

Douglas Academy Parent Council Session 2020/21

Minutes of Meeting, 26 May 2021

1. Welcome and Apologies

Attendance

Scott Taylor (Chair), Barry Smedley (Head Teacher), Caryn McDade (Secretary), Rachel Lowther, Mascha Rietdijk, Michelle Stewart, Andrew McLean, John Jeffers, Caroline McCorkindale, Michael Lodhi, Lisa McIntosh

Apologies

None

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting of 24 March 2021 were approved.

3. PC Forums Updates

EDC Meeting and Wakelet

ST updated the Forum on an EDC meeting held on 25 May with representatives from EDC and PC Chairs. There was an update on the alternative certification model and it was confirmed the SQA will not reduce a school's marking down. The deadline remains 25 June although BS confirmed for DA that effectively means 24 June when the school closes. It was clear there has been a lot of sharing of practice by EDC across the cluster authorities of North Lanarkshire and East Renfrewshire.

There was a discussion on Wakelet and it was apparent there is limited knowledge generally of it. It was agreed parents of pupils at DA are kept well informed by BS's weekly updates and therefore circulation of the link to Wakelet wouldn't be needed.

4. Parent Council correspondence, standing and raised items

Senior pupils attendance at school

While understanding parents concerns about senior phase pupils being in school out with assessments, BS clarified that the decision not to grant study leave was made by the Scottish Government. The rationale for this is that there is no examination diet therefore no requirement for study leave. The only exceptions to this this have been 3 schools in the south side of Glasgow affected by the recent rise in Covid cases and some private schools where senior pupils attend school only for assessments. It was noted that pupils study in different ways and some pupils have found studying in school useful while others have found it more challenging. There was a recognition that having pupils in school made it more difficult for teachers to

cover all the marking they needed to do and most of this was therefore having to be done outwith school hours by teachers.

BS emphasises that “supplementary evidence” can be taken into account in addition to assessments and this can be gathered up until 21 June. This could be particularly important for pupils whose mark falls on the cusp of grades therefore senior pupils being in school remains a requirement to allow for any supplementary evidence to be gathered. This was outlined in a letter issued by the school and BS agreed to reemphasise to senior years the importance of continued attendance

End Year Reports

BS confirmed there was insufficient time to provide written reports for S1 - S3 as the priority had to be work on assessments for senior pupils. The intention is to provide the current S1 – S3 pupils with report cards early in the new academic year and BS will write to parents of pupils in those years confirming this. He also advised Guidance Teachers and PT's are in regular contact with parents where there is a particular concern about a pupils progression and issues are always addressed quickly.

Curriculum content for 2021/22

BS advised there had been no guidance as yet from the SQA about the curriculum content for subjects for the 21/22 academic year. There was some discussion on the merits of changing the way pupils are assessed and it was hoped that the SQA would take on board the views of teachers, pupils and parents in implementing changes in the future (although it was recognised any change to a traditional exam diet would take time to phase in).

Timetable and Moving up Years

The current timetable will continue to operate until the school closes on 24 June. BS advised that consideration had been given to year progression in early June however to allow the maximum time for gathering evidence for senior pupils it was decided the only way this could be done is by maintaining the timetable. For S3 pupils this means they will have to start course work in June for 2 subjects they won't be continuing with in August however this is only for a very short time.

School Performance

It was noted that DA had dropped from the top 10 in the ranking of Scottish schools. It was recognised that there was significant grade inflation in 17 out of the top 20 schools in this year's table while only 3 schools, including DA, had consistent excellent performance on the criteria.

Isolation Process

It was clarified that the current Scottish Government guidance is that anyone who is a close contact of someone who tests positive for Covid must isolate, even if they have a negative test themselves.

GBV

BS advised that it is planned to do something on this issue when the school returns in August linked to the school's values and respecting others. There are also plans to include it at PSE.

5. Head Teacher's Report

6. AOB

ST and BS thanked MR and CM for their contribution to the work of the PC over many years.