waiting until Monday morning and trying to do this as well as set up for their own responsibilities. Janie Campbell agreed that having structured learning for the week works well. Erin Illingworth intimated that different systems work best for different age groups, with Christine adding that day to day planning works better for the upper school.

Pamela Paterson intimated that it was sometimes difficult to find tasks and work added to the workstream due to pupils posting their comments and pictures, which Ashley Meldrum agreed with and confirmed that direction had been sent out to parents asking that all work is uploaded to the tasks list rather than posted on the stream.

Angela Norris asked if there was a way to filter out work completed or previous weeks' work so that parents/pupils can identify new work easier. Erin advised that teachers can set up their class work streams differently to try to make it as user friendly as possible.

All staff are aware that Google classroom is still a ‘work in progress’ and all comments and feedback is welcomed to try to improve this for everyone.

It was confirmed that Google classroom would continue to be populated for the month of February, with new work packs being collated and distributed in coming weeks to support ongoing home learning.

Parent phone calls are continuing throughout this week, giving another opportunity for feedback.

Going forward, there will be a whole school approach for STEM and literacy projects during February – details to follow. Google live chats will be organised for each class to allow the pupils to ‘meet’ up with each other again, however this required a consent document to be returned by each family before a child can participate, and there were still quite a few outstanding.

Transition events have begun for the P7s via remote sessions in class between August and December, and online events are planned for the coming months. P1 enrolment is ongoing this week and it looks like approximately 30 new pupils will join in August 2021.

There was then general discussion and feedback from those present, with Lorna Laird highlighting that she found the call to her child was very helpful, as are the ‘relaxation room’ activities on Google classroom. Ashley informed everyone that google slides with links to various websites had been put onto the classroom stream and that they had been well received.

It was agreed that the children are missing social contact much more now, which was noticed by both parents and staff. Angela Norris agreed that the phone calls had been a good thing and that the structure of work was also very welcome, however it would be appreciated if new work tasks could be highlighted as such as sometimes parents do not know if their child has already covered the subject or not and therefore are unaware that extra support may be required.

Christine and other staff members welcomed the feedback.

Financial Update

Gail was unable to provide this due to sound issues. This will be updated at the next meeting.

AOCB

Janie advised the meeting that a request had been received from the Nurture Group to provide funding for garden tools, equipment and plants. The committee had discussed this and felt that while they are happy to support the group financially, given the current restrictions, ongoing home learning and the fact that no fundraising will be happening for the foreseeable, the full amount could not be provided. The committee have offered £300 to allow the group to purchase the equipment and tools required, which Christine Forbes advised was acceptable.

Erin confirmed that litter pickers and equipment had very kindly been provided to the school following the last meeting – unfortunately, they have not been able to be put to much use since returning after Christmas.

Close

There being no further business Christine thanked everyone for attending. The next meeting will be Wednesday 24th February 2021 at 7pm and Louise will forward a link for same nearer the time.