

Minutes of Trinity Academy Parent Council, 9th March 2023

Paul Jeffrey has taken over from Mike Nicholson as the new Chair of the Parent Council. Paul welcomed everyone to this online meeting and added that the next meeting would be face-to-face in the school in early May.

Headteacher update:

Mr Burge thanked parents for attending the meeting and provided the following updates:

A new app (Class Charts) - this will be used by the school as a monitoring tool. Staff will use this to share information about pupils and to help monitor classroom issues, including disruptive behaviour. It is hoped that this new tool can be rolled out after the Easter break.

Communication about school clubs and activities – ways to improve communication with parents and children have been discussed in the school. A new daily bulletin will be introduced, which will share any information presented during Registration class with the pupils via their school email address.

Positive destinations – Mr Burge highlighted the good news that almost all (97%) of Trinity school leavers moved to a positive destination last year. He thanked all the staff and families for their efforts and support in achieving this.

New school year 2023/24 – some visits from a new S1 cohort of pupils had taken place. The new school roll from August will be approximately 1005, which is above the capped number of pupils for the school. This will equate to one additional teacher.

New school update – the design team for the project have concluded their initial design for the school. Pupils were given a chance to feed their ideas into the design. A letter was sent to all pupils, and 65 volunteered to take part in the consultation, creating mood boards for the design team to consider. A newsletter with an update on the new school will be circulated to parents, local primary schools and the wider community. In answer to a question about toilets, Mr Burge mentioned that pupils' preference was for a mix of gendered and gender-neutral toilets to be available, and that this was fed back to the design team.

Strike action and impacts – Mr Burge was grateful to parents for their patience throughout this challenging time. He indicated that the rules around teaching were the same and that they are prioritising essential activities where necessary.

Questions from parents

Access to toilets: One parent asked whether pupils are allowed to go the toilet during class time. Mr Burge replied that pupils who need to use the toilet should be allowed to do so within reason. This issue of concern is more about pupils who frequently leave their classes to use the toilets. Pupils are encouraged to use the toilets during break times where possible. There are plans within the new school building development to make more toilets available to pupils. Where any issues arise for parents in relation to toilet usage these should be directed to the school.

Fundraising: two parents asked questions relating to fundraising activities for the school. Helen Davey asked whether fundraising could be targeted towards helping parents who struggle to pay for activities such as sports memberships. She added that some parents are willing to pay items such as a membership fee for sports clubs. Mr Burge clarified that the school has not stopped offering any activity or club on the basis of affordability and that through various means they have managed to

save some money to cover the cost of the school day (e.g. by training parent volunteers for the DoE activities and less costly ways of using coaches). Colin Duncan welcomed the activities being offered through the Trinity Plus offering but also asked if there could be consideration of how the Parent Council and fundraising in general can work to help support more expensive trips.

Mr Burge replied that discussions were now taking place in the school about how to support excursions (including foreign trips), and that he is keen that pupils have an opportunity to participate in activities beyond the usual classroom routines. He added that council guidance on excursions has only just been released in February, and that he hopes to share more information on the school's position on trips after the Easter break. Mr Burge asked that parents contact him directly if they have specific concerns about the school's approach to excursions.

There was discussion about different approaches to fundraising – whether it should be presented as general fundraising for the school to be used as needed across a range of different activities, or as raising funds for a specific activity or excursion. Many Parent Council fundraising activities to date have been conducted at specific school events, with money raised going to the Parent Council and the school department running the event. One parent added that the National Lottery Fund is an option worth considering where funding is needed for activities that are done outside of school time.

Mr Burge thanked the parent body their willingness to support future fundraising for school activities and excursions.

Paul highlighted the need for fundraising leads to have further discussion around all these fundraising issues.

50/50 club

Lisa Cardozo has been managing this fundraising activity for the last 6 years and is ready to hand over this role to another parent. The role requires very little time (approx. 1 hour per month) and involves checking bank statements, and paying out the winnings. We are keen to appoint a new parent volunteer for this role. (Subsequent to the meeting, Colin Duncan has taken over the running of the 50/50 club with our thanks!)

Any other business

Saltire Awards: Lesley Kelly gave a presentation about the Saltire Awards. This is a government award scheme overseen by Volunteer Edinburgh. Young people aged 12-25 who have spent time volunteering can request a certificate of achievement. This can be very helpful to mention when making applications, for example, to college courses. Things which count towards volunteering hours include formal volunteering with organisations, any school volunteering, and volunteering done as part of the Duke of Edinburgh scheme. Lesley highlighted the need to raise awareness of the Saltire Awards by engaging with schools, and hoped that both Mr Burge and the Parent Council may help to raise awareness of this scheme for young people. Lesley will send her presentation to Paul.

Other items: Paul asked parents to email the parent council (trinityparentcouncil@googlemail.com) if they have any other business points to add.

Next meeting

The next meeting will be face-to-face in the school on Tuesday 9th May. Details will be circulated to parents.