

**Minutes of the meeting of the
Douglas Academy Parent Council
on 28 November 2023**

Present: **ST (Chair)**
 AMcL
 CM
 LH
 ML
 JS
 SA
 IF
 BS

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chairman welcomed all attendees and indicated that apologies had been received from LM, MS and Cllr Gibbons.

2. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved with no matters arising. BS was requested to upload them to the public website.

3. Parent Council Forum update

The Chairman referred to the slides of the previous meeting which had been circulated before the meeting. BS reported that he had raised the concerns previously raised by Parent Council attendees about the format of the PC Forum meetings (namely that their tendency to be non-interactive and with little opportunity for discussion or debate) with Greg Bremner, the Chief Education Officer. These had been taken on board and it was expected that the next meeting, scheduled for March 2024, would be more interactive.

4. Parent Council correspondence, standing and raised items

- a. Cashless catering at D'Arista: A question had been raised about the possibility of introducing cashless payment at D'Arista but BS advised that following investigations, EDC have confirmed that they are unable to facilitate this. It is therefore not obvious how the need can be addressed, although investigations will continue.
- b. Demerit scheme: BS explained how the demerit system works and that it was a centrally managed system that allowed little discretion for individual schools about how it was used. He explained that in his opinion, it was overly negative, as it didn't focus on or allow the sharing of positive news or behaviour. He referred to the Promoting Positive Behaviour scheme which had certain benefits over the demerit scheme, but noted that parents had indicated they nevertheless wanted to keep the demerit system. Discussion followed about the seeming inconsistency with how different staff members issued demerits, with some being issued for trivial misdemeanours. BS agreed there were inconsistencies, although conceded these were also present in the merit schemes too. It was agreed that consideration should be given to consulting with the parent body for views on the ongoing utility of the demerit system and/or its replacement with a more positive merit-based scheme.
- c. Parental Engagement in Relationships: BS advised there was nothing to update and a reminder would be sent.

- d. Pedestrian crossings: BS reported that the Mains Estate Residents Association had approached the school seeking support for installing a pedestrian crossing on the vehicular entrance to the school. This was in response to concerns from dog-walkers using Craigton Woods and encountering vehicles entering and existing the school. After a short discussion, it was concluded that there was no support for such a measure as the volume and speed of traffic and the number of pedestrians did not merit the expense of installing such a crossing.

BS also reported that concerns had been raised about the increased speed of vehicles using Criagton Road following its recent resurfacing. He advised that there was arguably a need for speed bumps and/or a crossing to be installed at the entrance to the Cloberfield Estate. It was agreed that this had become a problem and the Forum was supportive of traffic calming measures being introduced. BS undertook to speak to EDC.

- e. Football pitch fencing: There was no update

5. Head Teacher Update

Good evening and welcome to the last Parent Council meeting of session 2023. There are a number items I will share with you this evening including changes to staffing, important aspects of school business and a wide range of outstanding pupil achievements.

Staffing

We have appointed a number of staff to vacancies and new roles in the last few months.

- Mrs Davidson (current Maths PT) and Mr Stepney (current 0.4 DHT) were both appointed to our 0.2 and 0.4 PEF DHT posts, respectively. They have responsibility for co-ordinating all PEF interventions. Both post will last approximately 23 months.
- Miss Erin Gilbride was appointed to our PT Achievement and Wider Accreditation post last week. This is a PEF funded post that will run for 23 months.
- Mrs Morrison was appointed to our vacant 0.2 PT Maths post, as backfill for Mrs Davidson doing the DHT role.
- Mrs Lorna Kerr was appointed to Acting PT English to cover Miss Di Mambro's maternity leave. Mrs Kerr started on Monday, 27th November and joins us from Bishopbriggs Academy.
- Ms Jenny Hunter was appointed to our 0.8 FTE Teacher of English vacancy. Ms Hunter also started on Monday, 27th November and joins us from Calderglen HS in South Lanarkshire.

School Business

- Parents' Evenings for S1, S3, S4 and S5/6 have all taken place over the last few months. Parents and carers have welcomed the return to in-person meetings with feedback being overwhelmingly positive and approximately 90% attendance being recorded at each evening.
- Interim reports have been issued to S4-6 parents and carers, which provided an update on progress from August to October. S2 full reports have also been issued and a parents' evening is scheduled for February for this year group.

- S4 Supported Study has been running for four weeks and has been very well attended across all subjects offered. S5/6 supported study started on Monday, 27th November and will run until the Christmas break.
- S4 prelim examinations start tomorrow, Wednesday 29th November. Young people will be on study leave for the duration of the exams. The last day of the diet is Wednesday, 13th December and pupils will return to school on Thursday, 14th December.
- S5/6 prelim examinations are scheduled for 9th-23rd January. Similarly to S4, young people will be on study leave and return to school on Wednesday, 24th January.
- Remembrance Assemblies took place in the lead up to our Remembrance Day Service on Friday, 10th November. The Captaincy Team and Prefect Team collected money for poppies and our School Captains delivered a speech prior to the silence being observed by all staff and pupils. Douglas Academy School Captains laid a wreath at the war memorial in Milngavie Town Centre on Sunday, 12th November.

Achievements and Additional Opportunities

- **Mentors in Violence Prevention**
28 new S6 pupils underwent training in August. From September- October, they took responsibility for planning, delivery and evaluation of lessons to S3 PSE classes.
- **Mental Health Ambassadors**
30 new S5 pupils trained in June 2023. From Sept-October, they took responsibility for planning, delivery and evaluation of lessons to S1 PSE classes.
- **Silver Surfers**
Seven S6 pupils have volunteered to be part of our Silver Surfers Group. Once a month they volunteer at Milngavie library helping members of the local community to access internet, tablet and smartphone resources.
- **Duke Of Edinburgh**
Bronze- 80 new participants enrolled and completed expeditions in May. They will have until January to complete their volunteering, physical and skill sections before silver applications open.
New bronze applications will open in January 2024 for current S3 pupils.
Silver- 28 new S5 participants enrolled and completed practice and qualifying expeditions in August & September. They will have until May to complete their volunteering, physical and skill sections.
New Silver applications for current bronze will open in January 2024.
- **Saltire**
Over 50 pupils have achieved their minimum 10+ Saltire hours since signing up in August.
- **S2/S3 Careers Day**
Our S5/6 Leadership class ran their first S2 & S3 Careers Day in November which was a great success.
All S2 & S3 pupils who participated very much enjoyed the opportunity to ask our various speakers questions, interact with the activities, see the animals, take part in some sport demonstrations, and get some free food!
- **Active Girls Day**

All S1-S3 Girls had the opportunity to participate in netball, dance and cheerleading. The yearly Sports Scotland initiative runs in order to inspire young women to be more physically active and educating them on the benefits of physical activity. It is hoped events like this continue to build confidence and reduce the gap and female dropout rate in sport. The response from the day was incredibly positive.

- **Music**

- Variety Concert - one of the best in a while with some amazing performances. Great audience with full hall!
- A pupil successfully auditioned for a place on the German/Scandinavian Youth Orchestra course over Christmas. This is based in Berlin and take players from all over the world. The final concert is in the world famous new Berlin Philharmonic Concert Hall (you should search on google images!)
- Two pupils will represent Scotland in the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain in season 2023-24.
- Two pupils were offered scholarships on the spot when auditioning for Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and Royal College of Music London respectively. This happens rarely and in exceptional circumstances (i.e. they would normally wait until hearing all candidates before offering scholarships)
- We have had approximately 20 students apply successfully to the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland as well as West of Scotland Symphony Orchestra and band

- **Debating**

Five young people from Douglas Academy selected for the Scottish Youth Development squad.

That concludes the Head Teacher's Report for this evening.

6. AOB

A PC Council member referred to a video that had been shown to 6th Year pupils in a neighbouring school highlighting the dangers that may be encountered on the now-commonplace 6th Year holiday. BS undertook to follow this up ahead of the current 6th Year leaving school for study leave after the Easter Holidays.

There being no other business, the meeting ended.