



## Meeting of Mackie Academy Parent Council

**Tuesday 21 September 2021**

**PRESENT:** Alana Allison, Cllr Sarah Dickinson, Colin Esslemont (Chair), Rhona Grant (Clerk), Chris Ann Holt, Lisa Macaulay, Elaine Mitchell, Louise Moir (Head Teacher), Marion Montgomery, Susan Purvis, Fiona Ritchie, Lindsay Robertson, Richard Sharp, Mandy Tulloch

**APOLOGIES:** Dawn Black, Patricia Bruce, Morag Coull, Fiona Hogg, Carol Howie, Jacqui Hutchison, Annette Leith, Hamish Loveday, Mark Lowey, Karen McClymont, Mhari Mitchell, Cllr Robertson

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Nicola Hamilton, Gavin Morrison, Fiona Stark, Kat Thoires (Depute Head Teachers)

This meeting was convened virtually via Microsoft Teams.

### 1. WELCOME INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

Colin Esslemont welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were noted.

### 2. APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTED MEMBERS

Louise Moir advised that Annette Leith (Sports Hub) and Mark Lowey (local churches/chaplaincy team) had accepted the invitation to join the Parent Council as Co-opted Members however they had been unable to attend this meeting. Colin pointed out that it will be very worthwhile to have a cross-representation of the local community participating in future meetings.

### 3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the previous meeting, held on 21 September 2021, were approved. Their adoption as a true record was proposed by Richard Sharp and seconded by Mandy Tulloch.

### 4. MATTERS ARISING

All matters arising were covered in the agenda.



## 5. IMPACT TEAMS

Members were directed to breakout rooms for an introductory session each led by a Depute Head Teacher. Those members who had not indicated a preference for an Impact Team were assigned to a team by Louise.

When the main meeting resumed Louise suggested including the breakout sessions at every second Parent Council meeting. She advised that a trial of a Teams channel for the Parent Council is currently being carried out and, if successful, it will be opened up to all members which should make it easier to communicate and to access documents.

Members voiced the opinion that a longer session would have been helpful and Louise indicated that it could be worthwhile to do so at the January meeting at which time the self-evaluation process will be complete and key priorities will have been identified. Colin suggested that offline sessions within the groups could be organised in the meantime which could feed back into the main meeting.

Louise advised that staff were willing to try whatever members feel will be most useful but they did not want participation to become too onerous. Louise undertook to pass on email addresses to the Depute Heads and each team can decide what works best for them, with one person feeding back to the next meeting. Once the channel is operational it will be easier to communicate with each other.

Louise explained that the self-evaluation process is under way with two days set aside on 18 and 19 November to work through the process, as well as identifying key priorities and some focus on Improvement Planning. The whole staff evaluation had resulted in positive feedback from staff. Their perceptions have, in the main, been positive, with constructive comments suggesting areas that could be improved. It is intended to share the details with staff on 19 November and with the Parent Council at the December meeting.

Louise said also that the Insight advisor had carried out sessions with staff. She explained that Insight is the national tool related to senior phase results. Obviously, because of current circumstances, marks have been awarded differently which has to be taken into consideration but Insight is still a useful tool. Louise said that a summary of the key trends will be shared at the next meeting but staff had been pleased to learn that although there had been some concerns about results, understandably, there had been no significant change in the depicted trends. Louise underlined that the school's processes, pre-covid, had resulted in consistent sets of results, and because staff had responded so well to the challenges of covid, the most recent results are not hugely out of step. The solid sets of data available to the school paint a positive picture. As well as sharing the detail at the next meeting, Louise will also share examples of how the school uses this data, going forward.

## 6. LEAVERS' DESTINATIONS 2021-22

Louise explained that prior to leaving school, young people are asked to supply their intended destination. This information is passed on to Skills Development Scotland and



they carry out checks to ascertain if the young person did in fact go on to that destination. The updated information is then fed back to the school.

Louise shared a pie chart which depicted the breakdown between the various destinations and clarified the difference between Further Education College, Higher Education College and Higher Education (university). Louise pointed out that the figures are reflective of the diverse pathways currently available to young people as well as staff members' ability to support their students to choose the pathway that is right for them.

Louise explained that "Unknown" equates to those who are unemployed whether or not they are seeking employment and Skills Development Scotland will support these young people to progress in whichever direction they want to go.

Louise emphasised that the picture is very positive, in that out of 199 leavers, 97% have moved on to a positive destination.

Richard asked how the data is used. Louise said that the information is used by Developing the Young Workforce as well as informing partnerships with colleges and employers. For example, several years ago a construction course had been offered via Dundee & Angus College and that link means that students view Dundee & Angus College as a viable option. The Arbroath Campus is quite accessible from Stonehaven and opens up other opportunities for the young people. Some students go on to attend college for an HND qualification and then continue to university for years 3 and 4 or alternatively choose to seek employment but there is evidence that a greater number of students who choose that route go on to complete their degree, compared to those who go straight to university.

The data can also be used to support pupils in Broad General Education as they begin to consider their options and are made aware of the destinations and pathways available to them.

## **7. COVID 19 UPDATE**

Louise reported that NHS Grampian continues to provide regular updates of the local transmission figures which are currently rising in Aberdeenshire, although there is a decrease in the figures for 13 – 30-year-olds and positive cases and self-isolating has not been a major factor in Mackie and no staff members have been absent for either reason thus far.

However, restrictions have not relaxed, as anticipated, and it is highly unlikely that they will do so before Christmas. Pupils have responded well to continued mask-wearing and the need for ventilation but it is now November and the school can become very cold so they are trying to strike a balance with windows open at break and lunchtimes but otherwise closed. Louise advised that a whole school assembly via Teams was planned for the following week, and one of its purposes is to encourage the young people to wear appropriate clothing so that they keep warm and well.



There is a sense that everyone is flagging a little and feeling that it is tough going and therefore it is intended to ask the S6 students to organise some Children in Need activities. Louise stressed that the young people have been very resilient and are making the best of a difficult situation, which will be recognised at the assembly.

Mandy emphasised that the whole school community has to be commended for the way they have all coped with very challenging circumstances. Members indicated their agreement.

Louise reported that a team of S3 students have been very busy enthusiastically preparing for the upcoming Uniform Exchange. Marion Montgomery asked that thanks be passed on to the students for all their efforts and advised that adult volunteers on the day will be very helpful. Louise said the event has been well advertised via social media.

#### **8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

As previously notified, the next meeting will be held on Tuesday 14 December 2021.

Colin thanked everyone for their participation and contribution to discussions and closed the meeting.