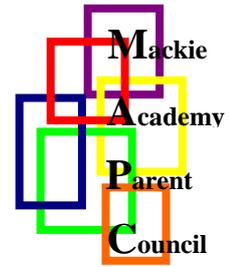


Meeting of Mackie Academy Parent Council



Wednesday 1 November 2017

PRESENT: Cllr Sarah Dickinson, Lorna Findlay, Rhona Grant (Clerk), Carol Howie, Kim Milton, Louise Moir (Rector), Vicky McGillivray, Aileen McKellar, Karen Perks, Keith Petrie, Fiona Ritchie, Rachel Shanks (Chairperson)

APOLOGIES: Katie Bannister, Sonia Cooper, Morag Coull, Paula Durward, Andy Forster, Fiona Harris, Lynn Howden, Elaine Kininmonth, Sheila Lees, Dawn Milroy, Marion Montgomery, Billy Morrison, Teresa Mugford, Lisa Macaulay, Karen McClymont, Michelle McGill, Marc Nunn, Victoria Park, Lesley Tullock

WELCOME

Rachel Shanks welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were noted.

MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 19 September, were approved.

MATTERS ARISING

Issues raised at the AGM were discussed in detail as follows. Other matters arising were covered in the agenda.

Blairs Re-zoning

Louise Moir explained that there is a proposal that the new housing development at Blairs will be zoned to Lairhilllock Primary and then to Mackie. Louise clarified that she did not anticipate any issues with this as it is likely that only a small number of pupils would be affected.

Cllr Sarah Dickinson explained that one reason for the re-zoning is that Cults Academy is at/around capacity but Aberdeen City Council have been asked to reconsider their decision to re-zone. Louise advised that the school roll continues to grow although there are fewer housing developments. Vicky McGillivray stressed that we should endeavour to ensure that parents see their child being zoned to attend Mackie as a positive factor.

Duke of Edinburgh Award

Louise explained that previously the Community Learning & Development Team had run the local group very successfully, however the Education & Children's Services Dept have now decided that schools should resume responsibility for the group in their area. Louise underlined that Mackie did not have the capacity to do so; there were not sufficient staff members who could lead the group or who could provide administrative support. It has been assured that current participants will be supported and one possibility under consideration is including it in the 2018/19 curriculum. There is

a large number of parent volunteers who are keen to see the group continue and are unhappy about there being a break but it is just impossible to take it on at present.

Cllr Dickinson confirmed that she had been approached by parents who were unhappy about the proposed changes. Rachel advised that the local Explorers Group is looking into the possibility of the current Explorers doing the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh award, meaning around 11 Mackie Academy pupils will be able to do the Bronze this year. Louise explained that one possible option would be to include it in the S3 curriculum but significant input would be required from staff, and admin support as well as volunteers.

Vicky pointed out the knock-on effect of organisations that have usually relied on volunteers from the Duke of Edinburgh group to help run events.

Cllr Dickinson undertook to ascertain how it is anticipated that admin support will be funded.

Pupil Equity Fund – School Counsellor

Louise reported that the Mackie cluster had been allocated £38,400 which would be insufficient for staffing purposes but cluster-wide initiatives in relation to mental health are being given consideration and organised. A pupil support worker had been appointed for the cluster.

Karen Perks asked if there was guidance on mental health issues and Louise confirmed that there was. She said that it is recognised that it has to be addressed as whilst Guidance/Pupil Support and Attainment Teachers do a sterling job, obviously they are not mental health specialists.

In the ensuing discussion, Carol Howie enquired about the consequences of anti-social behaviour and Louise explained how the restorative practices system is utilised within Mackie. She clarified that there are consequences, although not punishment as such, and exclusion would be seen as a final step. Louise explained that there are Scottish Government guidelines but the school can decide how to implement them. Louise stressed that most pupils do everything that is asked of them, and pupil/staff relationships have been more positive since introducing restorative practices. It was agreed that it would be helpful to include information on the system in the P7 induction pack and for the policy to be on the school website.

PRIORITIES 2017/18

Rachel requested suggestions for priority issues for the Parent Council to address in the current year. The following items were suggested:

- Environmental issues (including plastic bottles)
- Transition information
- Best method of communication between school/home

On the subject of communication, Fiona Ritchie said that she had been unaware of the contact details for Guidance Teachers. Louise confirmed that a staff list with contact details is included in the induction pack, but acknowledged that it might be worthwhile to flag up the list to parents of older students. Louise underlined that it is not possible to contact class teachers direct and contact should be via the guidance teacher or by the generic form on the website. Vicky advised that she had used the generic form and had received a prompt response. It was agreed that the Guidance teachers' email addresses would be included in the next email out to parents/carers.

The school's suggestions for priorities were:

- Communications generally

- Windows
- Family learning
- Supporting parents to support pupils (a long-term project for which Parent Council input will be helpful)

Louise advised that the contract for Show my Homework had been renewed. It was agreed that it was a very useful tool and it could be worthwhile to organise a workshop to ensure that parents/students are getting the most out of it.

Rachel cautioned that broadband speed at home can be a negative factor, especially for students using school transport who are therefore unable to stay behind at the end of the day.

It was noted that the litter problem on Slug Road is ongoing, and various possibilities of addressing it were suggested.

Carol asked about the changing area at the pool. Louise explained that Aberdeenshire Council has set aside money for refurbishment and a scoping exercise is being carried out. Louise said that she had reminded Hazel Hall that the school is extensively used by the community but the rental income does not come back to the school despite the fact that it has to budget for any repairs. Louise said that the pool area is seen as a priority but it is recognised that the costs to refurbish it, and make it DDA compliant, might be prohibitive.

Vicky said that as previously the Parent Council can be a voice of support, when required.

SCHOOL BUSINESS

Exam Results 2017

Louise provided a presentation on exam results based around attainment versus deprivation and highlighted various factors contained therein. The school's results are compared to the Aberdeenshire and national averages and a virtual comparator.

Parental Questionnaire Feedback 2016/17 from Parents' Evenings

Louise tabled the results of the questionnaire and explained how the data will be used to determine where the school focus should be.

TRACKING REPORTS

The general feeling from parents was that the tracking reports are difficult to comprehend and also that perhaps there was an inconsistent approach to them from staff. Louise confirmed that they are working with staff on a uniform approach and pointed out that the school does have a good track record of estimates being close to actual results. Louise explained that the system used by Aberdeenshire schools, SEMIS, does not allow for a great degree of flexibility but consideration will be given to ensure that reporting is meaningful for parents. Louise invited Parent Representatives to provide detailed feedback.

AOB

In response to a query Louise advised that there are few instances when money is required in school but, for instance, in the case of sponsorship money it can be handed to reception staff who will put it in the safe until it is required.

Rachel said that it would be ensured that minutes are circulated promptly but in any event the Action Points from tonight's meeting would be highlighted at the end of the meeting.

Louise reminded members of the Internet Safety Summit on 29 November, and requested that any parent wishing to attend let her know as soon as possible. It was agreed that a reminder of the details would be circulated.

Rachel enquired if anyone was free to attend the Parents Evening scheduled for the following week, to represent the Parent Council. Louise offered to set up a board with information and, say, four key questions with sticky notes. Vicky undertook to prepare the notice board with the office staff assisting with printing as necessary.

DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

The next two meetings were scheduled for 13 December and 1 February. It was agreed that each meeting would focus on a priority. Accordingly the meeting in December will focus on environmental issues and it was decided to invite the staff member who organises the school's Eco Group.