

Braes High School Parent Council Meeting
Thursday 7 March 2024

In Attendance

Iain Livingstone(Headteacher), Kenneth MacKinnon(Chair), Kirsty Baird, Morag Lang, Natash Wood Wakefield, Ailsa Johnson, Jackie Ormsby, Matt Taylor(Treasurer), Julie Wilkinson, Darren Yeates. Lucy Kieran (school careers advisor), Gillian Wilson and Laura Cameron (Skills Development Scotland)

Apologies

Councillor Gordon Forrest, Councillor Ann Hannah, Wendy McPherson, Donna Ainslie, Amanda Anderson

Previous minutes and actions

No matters arising from the previous minutes. No outstanding actions.

Treasurer updated that the accounts were on way to the council.

Minutes were proposed by Kenneth MacKinnon and seconded by Natash Wood Wakefield.

Skills Development Scotland

The school careers advisor and post school advisors from Skills Development Scotland provided an input to the group. The outlined that they are a national free service, and they are in partnership with all the schools in the Falkirk area.

They work with young people from S1 trough to S6 and beyond. In S1 it is through my world at work, in s2 there are subject choice interviews, S3 as one to one with pastoral staff thereafter the staff work closely to ensure leavers are ready and prepared for positive destinations. 98.5% of last years cohort are in positive destinations, with Braes outperforming local and national figures.

Skills development Scotland pick up what additional 1.5% which is 3 out of 199 and work with them after school. Every school leaver has a named advisor and the school identify who may need additional support. They work with the young persons to look at opportunities and options. They have work coaches providing extra assistance, use charitable agencies and build confidence and relationships to progress to the next steps.

The chair and Mr Livingstone thanked the staff for their support and ongoing work with the school.

Performance and Analysis toolkit

Pupil surveys and feedback have been carried out and now learning intentions, learning tasks, questioning, plenaries, success criteria, differentiation and assessment and feedback are all being progressed to meet the information collated.

An online resource compiling this information will be circulated to Parent Council when complete.

Parents/carers evenings and tracking

A draft of next sessions proposed dates were circulated to the group for comment. Some suggestions were provided which the staff will consider, and amendments may be made.

A discussion around guidance for parents being available, especially in the early years as the parents/ carers may not be able to get appointments with all staff. There will be some guidance around focussing on the subjects that interest and are important to the young person and to contact the faculty head if you are unable to get an appointment or require some additional information. There was also a discussion about the rotation subjects (ie sciences and languages) and how this can be better incorporated into the evenings. There was also some discussion about the online wizard being removed.

Actions to circulate guidance was noted.

An action to remove the online wizard was noted.

School improvement Plan

Paperwork will be circulated to the parent council membership to read and there will be a discussion at the May Parent Council Meeting.

An action to circulate the paperwork in advance of the next meeting was noted.

Budget cuts/Community Access to School

The group were made aware of a proposal from the Development Group at Falkirk Council to utilise some high schools in the area as community schools and additional facilities to be added. However, this is at the detriment of some other council facilities being closed (ie Boness Recreation Centre). These proposals are in the early stages and the group will be updated when more information is available.

Mobile phones in School

The recent media exposure in relation to use of mobile phones in schools has been highlighted and the school are looking at use of mobile phones in school. Other schools in the area have different approaches and options are being considered. At present Braes pupils are respectful and lessons are not being adversely disrupted by phone use. Moments that matter in such times as exams and assessments is being considered, where phones are not allowed at all, however providing the young

persons with trust and maturity to use phones responsibly at other times is taken into consideration. Use of apps and having digital literacy are important and ways to ensure phones are being used in a responsible manner are being progressed. There are no significant challenges currently within the school in respect to phone usage. The view of the Parent Council was it is better to help our young people learn use mobile phones responsibly and that a stricter regime may prove to be counterproductive.

Change in the school week

A council wide consultation is currently ongoing in respect to the change in the school week. Presentation and FAQs are being prepared to inform all stakeholders. The schools would have to consider what would require to be relinquished and what could be retained, staffing levels, amount of time in class and number of periods, break and lunchtimes.

This is all in the early stages the school will update the group when further information is received from the council.

AOCB

It was raised that early communication where possible on teams or other platforms could be given in respect to sports events. While last minute changes are understandable, it was asked that changes to any extracurricular clubs or competitions can be circulated in advance to allow for young persons or parents to prepare clothing or changes in transport for that day and which staff are best to contact and the best way to contact them.

Date of next meeting Wednesday 1 May, 7-9pm in school library