

**Minutes of Meeting of  
Douglas Academy Parent Council Meeting on 9 November 2021**

The Chairman noted the meeting was quorate and welcomed Mr Sinclair in place of Mr Smedley who was on paternity leave.

**Previous Minutes**

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

**Matters Arising**

Parent Council Constitution:

It was noted that an updated draft constitution had been circulated to the Council. It was noted that the draft appeared to be satisfactory, but any comments should be directed forwarded directly.

**Agenda Items**

PC Forum updates:

An update was provided on recent Parent Council Forum meetings. There had been little discussion at these meetings, with the focus being on presentation from the Local Authority. Highlights reported included a new Interim Chief Education Officer had been appointed and there was a new leadership structure being put in place. It was also reported that Covid measures continued to be put in place, with CO2 monitors having now been installed in all schools. Mr Sinclair confirmed that these are being installed in classrooms and would supplement other mitigation measures such as increased ventilation. School trips could also now take place, provided appropriate risk assessment had been undertaken. Each school also now has a Youth Officer to help with students' mental health. Finally, attainment levels had risen across EDC schools, with Higher and Advanced Higher results both up on 2020 although National 5s were slightly down. It was noted that the basis of assessment in 2021 had differed from 2020 and therefore the results should be treated with a degree of caution. Despite the useful updates, the feeling was that parents are viewed as an audience for EDC rather than being a resource to discuss things. This was acknowledged by Councillor Goodall who has raised the matter with the Interim Chief Education Officer with the request that the Forum meetings become more discussion-based in future.

COP26 absences:

A question was raised about why student absences due to attendance at demonstrations around COP26 would be marked as unauthorised absences. Mr Goodall explained that there was a degree of inconsistency across EDC but that no school would take action against any pupils attending such activities. However, it was noted that unauthorised absences could impact Educational Maintenance Allowance payments. Nevertheless, it was emphasised that the school roll was a legal document and therefore had to be accurate. Mr Sinclair confirmed that there had been a significant number of students – many dozens – absent in this way, and whilst it was mainly in the older year groups, it had been apparent across all year groups.

School lockers:

Mr Sinclair was asked whether there was any possibility of re-instating these post-Covid. He confirmed that plans were in place for this to happen at the end of November and work was underway to recover lost keys.

#### Supported Study:

Mr Sinclair was asked to explain what this involved in practice, and advised that there was no single model, with different departments adopting different approaches. This could include additional teaching on problem areas or a drop-in approach. However, he emphasised it should not be just supervised revision and should be interactive. He also noted that demand for the sessions significantly outweighed supply, with some students wanting more support than is available. This is because provision of such sessions is on a voluntary basis by staff, so a targeted approach was being taken, with teachers identifying the students who they think would benefit most from the additional help. He also explained that at Higher level, masterclasses would be run during PSE periods after the prelims, again on a targeted basis. He stressed that all students were always able to approach staff on an ad hoc basis at breaks for additional help and support.

#### Contacting the Parent Council:

There was a discussion about how to ensure parents could contact the parent council and get updates. It was noted that everything was on the school website for parents to check, although this needed to be updated with representative information. It was also agreed that a GroupCall message should go out to parents about a week before the next meeting seeking questions, as this was a well-established means of communication.

#### **Head Teacher Update**

Mr Sinclair provided an update and noted that although Mr Smedley was currently on paternity leave, he was still in frequent contact with staff.

Interim school reports for S4-6 had been issued today and supported study for S4 had started ahead of the prelim diet starting on 3 December for 2 weeks. Study leave would be in place, with details to follow. Study leave for S5/6 would start on 10 January and last until the end of their prelims on 17 January.

A SQA presentation is being planned for parents on 22 November to update them on the latest guidance, with the current intention to be to hold a full exam diet in April and May 2022.

On literacy, the DARN (Douglas Academy Reading Network) newsletter would be sent out once a term to update parents on literacy activity within the school.

Health and wellbeing: a Principal Teacher of Nurture and Wellbeing has been appointed with a focus on achieving the National Nurture School Award.

Fitness equipment: new fitness equipment would be installed in the fitness suite on 23 November, including treadmills and free weights. An exercise and fitness leadership course would also be made available to S5/6 pupils.

The PE Department had run a Active Girls Day on 27 October for S1-3 girls which had been popular and well-received.

NHS Flu vaccinations had been delivered on 26 October.

A Mindfulness Evening for parents was being planned for 17 November, and staff had had mindfulness training as part of the in-service day in October.

School Council representatives are now in place across all Year groups and will be led by the Captaincy Team which is also now in place. The first meeting will focus on health and wellbeing. Scottish Youth Parliament elections will start next week and there will be one candidate from Douglas Academy.

Mr Stepney (PE Dept) is leading an outdoor learning initiative in partnership with Edinburgh University, aimed at capitalising on the unique semi-rural environment around the school. Quotes are being reviewed for an outdoor classroom with the aim of installing it in Spring 2022 to provide outside learning opportunities. As a result, horticulture is being planned to be offered in the senior phase curriculum from 2022/23.

On extra curricular activities, A S1-3 Extra Curriculum Fair was held recently and there was very high uptake by students. The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme is now running again, with details for S3 and S4 participation to be issued shortly.

7 music school students have been accepted into the RSC Chorus and a 6<sup>th</sup> Year student has been offered the role of Principal Clarinet in the Youth Orchestra of the UK. Other students have been offered places in the National Youth Orchestra and Children's Orchestra. There has been continued debating success, with 2 6<sup>th</sup> Year students qualifying for the Cambridge Union competition.

The COP26 summit in Glasgow had provided an opportunity for environmental issues to be raised across the school and awareness increased.

Fundraising - £800 had been raised by S1 students for the STV Children's Appeal and the PTA had raised £2,700 for a mini-bus and donated £100 for netball bibs.

Remembrance Assemblies would be taking place this week for all Year groups, and on 11 November there would be two ceremonies, at 10am and 11am. The School Captain will be making a speech and the Captaincy Team and prefects had been collecting money for poppies. A wreath will be laid at the war memorial in Milngavie Town Centre by the School captains.

### **Any other business**

A question was raised about what action had been taken to tackle misogyny. Mr Sinclair advised that he had met with the Captaincy Team and there had been considerable interest in addressing this. However, he noted that care was required about how to do it, and the preference was to make it student-led and in consultation with the Pupil Council. He also added that external speakers would be of assistance but stressed that there was a keenness to address this and that it was part of the school improvement plan.

There being no other business, the meeting ended.