

MINUTE OF MEETING OF LAIRDSLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL

LOCATION: VIA MS TEAMS

DATE: TUESDAY 26TH JANUARY 2021

TIME: 6PM

MINUTE OF LAST MEETING / MATTERS ARISING

The December minutes were approved. Matters Arising – None.

HEAD TEACHER'S REPORT

CORONAVIRUS – ONGOING SCHOOL LIFE

Since our return to school in January we have been operating a Remote Learning Programme for most, but school is open to children of key workers and vulnerable children (approx. 30 children in total but numbers vary daily). When in school, the children follow the remote learning programme with the support of staff.

VIRTUAL LEARNING – FEEDBACK AND DISCUSSION

At the end of our first full week, we conducted a parent survey which had a 47% response rate (146 replies) and it represented a good balance across the demographic of the school population.

A positive finding was with respect to accessing a device. No one reported having no access, although there was some sharing of devices within families. We have supported in this area by putting in further applications for loan devices, offering paper copies and providing technical support where necessary.

Discussion around results

There was significant discussion around the survey results, with the following points being raised:

- Issues with joining Teams Meetings on an iPad – need to have the full link. Can this be communicated back to teachers? FD said most teachers are now using the calendar to schedule daily meetings so this should work on any device but will have a discussion with staff about this to ensure access is possible.

ACTION POINT – Discuss with teachers how best to schedule the daily meetings (FD)

- Some parents might have struggled to answer the question on “volume of work” as it varies day to day, and some concerns were raised that children may be worried about handing work in late if they can't complete it all in one day. FD stressed that “late hand in” is a Teams function that can't be avoided but teachers have assured the children that handing in “late” is not being treated as negative. There is an understanding that everyone will be working around different schedules.
- Concern among parents who are struggling with how to teach their children and guide them in their work – are there any teaching guides that could be given to parents to assist with this? FD stressed the importance of giving access to such resources without bombarding or overwhelming parents, and confirmed that there are useful links on every class teams page. There are also links

to resources on the school website under Learning / Learning at Home / Learning Guidelines and Self Isolation Grids. NR suggested that the name of this was changed from “Guidelines” to “Resources” to make it more obvious.

ACTION POINT – Change name on Website to make resources more obvious (FD)

MK pointed out that there is one point of contact on the website – Home Learning Section. NR stressed then that we need to keep referring parents back to the website and this one point of reference. Suggestion that any communication from school needs to promote this link.

ACTION POINT – Home learning link to be added to any school correspondence whilst home learning continues.

- It was asked by Inah Omoronyia if it was possible to assess if parents are doing a good enough job with remote learning? FD said that this is not possible as the level of input from parents/carers is unknown and will vary across the board, so it would therefore be difficult to report accurately on a child’s progress. However, reassurance was given that if a teacher or member of SMT had any specific concerns regarding an individual child’s work, contact would be made and support offered. LB re-iterated that it is important parents do not worry about being teachers. The enormity and difficulty of this situation is appreciated and understood, and when the children return to school their progress will be assessed and any gaps in learning will be filled. FD stressed that it was important to remember that everyone is in the same boat, and we know that the classroom cannot be replicated in the home.

There was significant discussion around other areas which were identified by parents in the survey results as barriers to remote learning and the action taken by the school to help address these.

Having looked at parent feedback, we will also be looking at pupil feedback. We have already done some of this with upper stages of the school and will look to roll it out to younger children too. Staff are going to be doing this with the children via Teams.

COMMUNICATIONS TO PARENTS

FD again acknowledged the challenges in using any remote work to report on progress to parents. As already discussed, we are unaware on the level of input from parents, and therefore it would be difficult to give accurate feedback on any work completed at home, and as a result, would be more beneficial to report in detail once the children are back in school. It was suggested that EDC may review the reporting guidance which could result in a more flexible approach with regards to phonecalls to parents, however we can’t commit to this at this stage. It was agreed that any report teaching staff could provide at the moment would be of limited value.

Some parents have asked if there is an area on Teams where parents can share – EDC guidance does not allow for parents to communicate with one another on this platform.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

The issue of technical support within the school was raised – is it falling on school staff or the Council IT department? Currently being managed largely in school. Sandra McEntee has a couple of contacts

in business that may be able to help upskill/support staff members and so this could be a useful resource.

ACTION POINT – Look into the possibility of this and report back (SMcE)

NR reflected that whilst there are some individual learning points, it is really important to look at the survey as a whole and see that it is a great reflection of the positive work that is going on. The number of responses gives certainty that the survey reflects the views of all parents and that by and large the staff team are getting it right. It should also be acknowledged that staff are working above and beyond just now and that there is a limit to what will be able to be delivered.

CHAIRS REPORT

VIRTUAL PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

NR spoke about using virtual pupil council meetings as a means of gathering pupil feedback on how they feel about virtual learning. School is looking at ways that they can involve parents virtually and a request for parent volunteers went out today from Natalie Swart. She will be looking at how parents can get involved remotely and offer some help. Going to re-share this week and include details of our Family Learning Assistant, Kelly Quail. She has been brought on to help support families in any areas that they may require assistance. NR asked if there was maybe a way to offer an online drop in session with Kelly? Almost like a virtual coffee morning where parents can go for a bit of support and know they're not alone. Could maybe offer this weekly with a view to increasing its frequency depending on uptake.

ACTION POINT – Look into the possibility of Kelly Quail holding virtual drop in sessions (FD to discuss with KQ)

EDC PARENT COUNCILS – Q&A SESSIONS

There will be another two EDC Parent Council Q&A sessions being held on Monday 1st Feb at 7pm and Wednesday 3rd Feb at 7pm. Members of the central team will attend to give an overview of remote learning and lead a discussion on the issues for parents. NR asked that anyone wishing to attend either of these sessions email him to arrange.

NR concluded the meeting by highlighting that the general feedback is very positive and that overall the school is performing very well despite the current situation.

ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

None

NEXT MEETING DATE

16th February 2021