

HOLY FAMILY PARENT COUNCIL
MINUTES OF PARENT COUNCIL MEETING

MONDAY 7th October 2024

PRESENT:

Mark Farrell (Chair)
Andrew Gallagher (Head Teacher)
Frances Breslin
Laura Ryan
Carolina Poginna
Marie McGovern
Hilda Quail (Church Rep)
Reece Davies (Teacher Rep)
Pauline Devine
Lorraine Wylie

APOLOGIES:

Matthew Platt
Julie O'Brien
Joanna Abraham

Mark welcomed everyone to the meeting and the meeting began with the school prayer.

The minutes of the last meeting were not available.

Head Teacher Update

Roll:- The current school roll stands at 347 children – up by 11 pupils.

Staffing:- No major updates. Mr Chahal is now full time and there is a no trainee, Mrs Gilhaney.

Vision, Values & Aims (VVA):- The new VVA have been shared with all stakeholders. Discussions have been had with external parties around poster boards for every classroom documenting the VVA. This will give a more corporate feel. We're awaiting prices.

School Grounds:- MUGA lining is now complete. There is likely to be an official opening event in May/June 2025 to coincide with sports day. Grouting and gutters have been recently fixed. Going forward, works within any council building will be on an emergency basis due to budget.

School Improvement Plan:- An all cluster Catholic schools meetings is scheduled for this Friday. As part of this, a survey was sent to all staff re commonalities.

Church Matters:- Mr G attending the Catholic Head Teachers' Conference last week. Mr G also met with Fr Toner about a potential pilgrimage and other options for different school stages to mark the church's 150 anniversary.

Uniform:- The brown uniform is becoming increasingly difficult to source as M&S have now stopped selling brown trousers. We still have a contract in place with Logo Express. Mr G reached out to the head teacher at St Michael's in Moodiesburn who also wear brown. They also have a contract with Logo Express. There are 2 potential options:-

- We maintain the status quo.
- We introduce a more accessible colour (grey/black) for part of the uniform, whilst still retaining some brown.

The full PC discussed this in detail and the overarching view was that we're going to have to step away from the full brown uniform given the cost and inaccessibility of the items. Some grey trousers/skirts are being provided by Logo Express to mock up the uniforms. Mr G asked if some PC members could take photos of their children in different mock options for the next meeting. Recognising that this transition from the brown uniform, if agreed, will take around 18 months to 2 years to get through the school given that parents retain hand-me-downs from older children and buy in bulk. LW agreed to call local supermarkets to find out if they could source more brown if we do decide to stick with the status quo. Consultations with parents will need to take place before any final decisions are made. Moving forward, we need to support all families. CP suggesting that she contact cotton sellers online to find out what colours are on offer for children with skin conditions. It is hoped that the consultation with parents can take place pre-Christmas given that parents normally buy more uniform for term beginning in the new year.

Christmas Fayre:- This is scheduled for Saturday 30th November in the school. Agreed that there will be pre-loved uniform room where anyone is free to take what they need in exchange for a donation to the PTA.

PC Agenda Items

After School Clubs

Issue raised by PD who questioned plans for potential after-school clubs as this had been offered regularly in the past. Mr G explained that 2 years ago, the Working Time Regulations were relaxed post-covid, giving teachers time to run after-school clubs. This is no longer the case. Now, we need a teacher who has an interest in sport/activity and an inclination to give up their free time for this to take place. There are plans afoot for after school football with Mr Davies, but nothing further to this. We can't have outside volunteers running clubs without teachers to assist so we're faced again with the same issue. There could be tasters during the school day but nothing planned for now.

Mock Court

Issue raised by PD who questioned plans for mock court for current P.6. Mr G confirmed that there are no plans to continue this for 2 reasons:-

1. It requires an excessive amount of organizing and the transport costs are too high.
2. Feedback from staff is that when it comes to the court days, it is only engaging and enjoyable for the few children with the key roles. The other children just have to sit and watch for prolonged periods of time, and don't therefore necessarily get much out of it.

As an alternative for P.6, there is a planned graffiti mural walk that has been planned by Mrs McGuire who has managed to secure a Sustrans grant.

Topics

Issue raised by MMG on the main topics covered by year groups in the Jan – March term. This was traditionally the term where the chunkiest and most engaging topic was covered, culminating in an engaging ‘Joining the Learning’ night where the children could showcase their work and sometimes even perform a song, dance or poem connected to their topic. It was always the same core topics for every year so children knew what was coming and looked forward to that. In recent years, this has changed and topics aren’t as set in stone for each year group. Furthermore, year groups who would have generally covered the same topic were given different topics. MMG suggested that some of the topics on offer were drier for some classes and asked if there could be consistency across year groups. Mr G explained that core topics are now teacher-led and could therefore vary on a year-by-year basis. He stated that thought does go into the interest-level of certain topics, and they do try to pitch the topics at the right level for the relevant age group. When asked about the old P7 China topic, he explained that as St Ninians is no longer part of the Confucious Hub, it’s unlikely that this topic will be continued.

Residential Trips

Issue raised by PD on the P7 residential trip. Mr G confirmed that the residential trip to Edinburgh will not take place for this P7 and it’s unlikely to happen in future years. Mr G explained that offering 2 residential trips is highly unusual and he knows no other school that has done this. With this in mind, he is planning to reach out to P4/P5 parents to ask whether they value residential trips and if money/cost is an issue. He will then ask if one residential trip is on offer, would parents prefer that this take place in P6 or P7. The structure/plan for future residential trips will be dictated by this survey. Existing P.6 parents won’t be included as they already have a trip scheduled to Lockerbie Manor at the end of this month. For the current P.7, Mr G confirmed that 2 separate day trips to Edinburgh for 2025 are being considered and an update will go to parents in due course. PD asked if future residential trips could be longer than 2 nights. Mr G confirmed that budgets will dictate the length of trips.

Homework

Mr G confirmed that a group of staff are looking at what other schools do with regard to homework. It seems that the homework set up at HF is not working as well as it should.

Next meeting: Monday 25th November
Location : Conference room at St Ninian’s High School.