MEARNS ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL

Wednesday 13th March 2019

Staff Room 7pm

ATTENDEES

Nanette Brown, Ruth McGill, Gareth Campbell, Margo Titmuss, Pauline Logue, Tom Lawson, Lindsay Cochrane, Bev Mackinnon, Kim Tait, Arlene Dickson, Robin Christie, John Vickers, Jo Mackinnon, Clare Ptaszek, Hazel Rickman, Patricia MacEachern, Therese Hendry, Jim Hendry, Cllr George Carr, Katrin Lewis, Gillian Milne

APOLOGIES

Suzanne MacDonald, Cllr Hutchison, Cllr Howatson, Pam Walsham, Isabella Riddoch, Suzanne Laskiewicz, Sheila Morgan

WELCOME & APOLOGIES

Nanette thanked everyone for coming along and apologised for the change of date. Ruth read out the apologies.

ADOPTION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

* Gareth Campbell is liasing with the local health centre regarding teaching CPR to 6th year pupils.
* Any issues with transport MUST be reported to John Vickers.
* There always was a safe space for all, however this has been highlighted at recent assemblies.
* Katherine Nepute operates the task of former pupils returning to do talks.

Proposed by Margo Titmuss, 2nd Katrin Lewis

HEAD TEACHERS REPORT

It has been a busy term with various parents evenings and 85% attendance which is excellent, a careers fair was held in school and also a careers fair for P7 pupils of transition, Mrs Benton led Fair Trade assemblies, Mr Christie has started pulling the information together of course choice forms, many assignments and assessments all taking place, SQA Examinations coming up, Equalities fair for S3 pupils took place, Arnold Clark van visit, Fire Brigade Safety talk with S4, P7 club been a huge success, Positive letters came back about our young people on work experience, Discussions with Career ready, TOK, Breakfast club, Free Breakfast for all pupils – porridge and fruit, Making thinking visible to staff to take part in learning opportunity, Soccer 7’s fundraiser, the football Interhouse competitions took place, pupil council stronger than ever with regular meetings, Prefects meal out taking place soon, Brian Middleton leading on samples of school uniform including a PE kit which will be issued shortly, Vision values and aims almost ready with a final survey of all pupils, parents and partners from an agreed list of values to take place.

As part of our self improving trio with Mackie and Portlethen we are beginning to link faculties together, share attainment data and curriculum choices.

Various staffing changes with Angela Wotherspoon taking up a post as QIO, Robin Christie acting deputy HT, 3 applicants being interviewed for Maths, Bob Cattanach retiring in May, Emma Myatt appointed in English, various national staffing challenges but Mearns thankfully stays strong.

This month sees young musician of the year, comic relief, Hospitality exams, Glencoe trip for 31 pupils and a sports festival in May.

Finally, a thank you to the Parent council for its support. At a parental engagement meeting which took place there’s a lot being done really well at Mearns Academy and to be proud of this.

TREASURERS REPORT

Jim Hendry handed out a spread sheet of the current finances. £6065.95 in the account with £124.40 in petty cash.

RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOL

Nanette asked if 2 parents could attend a meeting on Thursday 18th April for a half hour and to let her know.

SENIOR SCHOOL SUBJECT CHOICES

Staff organise the S1-S2 timetable initially and S3 pupils are given the choice to individualise their timetable. The S3 timetable is a pathway to National qualifications. There will be more national progression awards for 4th – 6th years in the future and a rise in courses and the opportunity for some to take on foundation apprenticeships as opposed to only Highers. Advanced Highers may be limited due to teacher availability but advanced English and Maths will be standard. Spanish has been requested but we don’t have the staff.

CLASSROOM PASSES

This is necessary as some pupils were walking about school when they should have been in class. It was brought to the heads attention that some pupils were being let out earlier than 3.30pm but all teachers have been told they cannot let pupils out until the bell goes. The passes also help for pupils who have extra care.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE AWARENESS

Pauline Logue spoke to us at the meeting about Drugs and told us about helpfull websites and gave valuable information about signs to look for and how to educate and try to influence our youngsters of the dangers of drugs. Alcohol is more a problem at high school age and again we just have to try to teach them to be more aware. Councillor Carr had a meeting with Wayne Gault from Aberdeenshire council who is very knowledgeable about these issues and thought he could come into the school and do a talk to the pupils plus Gareth Campbell suggested asking the police to come back in again to give a talk highlighting the dangers of drugs and alcohol. Plus, Lindsay Cochrane said she’d put the forms handed out by Pauline Logue onto the FB Page. **(Action Cllr Carr & GC)**

PREFECT DAY AWAY/DRAGONS DEN

The Prefect meal has been organised for Monday 15th April and Parent council are happy to hand over £400 towards their meal as they do such a good job and have a lot of responsibility.

DD – There is already funding put aside for a new 6th year area so the Dragons Den idea which we had 2 years ago could be done again as it gives different pupils the opportunity to pitch ideas for funds they’d like to use within the school for their chosen subjects infront of a panel of judges.

DUKE OF EDINBURGH

John Vickers spoke to us about the amount of people needed whilst doing DOE and how we need much more volunteers to be involved as there are so many pupils wanting to take part in DOE. Admin is a big area as every expedition takes up a huge amount of paperwork but Pauline Logue passed her supervisor qualification recently and can go out with pupils. John also said some Land owners aren’t happy as same areas are being used all the time with people pitching tents etc so new routes must be sought. There are 2 new members of staff interested to be trained in the mountain leader qualification and there is also a cost involved with the Gold expeditions. The authorities pay ½ and the average cost is £50 per participant with £21 going directly to DOE. George Carr suggested speaking to Emma Storrey in the area office for help with funding as they have £80,000 which could go towards the participants. John said any parent volunteers would be excellent to help with our way forward with DOE so if you’re interested get in touch with John or Pauline.

AOCB

* Katrin asked about the lack of seating areas at lunch time. GC is aware of this problem and is working with the prefects and pupil council trying to resolve this problem but there are currently lots of pupils in the school at the one time presently however this should be resolved soon.
* It was brought to GC attention some teachers are not letting pupils out to pick up their items from Home Economics class. He will speak to the individuals involved.
* Councillor Carr said the pitches are being monitored and new grass is growing again but is aware of the landslides into the pitches because of water coming from the road. The Roads department have now been made aware of this and are dealing with the problem.
* Councillor Hutchison is still looking into funding for the flag pole.
* Lindsay Cochrane asked why the ski trip was more expensive this year but it was due to the accommodation this time however it is still very good value given the pupils have 5 hours ski tuition, hotel, flight etc it’s still cheaper than Mackie.
* Clare thanked the staff for providing after school revision classes as it is very beneficial for pupils doing exams.

Meeting closed 8.30pm

**NEXT MEETING TUESDAY 14th MAY 7pm**