

PORTLETHEN ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting held on 09 January 2020

Present:

Neil Morrison (Head Teacher), Fiona Squires (Chair), Erica Kemp (Treasurer), Graeme McColl, Ken Watson, Fiona Lindsay, Alex Robertson, Anne Wilkins, Gillian Smith, Nadine Bown (Secretary).

Apologies:

Viveca McNeil, Elaine Northcroft, Tracey Robinson, Erica Cargill

Approval of Previous Minutes:

It was noted and apologies were given for an omission in the minutes of meeting held on 30 October 2019. A Parent Council member was interested in the use of Named Person Scheme, a brief discussion ensued but was not minuted. This has been followed up by Neil and Fiona and is an item to be discussed more fully on tonight's agenda. All other items were approved by those present.

Financial Report:

Account balance is £3,558.80

Items of Business:

Head Teachers Report

Neil began by paying tribute to a very respected and highly regarded member of staff, who sadly, and very unexpectedly, died during the holidays. Assemblies were held to formally announce the news to pupils and to communicate the support available should it be required. The academy will be represented at his funeral and send sincere condolences to his family and friends.

Youth Philanthropy Initiative (YPI)

Neil and Fiona attended the annual YPI presentations which took place on Wednesday 8th January. The event was extremely well organised and was strongly supported by families, School Captains and three pupils who did an amazing job providing the lighting and sound. The standard of the presentations given by the pupils was outstanding. This year's winner is Mental Health Aberdeen.

Staffing

A newly recruited Business Teacher is due to take up their post in February. A part-time maths teacher vacancy has arisen due to the current teacher taking up a post closer to home.

Calendar

Prelims begin on the 13th of January for a condensed programme of two weeks.

Validated Self Evaluation (VSE)

As a result of a reduction in central scrutiny, schools within Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire are currently undertaking a form of external self- evaluation that would have previously been carried out by the Council's Schools Quality Improvement Team or ultimately Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE). Portlethen Academy is currently working in a 'trio' with Mackie and Mearns Academies. The first inspection of Portlethen Academy recently took place. Five members of staff from each school, comprising of Principal Teachers, Deputes and a Head Teacher plus a Part Time Inspector, jointly performed a mini but rigorous inspection around one of the four core quality indicators, this session was evaluating - learning, teaching and assessment. All staff found this to be a positive and worthwhile experience.

Named Person Scheme

It was discussed that the Named Person Scheme has been withdrawn and suggested that information in our school handbooks and posters in the foyer should reflect this. The scheme would have meant that a Teacher or Health Visitor would be a clear point of contact to ensure the wellbeing of every child in Scotland from birth to 18. Neil has taken advice from Aberdeenshire Council - the scheme has been abolished as mandatory but still available to support those who chose/need to use it. Therefore, providing there's no mention of previous legislation the information can remain. We then discussed that the school holds confidential information about pupils that is provided by parents/caregivers on a voluntary rather than statutory basis. This information would only ever be shared after consultation with parents/care givers.

School Security

Triggered by a recent intruder (see email/letter of 26.11.19) the Academy intends to produce an Emergency Procedures Plan. The current plan is a generic document formulated by Aberdeenshire Council in conjunction with Police Scotland. The plan will be re-worded to better reflect the dynamics and needs of the school. It was suggested that both pupils and staff be involved in formulating the new document, which could help reduce the fear factor and familiarise pupils with associated terminology and procedure. It was also suggested that lockdown practice be incorporated into the school day much like a fire drill.

Excelerate Pilot Project

Neil will report to the next meeting re the Excelerate Nashville visit and Fiona has been invited to join the school team attending the Excelerate Stakeholders Conference in Aberdeen, 17 January 2020.

AOCB:

The wearing of school uniform in order to enhance security and make pupils easily identifiable was discussed. It was suggested that our current uniform was easy to emulate and that some sort of badge or school logo would be a good idea. A local Academy's uniform complete with blazers and badges was used as an example. There was some concern that the cost could be prohibitive, however, a breakdown of cost was provided as an example and the whole uniform, excluding shoes came in at £100. It was also suggested that iron on logos/badges could be used on school jumpers/cardigans, if a full uniform re-vamp wasn't practical. Neil would like to see pupils wearing the current uniform properly before considering alternatives. There will be on-going discussions with pupils about why we wear a uniform and adhere to the uniform policy. It will also be highlighted that Personal Protective clothing may need to be worn in the workplace, the same principle applies in school. However, it was brought to our attention that the wearing of school uniform is not enforceable in Scotland.

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 4th March, 7 – 8.30pm