

**Deans Community High School**  
**Parent Council Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

**Attendees**

Angela Ritchie (Chair), Pauline Allison (HT), Caroline Bleach (DHT), Heather Marriott, Eddie Carson, Patricia Miller

**Apologies**

Mark Cockburn, Caroline Bennett, Susan Begley, Alison Hatcher, Stacey McCallum, Sandra Fannon, Janice Ritchie

**Agenda:**

- 1. Welcome**
- 2. Apologies**
- 3. Review of the Minutes from previous Meeting**
- 4. Consultation Document**  
**Proposal to review Admission Arrangements – To Discuss**
- 5. School Improvement Plan**
- 6. Head Teacher's update**
- 7. AOCB**

1. **Welcome**

AR welcomed all to the meeting including Eddie Carson to his first Parent Council meeting.

2. **Apologies**

As stated above.

3. **Review of Previous Minutes**

Previous minutes were accepted.

4. **Consultation Document – Proposal to review Admission Arrangements**

An area within Deans Community High School catchment north of the B7015 and south of the River Almond is proposed to transfer from Deans Community High School catchment area to West Calder High School catchment. There are 7 existing residential properties in the area with

no children in education in West Lothian. More interesting is the further proposal for a separate Statutory Consultation to propose review of primary school catchment areas including Seafield Primary School which currently transitions to DCHS. Will require to keep an eye out on that going forward.

## **5. School Improvement Plan**

Information contained in the Standard & Quality Progress Report for Session 2020/21 has been discussed before at previous Parent Council meetings. Biggest change is the emphasis of engagement and consultation with a two way flow of conversations which has been a real positive move moving forward. Normally this report would also include information on extra curriculum activities including school shows, sports etc but due to COVID this was not possible this session which has been sadly missed by everyone.

For the Recovery Phase Plan there are three new Local Authority Factors - Agile Curriculum Pathways, Agile Pedagogies and Agile Renewal (Literacy, Numeracy & Wellbeing) :-

### 1. Improvement in all children and young people's wellbeing:

Proposed actions to ensure recovery in Health & Wellbeing include updating the PSE curriculum to allow additional mental health input from Your Space counselling service. Heads of House will run PSE within their own house getting to know the pupils better. Mental Health first aiders to be promoted throughout the school with the vision that every tutor teacher should be trained to be a mental health first aider. PSE will be reinstated for S4 & S5. School will be looking to create a wellbeing strategy. Pre October break there will be a wellbeing check-in. Heads of House & Mrs Bleach will then analyse the data. The wellbeing check-ins have been used before and it is an online form with areas for additional comments. The pupils rate themselves from 1-5 in each area which includes how safe they are at home and school. Any ratings less than 5 but in particular 1s & 2s will be flagged and looked across the board to see whether there are any red flags. The cluster Primary Schools do a similar wellbeing check-in.

### 2. Closing the attainment gap between the most and least advantaged children:

Aspirational Target grades added to all tracking systems. 1<sup>st</sup> Senior Phase S4 tracking reports was sent out today. Explanation on what the numbers mean will be sent out tomorrow. Teachers will have a learning conversation with students to support their progress.

### 3. Improvement and Positive Destinations:-

Working with Emma Ward from Develop Young Workforce (DYW) to highlight different job and training opportunities a bulletin goes out to students once a month during Tutor class.

The Career ready programme which has been available for some students includes having a mentor from selected industries with the possibility of placements and a permanent post.

The students are selected by the Career Ready programme who have a set criterion and not by the school. It tends to be more for pupils heading towards going into the workforce after leaving school rather than university. Mrs Allison received an email from a local employer Ashwood who is a great supporter of the school. There are 7 former students working in the company and it was lovely to hear how they are doing and what they are up to.

Emma is building on the local industries that we have connections with and bring that more into the school careers week. It is hoped that the Careers interviews etc will happen in person and on

line as this worked very well last year. This will be dependent on what the Covid restrictions are at the time. Careers week normally takes place around January or February.

The School are strong advocates of My World of Work which also has a parents section. There is a skills academy for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year and this emphasises that careers are about the skills you have and what you may be good at. The students are working on a programme that is based in literacy and numeracy and they are looking at all the skills that are involved in that and building pupils career pathways through their skills. This is a new programme.

The Improvement Plan will be available on both the WL council and school websites.

Mrs Allison confirmed school inspections have now resumed and it is very likely DCHS will be inspected after Christmas. The Parent Council will be asked to participate in school inspections.

## 6. Update from HT

The Recovery Focus Group met recently. This included a group of students and parents with the discussion facilitated by Mrs Fleming.

The new NHS Warn & Inform letters have begun to be issued. These go to the year group of any positive cases and replace the global letters used since August.

Interviews for the Business Education post will take place on Thursday.

## 7. AOCB

AR reported she attended the last WL Parent Forum which Derek Cornwall chairs. Derek had asked Catrina Hatch about modifications being made to SQA qualifications. Catrina confirmed that last year some assignments had indeed been removed in particular in English and the Sciences subjects. There were also modifications to assignments due to potential loss of learning in subjects like PE. The SQA have consulted with subject specialists this year and have listened to feedback from staff. There may be an element of modification to take account of that potential lost learning.

The Nat5 portfolio allowed for some assignments to be completed at home however now that the pupils are back in school this will no longer be the case moving forward.

A study guide for senior phase pupils which will include twilight classes and when they are running will go out to all parents. It was agreed that because some element of modifications had been made to subjects it would be helpful to parents if the guide included the assessable elements in each subject.

It was agreed it would be beneficial to invite Evelyn Rogers, Career Advisor for the school to a Parent Council meeting to talk about job remits, career pathways and apprenticeships. AR & CB would speak to Evelyn Rogers to confirm whether her talk would take place at a Parent Council meeting or a separate meeting altogether. Everyone agreed this would be an ideal opportunity to advertise the Parent Council to the school community to encourage more attendees moving

forward. Mrs Allison agreed to include details of the Parent Council in the next Parent Update letter providing details of the next meeting and how to find out more information.

**Date of next Parent Council Meeting will be on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2021 at 18:00 via Skype for Business.**