



Minutes of Parent Council Meeting 27 May 2020 Webinar

Panelists:

- Mrs Kate Morris (KM) (Chair)
- Mr David Dempster (DD) (Head Teacher)
- Ms Juliet Presley (Depute Head Teacher S1/2)
- Phil Cifelli (Depute Head Teacher S3/4)
- Mr Bruce Munro (Business/Project Manager)
- Mrs Claire Paterson (Depute Head Teacher S5/6)
- Mr Clive Hembury (Curriculum Leader Chemistry/Science S1-2)
- Mr Ian Murray MP (Shadow Secretary of State for Scotland, MP for Edinburgh South, and Scottish Labour's only Member of Parliament)
- Cllr Neil Ross (Scottish Liberal Democrats, Morningside)
- Cllr Scott Arthur (Scottish Labour, Colinton / Fairmilehead)

Topic	Action
<p>1. <u>Welcome and Apologies</u> <i>Chair Kate Morris (KM) presented</i></p> <p>Thanks for all the questions and for attending the meeting. Thank you to Cllr Scott Arthur and Cllr Neil Ross for attending the meeting. Thank you to Ian Murry MP for allowing the parent council to use his Zoom account for the webinar.</p> <p>People are dealing with different economic situations at home, and with children who are at different stages of education. The parent council is aware of the challenges that this poses for everyone.</p> <p>In this webinar, the school's senior management team are all present which is appreciated, and they have our sympathies for what is involved in the transition to home learning.</p> <p>Tonight's meeting is being run as a webinar but the audience has submitted questions before the meeting and if there is time, questions asked through the meeting chat will be answered. The chat will be saved afterwards.</p> <p>Sub Group Update - The Fundraising Team appreciate that they won't be able to raise the level of funds they have received before without access to the school, however, Easy Fundraising raises a lot of money for the school so if you could support the parent council through that, we could continue with the work we are able to fund. Access this at https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/boroughmuir-pc/.</p> <p>2. <u>Head Teacher's update</u> <i>David Dempster (DD) (Head Teacher) presented</i></p> <p>The feedback the school has received has been very encouraging and constructive. Thanks to the senior leadership team and all the teaching staff for all the hard work they have put in. They are trying to achieve the best teaching experience they possibly can under the circumstances.</p> <p>View the Head Teacher's May update here for a detailed summary of where the school's efforts are focussed. http://boroughmuirhighschool.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/HTs-Newsletter-May-2020.pdf. Timetabling and course choices for instance have been discussed at length through daily communication with staff, pupils and parents where necessary.</p>	

Discussion with other south side Edinburgh schools about mapping a way forward, has been a priority for the Head Teacher.

3. **Questions submitted before the meeting then through chat during the meeting** *Kate Morris (Chair) coordinated*

Question: What will learning look like in the long term and what might 'blended learning' look like? *David Dempster (DD) answered*

DD said that the government is putting together a framework for how this should work as there has to be a system that applies to all schools. This has not been completed yet. There must be consistency between schools so that all children get similar provision. DD surmises that there is likely to be no more than 25% of pupils attending school at one time (this is what is happening in England). DD thinks that perhaps 1/3 of pupils would be possible in Boroughmuir e.g. two year groups in the building at a time. For example, S3 and S4 is roughly a third of the school and class sizes could be reduced to a third also with a maximum of 10 pupils per class. If the first third came in on a Monday, they would not be back until a Thursday. DD thinks this would work. There is a big demand for face to face teaching. So far, the teachers have not had access to school all day until 28 May, then the following Thursday. w/b the 8th June the school will be open to teachers only, full time for staff who can go in. Returning pupils on a blended basis will be complex but DD thinks it would work. The 23 High Schools would have to implement a similar system.

Question: What training and support is being offered to teachers? *Ms Juliet Presly answered*

There is a culture of sharing best practise. 53 members of staff are learning together online, identifying the gaps, and sharing new practise such as use of videos. They are effectively working with each other.

Online support materials have been provided by The City of Edinburgh, the University of Edinburgh and Education Scotland. Teachers are getting more informed now and improving the online education being offered.

Question: Can the school provide other mixed media as well as Teams in the future? *Ms Presly answered*

Microsoft Teams has been successful. Not all faculties are on yet but those who are, find it works well. Edinburgh City Council do not allow schools to use Zoom but we are improving the use of media and video on Teams. Perhaps live and recorded teaching will happen in the future.

Question: Face to face contact – would a weekly video meeting be possible? *Ms Presly answered*

Learning support pupils who have accessed the hub in the past have begun to get video calls this week w/c 25th May. A parent commented that Computer Science has also started video contact.

Virtual assemblies are also now happening. The school is releasing information virtually that it would normally present at assemblies.

Question: How will the schools support s3-4 for transition to next year? *DD answered*

DD hopes there would not be a problem with this. Although he thinks we cannot expect all levels of pupils being able to go back at the same level as where they have been before, that we will have to do remediation. The SQA will have to adjust what it requires. The young people are disappointed at missing out on Nat 5s without the

opportunity of being able to demonstrate what they can do. DD thinks that it will not be the same size of exams and coursework that has been required before. SQA have not communicated anything about this yet. Pupils have missed the exams but all s4-s6 have had estimate grades signed off. Going forward the school is confident that evidence supporting pupils levels of attainment will be in place.

Question: Is it possible to have work for every subject posted at the beginning of the week? It is difficult to plan the week when we don't know when the work is coming. Timetables have not yet been issued. *Clive Hembury answered*

Course choices information has been useful. The timetable is written now and is with the senior team to approve. The school is trying to put together 1700 periods, and is nearly there, but we do need access to a way that we can print off or email information to parents. Our guidance teachers are in touch with a lot of parents and pupils to support pupils' access to information. The initial guidance for example for 5-6 year pupils was that they should spend 3-4 hours per subject. Pupils working habits are quite different at home so putting together a rigid timetable is quite difficult to do but as yet the school cannot promise when that can happen. The school day at home is not like a normal school day with different things happening.

Ms Presley also answered the timetable question

Yes some faculties have taken this on board that pupils need timetabling guidance. Changing levels of study have delayed this.

Question: Is there guidance for s1 pupils on the amount of time that should be spent on each subject? *Claire Paterson answered*

If a pupil would normally have a class for 3 hours a week then they should try and do that but if that is overwhelming and many are finding that, please get in touch with the teachers. The teachers can view levels of engagement by pupils on Teams and what has been accessed. The teachers have been getting in touch with pupils if needed and they are available. Those who attended The Hub at lunchtime have been contacted. The support for Learning team are available to chat with the PSAs. If you think your child would benefit from that then get in touch with the school. Mary Alexander is a support worker and is getting in touch to offer phone contact and consultations. If anyone is overwhelmed then contact the school and they will offer as much help and support as needed. The first line of contact would be to the guidance teacher or if you do not know who that is, the admin team can forward emails on.

Question: Is there an update on refunds for cancelled school trips? *Mr Bruce Munro answered.*

The school has refunded all non-residential trips. The foreign trips are causing more trouble through having to deal with insurance. Berlin and Amsterdam should be refunded by the end of June and others by the end of July.

Is there an update on the HPB vaccines that must be given at school? *Claire Paterson answered.*

We have made contact with the community vaccination team. They are actively working on options to vaccinate pupils who have not been vaccinated because of school closures but they will be included in planning for academic year 2021.

When blended learning comes in force can siblings be timetabled together? *DD answered.*

On the face of it, DD believes that is sensible, but he is not sure how pupils will take it. For example, if there is an s1 and an s4 sibling group and the s4 does not have timetabled subjects on the day the s1 has timetabled subjects, then it will just be a child-minding facility at the school for the s4, so in practise its difficult but it's a laudable idea.

Some pupils might be in school every day. Some may prefer to stay at home. We will try, but we'll need to see how it plays out.

Question - when will work start on the extension again? *Mr Munro answered*

The work being carried out before the lockdown has been suspended. New work comes under phase two of the government's framework so we don't know yet. A contractor has been put in place. Work was going to start 8 June 2020 but this is now highly unlikely.

Question: What provision is there likely to be for expanding for pupils to come in August? *DD answered*

The school is likely to have less pupils until October. Perhaps pupil levels will then be increased to 50-75%. By Christmas, it is possible that the school could be at full capacity. The complexities of travelling across multiple sites to increase capacity would be a major timetabling exercise. DD thinks we should be using our own school and nowhere else. Pupils travel by bus to Meggetland as the quickest way to get there and back, but now we may have to walk there or just use the facilities we have at Boroughmuir.

Question: What contingency planning is there if there is another outbreak at the school? *DD answered*

Teachers will monitor what is happening at the school and get a lot of advice, help and direction on that. If we were to take another chunk out of teaching, no-one would like that. We are optimistic that we can avoid another outbreak.

Question: My son has underlying health conditions, should I keep him off? *DD answered*

If there is any threat to health, the child should stay at home and if they know who their guidance teacher is, they should contact them as they should not worry about that.

Question - How can parents of incoming s1s transitioning from primary school structure their work to prepare them for entering High School? *Ms Juliet Presley answered*

We are doing virtually, with video and information, what we would normally give p7s in person. We will have a visit and information evening for parents in June.

Question – given extra demands for social distancing. Do you think there should be more teachers? *DD answered*

Teachers are working incredibly hard, learning as they are going along. We are getting better but it was pretty full on a couple of weeks back but we're getting there now. It will maybe play out in trying to balance face to face and online. We have to make sure teachers are not overloaded and then go off sick. DD is mindful of this. There is no extra money from the government offered yet, but if it was, it would be welcomed.

Question: How can we support the teachers? *DD answered*

Thank you for your feedback and support. I am not quite sure what the new world will look like. We will get back to you on that.

Question: Timetabling university style is difficult for a lot of families. Could we just run video classes? *Clive Hembury answered*

The vast majority have managed to cope with Microsoft Teams and we've tried to stick to existing structures. There is just a little delay in getting new timetables out but we'll get them out as soon as possible. It is not going to be possible to run video classes.

Question: Will it be possible for pupils to change subjects? *Claire Paterson answered*

The school has changed subjects where pupils have requested this, where they could, but she would caution against that. Pupils may wish to hold off until August to wait for their exam results before making any changes. If they really want to change subjects now, then they should speak to their guidance teachers. The school may not be able to accommodate changes if subjects are in different columns or if the classes do not have capacity. If pupils are thinking of repeating subjects, we would caution against that until August but get in touch to discuss it.

Question: What parent/teacher feedback is available? *DD answered*

S1s have missed the reporting on pupils. We will prioritise perhaps a parents night or end of year reports. We need to work out what these will be based on and how we would get them to you, this all needs to be considered. Print outs are difficult. Tell us how we are doing through Microsoft Teams. If you cannot access Teams, feedback through the guidance teachers. Clive Hembury said that they do not have any electronic reporting capability at the moment.

Question: Are teachers receiving Health and safety training? *DD answered*

Senior managers share managing the Hubs and we have significant health and safety to work around there. Teachers will be properly trained prior to pupils phased returns.

Question: What Mental Health Support is available? *Claire Paterson answered*

Counsellors have been provided for schools e.g. Mary Alexander is available. Coping with change/anxiety may be resources that we can put online. The guidance teachers are front line workers at supporting anxious pupils. They are superb and a major support. Not every school has this, but we have a trained guidance teacher for every single pupil in the school. If we need additional support and back up, we will find it.

Question: How do you assess engagement with Teams? *Juliet Presley answered*

They can see assignments that have been handed in and they will be following these up. They can assess the level of engagement through the pupil's interaction with the application.

DD further commented:

The Back to School date has been confirmed to be 11 August 2020. Every school in Scotland will return then. A week earlier than previously planned. How will that time be given back to schools is yet to play out.

Cllr Neil Ross added a comment on the shape of Learning in the future.

He spoke to Scotland's Chief Education Officer today 28 May 2020. Two things have been decided – a letter will be sent out within the next week to parents summarising government decisions, and a parents learning consultation group allowing parents to influence the shape of learning in the future will be set up.

Phil Cifeli (Depute Head Teacher S3/4) finishes working for Boroughmuir High School in 4 weeks' time and everyone wishes him well. Kate Morris thanked him on behalf of pupils and parents. Phil Cifeli commented that he has been at Boroughmuir for 16 years. Getting to know parents very well has been an important and enjoyable part of his work. His time at Boroughmuir has been very special so thank you.

Kate Morris, Chair, thanked the teaching group for attending and answering all the questions. Also, thanks were expressed to Ian Murray MP who took time out to host the webinar for the parent council, and to local councillors Neil Ross and Scott Arthur for their support for the school. Thanks too to all parents who attended.

Dates of 2020 parent council meetings at 6.30pm in the dual teaching space are:

Tbc

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