

**Minutes of Meeting of
Douglas Academy Parent Council Meeting on 15 March 2022**

The Chairman noted the meeting was quorate.

Previous Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

Matters Arising

Parent Council Forum:

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on 22 March but a substitute attendee would be required as the normal delegate was unavailable.

Parent Council Constitution:

No further comments have been received on the updated constitution so it was agreed this would be circulated to all parents and carers ahead of the AGM at the start of the 2022/23 session along with a short note of the main changes.

Agenda Items

Meal payments: It was noted that the iPayment system for school meal payments which has caused problems for some parents. Mr Smedley explained that the school would be migrating onto the Parent Portal in mid April which would bring this and several other services and information (e.g. timetables, absences etc) together. He explained the aim of the Parent Portal is to reduce calls to schools from parents and the problems encountered with iPayment may be related to the transition arrangements. He undertook to investigate and let the Council know.

PTA Summer Events: Mr Smedley advised that the PTA is looking for help from the Parent Council in re-energising the PTA after the last two years of pandemic disruption. There has been low attendance at PTA meetings so there is a need for more volunteers and helpers. It was noted that the P7 parents' evening in June would be a good opportunity to enlist new parents of children joining the school for the first time.

S2 trips: A question was raised about school trips and what the position was with these post-pandemic, especially as there was a lack of understanding of what had happened before from older siblings due to the disruption. Mr Smedley undertook to check what information has been provided to parents and pupils.

Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme: A question was raised about this in respect of 4th Year pupils who did not have the opportunity to undertake the Bronze Award due to Covid. Mr Smedley advised that discussions were in hand with EDC to allow such pupils to join the scheme at Silver level and communications would be sent as soon as this had been confirmed.

Library Access: A question was raised about whether access to the school library could be made "open" again instead of the current allocated times. Mr Smedley explained that new guidance was expected this week from the Educational Recovery Group which would hopefully provide the green light to open access again.

Parent Forum: It was reported that there had been a lengthy Parent Forum meeting with numerous presentations, although with a focus on Boclair Academy and student well-being. It had been reported that 8 years ago Boclair had been the EDC school with the highest excluding school (i.e. excluding the highest number of pupils) but that it was now the lowest, and the Parent Forum meeting was told how this had been achieved through a number of initiatives. One of these was that every child is required to be a member of a School Club. Medics Against Violence was also highlighted as a charity that had worked with the school, helping to teach and encourage pupils how not to be bystanders and to escalate inappropriate behaviour where necessary. This was seen as having a direct correlation with a decrease in violent behaviour. Another initiative that had been reported was a “Room of Requirement” which was open to all pupils and contained personal hygiene products that pupils might require but be embarrassed to ask for. Free toast at morning break was also reported as being very popular. Mr Smedley acknowledged he was aware of many of these issues, some of which were funded through a larger Pupil Attainment Fund allocation, and that several similar initiatives were being explored at Douglas Academy. The Chairman also reported that he had worked with the Medics Against Violence group for several years and that much of the work, such as a training S5/6 pupils to act as peer support, had been paused due to the pandemic and the restrictions on external visitors in schools. However he undertook to look into what was happening post-pandemic and provide an update once he knew more.

Gender Based Violence: Mr Smedley reported that contact had been made with the group behind the “Don’t Be That Guy” campaign against gender-based violence and that staff and pupil forums continued to examine the best ways to tackle this in the school, including by using external groups. However, he noted that no pupils had attended a recent meeting that had been called on the subject which had been disappointing.

Demerits: Mr Smedley advised that these would change from 2022/23. He explained he had always had reservations about the utility of the system and process behind them, but as it had been a Scottish Government system, individual schools had no ability to tailor it to their own needs. He noted that most of the demerits issued in a typical week were for trivial issues, such as timekeeping or forgetting PE kits, which parent tended to ignore them, which was unhelpful if they had in fact been issued for more serious reasons. He confirmed that details of the new system, how it would work and what positive and negative issues would be communicated to parents, would be made available to pupils and parents in due course.

Head Teacher Update:

Mr Smedley presented the following report:

Good evening and welcome to the first Parent Council meeting of 2022. There are a number items I will share with you this evening including changes to staffing, Senior Phase pupils progress towards their SQA examinations and, as ever, a wide range of outstanding pupil achievements.

Staffing

- Ms Quearns recently took up the post of Acting PT Business as Mrs Kennedy is on maternity leave. Ms Quearns will remain in post until the summer and Miss Thomson will then cover the vacancy from August onwards.
- We currently have four full-time permanent positions for next session. We will be appointing in Maths, French, Physical Education and Music. We have one temporary position advertised in Chemistry and I am currently discussing options with East Dunbartonshire Council in relation to

the Drama and Dance vacancies. I will update the PC at the next meeting once the staffing situation for next session has been finalised.

Attainment

- S4-S6 prelim results were collated in January and targeted interventions put in place to support pupils who required it the most. We have an extensive supported study programme currently taking place in school, with young people attending classes they were targeted for. We also relaunched our S5/6 Masterclasses to provide pupils with additional time and exam support within the school day. For the first time at Douglas Academy, Masterclasses have also been included in S4. Targeted pupils are extracted from core subjects in the Senior Phase for 6 weeks to work in small tutorial groups with a member of staff who is timetabled to support them. There are currently 8 Masterclasses in S4 and 27 Masterclasses in S5/6, which run twice weekly during core subject time. We are currently finalising our Easter Revision Support programme and this will be communicated to parents/carers very soon. Additional money was provided by the Scottish Government and we had to target specific young people. Details below:
 - Senior Phase learners undertaking NQ Exams in 2022 from the most deprived backgrounds
 - Senior Phase learners undertaking NQ Exams in 2022 with additional support needs
 - Senior Phase learners undertaking NQ Exams in 2022 whose attendance and/or attainment has been most acutely affected by COVID-19 (this could be applied to almost all young people)
 - We are also currently analysing our school timetable and we intend to allocate time to study revision classes during study leave. This will be communicated to young people and their families once the programme has been finalised. It will allow young people to attend study revision classes that will be supervised by a member of staff during the school day. It also ensures young people can access subject teachers for support during the period of study leave.

School Business

1. We have continued to have a number of Family Learning evenings throughout January, February and March. Our Curriculum Evenings for S2 and S4/5 were very well attended. Over 800 option choices are now almost complete with S2 into S3 due to be finalised at the end of this week. We are currently looking at Senior Phase options and prelim results to identify pupils who have not selected their best subjects and we will discuss this with pupils when they return in June. Further discussion will take place in August when SQA results are released. Our S4-6 SQA Information Evening was also very well attended with approximately 200 families on our Teams call. We will follow this up next week with another SQA evening focusing on Managing Exam Stress and Study Skills. This will take place on Tuesday, 22nd March
2. We recently ran two remote Parents' Evenings for S4 and S5/6 Parents/Carers respectively. Initial feedback has been incredibly positive. More parents/carers said their preference was to continue with the online approach for next session. We will write to everyone in due course to explain our plans for reporting on progress next session.
3. Our school day is gradually becoming more 'normal' as we continue to receive updated guidance from the Scottish Government. The recent shift to in-person assemblies has made a huge difference to how we can communicate with entire year groups. Extra-curricular activities are operating as normal now Year Groups are no longer required to be in bubbles. Trips out with school have also restarted and we are due to attend an English Premier League game in May with our S1 & S2 pupils. We await further guidance from the Scottish Government and the impact on

schools when further restrictions are lifted next week. Again, all parents & carers will be fully updated once this has been received.

Achievements and Additional Opportunities

- We had a fantastic response from our entire school community to our Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal that took place on Thursday and Friday of last week. Our young people and their families contributed generously. We have raised £1733.26 for DEC, with many staff and families also donating directly to DEC through the link that was provided.
- Two of our Senior pupils were part of the West of Scotland team that defeated Hawick and qualified to the Under 18 Scottish Cup Final.
- Two of our pupils are performing in Scottish Opera's A Midsummer's Night Dream.
- Two of our pupils have been appointed to the RSNO Youth Advisory Board. This provides an opportunity to work with the RSNO board members and each receive a financial bursary from RSNO.
- Our European Youth Parliament (EYP) Team qualified for the UK Forum in Liverpool in September:
- Two of our pupils have been selected to be on the EDC UNCRC Pupil Forum.
- A Parliamentary Motion was recently submitted by Marie McNair, MSP for Clydebank & Milngavie and supported by a further 15 MSPs.

That the Parliament notes that the CyberFirst Girls Competition finalists from Douglas Academy in Milngavie; applauds their teacher, Mrs Maggie Tuohy, for encouraging the students participation in the contest; understands that the competition is run by the National Cyber Security Centre and that the UK-wide competition aims to inspire girls to pursue a career in cyber security; commends the efforts of the initiative and understands that female representation in the cyber sector is low at 16%; congratulates the pupils of Douglas Academy, and wishes them success in their chosen careers.

- **National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain:** 4 four students played with the orchestra at Christmas/New Year at the Barbican Centre in London. 5 will be playing with the orchestra as part of their Easter course
- **National Youth Orchestras of Scotland (NYOS):** 11 students have been offered places in these orchestras. One pupil has been appointed leader of NYOS Senior Orchestra.
- **BBC Young Musician Competition:** three of our students are competing in the Scottish round of the BBC Young Musician of the Year competition this month