



## Meeting of Mackie Academy Parent Council

Thursday 16 January 2020

**PRESENT:** Patricia Bruce, Cllr Sarah Dickinson, Paula Durward (Chair), Rhona Grant (Clerk), Carol Howie, Kim Milton, Elaine Mitchell, Marion Montgomery, Louise Moir (Head Teacher), Lisa Macaulay, Karen McClymont, Aileen McKellar, Fiona Ritchie, Cllr Dennis Robertson

**APOLOGIES:** Dawn Black, Morag Coull, Andrea Forster, Lorna Findlay, Fiona Hogg, Chris Ann Holt, Dawn Milroy

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Gretchen Perk (Principal Teacher) and Ryan Hewitt (Teacher)

### 1. WELCOME, INTRODUCTION AND APOLOGIES

The Chair, Paula Durward, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions were made and apologies for absence noted.

### 2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the previous meeting, held on 13 November, were approved.

### 3. MATTERS ARISING

#### Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme

Louise provided a brief update on the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. She advised that the awards evening for participants is scheduled for 3 February, and arrangements will be made so that the current cohorts can complete their expeditions, but it has been decided that a similar model will not be offered as from the next school year. A meeting is being arranged to discuss possible models, however, and it may be that some form of extra-curricular provision could be organised but it will be ensured that it is something that can be sustainable, in the long-term.

### 4. ENHANCED PROVISION AND ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR LEARNING

Gretchen Perk and Ryan Hewitt delivered a presentation which detailed the model used at Mackie for offering enhanced provision and additional support for learning to students. Gretchen explained that this is the first year that a dedicated space has been available for **enhanced provision**, therefore what is being offered to pupils is still being developed, but there is a wealth of experience and expertise within the team. The local community resource hub is based at Carronhill, so that source of knowledge and skills can be tapped into too.



Gretchen explained that it is intended to develop an ambitious, progressive and pro-active model.

It was highlighted that a service of support is also provided to mainstream teaching staff, and Karen confirmed that this service is proving very helpful to staff.

Ryan reported that pastoral support is also being provided, where there is a barrier to students accessing their education, by supporting the students to identify the underlying problem and seek a solution.

Paula queried the provision of resources in ASL; particularly staffing resources. Ryan explained that two adults only are present in Enhanced Provision so that students do not feel overwhelmed. Gretchen said that generally more PSA support would be ideal, but emphasised that the current PSA staff are very committed. Louise explained that significant resources have been allocated to Enhanced Provision but, as Ryan had already highlighted, the team is also providing support for pupils who are struggling to access their learning and are adopting a flexible approach in formulating solutions.

Cllr Robertson commended the school for the efforts being made to ensure that all students have the opportunity to access education.

## 5. SCHOOL BUSINESS

### Staffing

Louise reported that staffing is currently in a strong position, and the intention is to retain the current probationers with a view to being able to offer other courses in Business, and providing additional cover for maternity leave in PE.

Louise said that the RPMS team post has been advertised. Unfortunately, the Faculty Head of Science is on long-term sick leave but the post will be filled on an "Acting" basis.

### Property

Louise advised that the refurbishment of the changing rooms area has been postponed because of delays in the tendering process but the money allocated for this has been ring-fenced and the work will take place at a future date, during school holidays.

In respect of toilet facilities, the outcome of the Council's budget allocations is awaited before any decisions are made but, at the very least, consideration will be given to deep-cleaning and decoration.

Marion queried the provision of sanitary products within Mackie. Cllr Dickinson advised that sanitary products have been made available in all Aberdeenshire schools. Louise explained that they can be obtained from the First Aider and from the office staff, and a reminder will be issued to pupils.



Please note that since then all pupils have been reminded about how they can access sanitary products.

## 6. AOB

### School Trips

Patricia read out an email which had been sent to the Parent Council's generic email address, which queried if the school considers environmental issues when organising school trips involving air travel. Louise highlighted the difficulties in that trips by coach could involve a very long journey, and a significant time factor.

Aileen pointed out that planes are much more efficient nowadays, therefore it would be difficult to decide specifically which option most adversely affects the environment. Patricia pointed out that, in any event, one flight would not signify a major impact.

Louise voiced the opinion that there are more immediate environmental issues for the school to tackle such as separating waste; and the school continues working with the Council to find the best way to progress that initiative but it can be ensured that school trips are as least wasteful as possible.

Patricia pointed out that there are other ways of educating students which would have a more positive impact. Karen pointed out that a school trip by coach would prove to be less popular. Patricia suggested that perhaps trips closer to home could be considered.

Louise said that it is recognised that not all pupils can afford school trips. Some parents feel however that, whilst they could not afford a family trip to distant destinations, they can save up so that their child/ren can enjoy the experience. Also, such trips are arranged during the holidays since any term time trips have to be accessible to all. There is a fund available to subsidise costs associated with attending a school trip where there are financial implications for a family.

### PTA

Marion advised that the PTA are looking for volunteers to help out at fundraising events. Patricia recommended that they keep flagging up the request regularly, and of reach event. Louise pointed out that when the Parent App is operational it can be used to advertise such requests for help. Louise highlighted recent PTA fundraising successes, and how the money had been disbursed.

## 7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for 26 February. Louise suggested that Kat Thoires be invited to provide an update on the new reporting system for the BGE Phase. Should time allow, the Merit & Award system could also be discussed.



Paula thanked everyone for their attendance and contribution to discussions and closed the meeting.