**St Margaret’s Academy Parent Council Meeting**

**7th June 2021**

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| **Parents Present**  L Loran (Chair**)**  C Wilson  C Cooper  D Lawson  D Docherty  R McCracken  E Traynor  Martin Dobie (Church Rep) | **St Margaret’s Staff**  Siobhan McGarty (HT)  Isla Wright (DHT)  Julie Renfrew (DHT, Acting)  Anne Crookston (DHT, Acting)  Tina Melville (DHT) | **Apologies** |

* Opening Prayer
* Welcome led by Mrs Loran who outlined the format for the evening.
* Matters arising – Previous queries addressed

**HT Report**

Mrs McGarty provided an update on staffing: Mrs Thomson has been appointed as PT inclusion. Mrs Irvine will return in the week starting 14th June. An ad is current for Acting PT1 to support the new Skills Academy. A new development post for Business links will be created after the summer.

Since coming back after the Easter holiday, the whole school has had a period of reconnecting with learning and renewing well-being. It has been a very busy time for assessments, moderation and quality assurance with senior phase qualifications. There has also been significant work done to confirm pathways for students in S3,4 and S5 with a new timetable being written for next session. S3 have undertaken their transition programme which supports them in moving from BGE to senior phase.

There has been a focus on growth in well-being through our PSE programme, developing outdoor learning, and supporting mental health. The school has doubled its allocation of Counselling support and is also working with CLD (Community Learning & Development) to provide an informal lunch group.

We are in the middle of reviewing our school improvement plan and writing the standards and quality report for the session. This has to be completed by mid-September and will be shared with parents and the wider school community. A range of pupil focus groups are contributing to our review by discussing challenge questions focused on our SIP and supported by How Good is our School (HGIOURS).

Our S6 had their final farewell event recently and had a lovely time where they had a group photograph (outside), a ceremony where they received their testimonials and a bbq which they thoroughly enjoyed. A parent from the Parent Council commented that “my daughter was there and said it was brilliant”.

Staff are preparing for activity clubs to return hopefully soon after the summer holidays and information will be shared with parents in the new term. A parent asked about increasing practical work in Science. Mrs McGarty is also keen for this to happen within covid risk assessment guidelines, and will continue to work with the science department and H&S to put this into place.

We are keen to get back to full school uniform and with the changing rooms being open again will be able to do so from August. A letter with further information for parents will be issued before the end of term. A parent asked if pupils could wear their hoody or blazer. The school supports both and can support with costs. The school can support with PE kit, coats, uniform, stationery for families.

**Pupil Focus Group Feedback- On track with Learning**

Mrs Renfrew has been leading Pupil Focus Groups to discuss ‘what has been going well/better if’ and moving forward in learning into next year. This will inform professional learning next session in particular the use of digital forums to support learning in the classroom and at home. We have also discussed refreshing the Library and social spaces to gauge pupils’ views and will provide an outcome profile.

The parent group are interested in hearing more about a range of topics and it was suggested that team leads attend parent council to discuss progress in areas such as numeracy, literacy, digital pedagogy, DYW, curriculum planning.

**Well-being review and plans**

Mrs Crookston provided an update on the work of Nurture, TLC and ASD support groups. She explained that a number of pupils will be screened for dyslexia over the next term. A parent asked about support for students with dyscalculia. Further training for staff will take place next session and the school will ask for expertise to support this with a focus on dyscalculia, dyspraxia and dyslexia. New developments include our Skills Academy which will provide curriculum pathways in Care for the environment, Construction, Horticulture and Parish work experience partnerships.

Over this session, we have increased the number of Pupil Support staff who are PT/PTCs and our aim from August is to increase time that our Pupil Support Workers are in class to support learning for example, paired reading.

We have also increased support from the Inclusion and Well Being Service. Our staff support young people with consequential thinking and two new staff will provide input to our Skills Academy.

Senior pupils have been trained in peer mentoring this term and will support BGE in particular S3 pupils next session.

Our new Mental Health course is being developed for PSE with pupils gaining SCQF awards into S4.

**P7 Transition plan**

Mrs Melville shared an update on our extensive Transition programme. Individual child planning meetings have taken place. Live learning took place before Christmas with Business Education. There have also been virtual recorded lessons – (Bus Ed, Maths, Spanish) and a virtual tour of the school.

Enhanced transition visits took place last week on the inset days. This week a virtual transition will take place finishing with Faith Friday supported by Fr Simon. A digital book has been created for parents and pupils containing our school information.

Buddy training has also taken place and virtual Q/A sessions with every associate school. Fr Simon represented us at each school as a roving envoy and introduced himself as our Chaplain.

All P7 will have a 1 day visit next week following covid guidelines.

**Parents Eve Consult**

Mrs Wright shared the outcomes of the recent parents evening consultation about the potential move to online. 93% staff & 70% parents who responded were very positive about the move to online evenings and so the school will go ahead with this next session.

It was noted that the first evening has some technical glitches (due to overload by a number of schools using the same evening) but these were removed by the next one.

Parents comments included that it is much more convenient, helps with childcare issues, no rush to attend.

A few parents suggested that some face to face would be useful, a few suggested longer consults (which ELT can support). From the consult, 85% said that they had useful conversations, 90% instructions were straight forward. Parents thanked the office team, and a few parents said that not driving to parents evening is good for the environment. They also welcomed increasing the time slot from 5 to 7minutes.

Parent Council comments included, “really like it, less intrusive, not a big crowd, thorough reports & next steps discussed, slick, can prepare and discuss individual questions.”

Another parent said, “ it was easier, liked it, not waiting around, extend time if possible.”

Another parent said, “less stressful, 7 mins good.”

A parent asked about uptake? The senior phase very good, BGE slightly less and we will be reviewing the reporting calendar dates.

**Timetable/Curriculum plans:**

Mrs Wright explained that the timetable is due to change on the 14th June. This has been in draft due to the nature of this year and in agreement with all secondary schools in West Lothian. We now have our probationer allocation which will support the timetable.

We have undertaken a review of our curriculum pathways and introduced a number of new courses. We are bringing a new Digital Skills course into the BGE starting with S1. We will also provide a number of ‘after school’ courses at N5/H, as well as introducing Scottish Studies for all new S4 pupils.

Other new courses that we are planning include Academic Skills, Customer service.

**SP Alternative Model**

Mrs Wright provided an update on the senior phase alternative model. We have tried to ensure that assessment has been as manageable as possible. We have received positive feedback from SQA about courses that were chosen for verification. Our staff have engaged with marking, moderation including 2 inset days where they worked with colleagues from across the local authority and quality assurance.

Tracking reports will be issued on 21 June but learning conversations are ongoing about progress. Parents have found this reassuring that there has been dialogue with pupils.

Thanks to all of our parents during this very challenging time.

**AOB**

* The HPV vaccination programme starts on Wednesday/Thursday for S1/2, S3.
* Parents thanked staff for this year and wished all an enjoyable holiday.
* Parents thanked staff for supporting S6 to have a happy and memorable ‘last day’ which they thought was great.
* The Parent Chair congratulated the school in moving from 44th to 26th in the school attainment rankings published in the press recently (based on 5H results).
* SLT members thanked the Parent Council for their support throughout the year.