

# Trinity Academy Parent Council Meeting 24 August 2023 (face-to-face in school) - Minutes

## Present:

Paul Jeffrey (Chair)  
Nick Burge (Headteacher)  
Emma Stirling (staff)  
Caroline Cassalls (staff)  
Rowie Bennett  
Lisa Cardozo  
Betty Chow  
Helen Davy  
Colin Duncan  
Lucinda Horler  
Manuela Molendini  
Lorna Morgan  
Clare Sharp

**Apologies:** Helena Lawrence, Liz Blair

## 1. Headteacher update (Nick Burge):

### School roll:

This is currently sitting at 1009 pupils. Years S1 to S4 are now full, and numbers for years S5/6 are currently fluctuating as some pupils are considering whether or not to return.

### Staffing:

The school is now fully staffed, with 4 probationary staff due to start soon. We are saying goodbye to two staff members – Caroline Bannon who is taking up a position as Deputy Head at Portobello High School and Jane Liggat who is leaving to take up a Pupil Support Leader role in East Lothian.

### P6 decant:

The P6 pupils from Trinity Primary are now settled into their temporary classroom with no problems experienced.

### Attainment

A more detailed report on attainment will be provided soon but headline figures suggest:

- **4th year pupils:** There was an increase in attainment among the 4th year pupils
- **5th year pupils:** an underperformance compared with 2022, partly explained by a range of factors including that 11% of this group left and were therefore recorded as 0% on attainment (although some of these pupils started college); 5% did not have English as their first language; 8% were unable to attend fully due to mental health issues. There were drops from last year in the percentage of 5th years attaining 3 Highers (from 47% to 43%) and in the percentage attaining 5 Highers (from 28% to 24%). Ways to support 5th year pupils going forward are being discussed within the school.
- **6th year pupils:** an increase in the percentage attaining more Highers from this year.
- TA was listed as the most improved school for the percentage of pupils attaining 3 Highers, and none of the pupils were underperforming in maths.

- **Parent support:** Mr Burge would welcome parent input to help support pupils with attainment. One suggested way of doing this would be to create a Parent Curriculum Group.

**School excursions:** some staff volunteering their time to organise and support trips outside of the school have recently experienced unpleasant comments from a small number of parents. They have also reported that trip costs for some pupils have not been paid despite deadlines having been set and communications to both parents and pupils. The Parent Council notes that we are extremely grateful to those teachers who commit their time and effort to manage and maintain extra-curricular activities for our children.

**Financing school excursions to other countries:** the school recognises that some parents will need financial support to enable their child to attend one of these trips, and letters and forms relating to this have been sent to parents who have requested financial support. Efforts are being made in a number of areas to help ease the financial burden for families (use of money in the GAP fund, the 'pay for a pal' system in ParentPay, money from the Parent Council account as well as specific fundraising events for these trips).

## 2. Parent Council account

We are required to have the account audited by a certified accountant. Note that a volunteer has been sourced and the audit will be complete in time for the AGM.

## 3. Fundraising discussion

### Planning and running fundraising events:

The group discussed a number of points:

- creating a fundraising events calendar to help with planning, including listing specific types of events and who needs to be involved (staff, parents, volunteers, pupils etc)
- Encouraging parents of children going on the trips to volunteer their help at events (communication about this would be done via the school).
- Providing feedback to parent on where any money raised is being spent, including some of the smaller spends i.e. provision of school ties. This could be done using photos/images and through social media and may help with encouraging involvement from parents.
- Involving the pupils in some of these fundraising events.
- Another point is that these fundraising events are not only about raising money but also have an important social side, allowing the school community to meet, especially helpful for new parents.

### Some ideas for events were discussed:

- **Bangholm Café:** this initiative, led by Anna Turtle, has successfully raised money for the PE Dept, but could also contribute to raising funds for the trips. It is currently staffed by a small group of volunteers who either bake items to sell or serve customers on Saturday mornings when sports matches are occurring. It would be great to have more volunteers to support this, whether parents or pupils. One idea is that pupils could do this as part of their volunteering for DofE or to gain a Saltire Award. Anna has also suggested that other

fundraising activities could be run alongside the café including arts/crafts/jewellery stalls. If more activities are available, this may encourage more people to come along on the day.

- **Social events** – haggis and tatties, wine tasting. For events with alcohol, licensing requirements would need to be discussed and planned, including have a Personal Licence Holder on site.

#### **How will the money raised for trips be spent?**

- It was pointed out that communication about how the money raised at school events will be spent has been ad hoc, and that this should be made clearer.
- There may be a need to hold specific events to fundraise for the 2 international trips and these will make it clear that the money will go towards these events. In other events, it could be stated that a certain percentage of funds raised will go towards helping with school trip costs.
- For the Barcelona trip Ms Stirling indicated that money raised could go towards additional costs for pupils (providing them with lunches and t-shirts when they are there). However, it is possible that leftover funds raised could help reduce the costs of the trip for future families. For the French trip, pupils could each be given money to spend on the trip.
- Paul will follow up on these fundraising suggestions with Helen Davy and Colin Duncan.

## **4. Format for Parent Council Meetings**

**Time of meeting:** there was general agreement that 6.30pm would be the most suitable time for meetings.

**Format:** The preferred format is face-to-face meetings in the school. However, the group will explore whether an online link can also be set up for parents unable to come to the school in person for 6.30pm. This will be trialled at the next full meeting of the Parent Council (Thur 25 Jan 2024).

## **5. Any other business**

- It is recognised that some parents are not receiving emails relating to the Parent Council meetings that have been sent out via Mailchimp system. Update: The issue has been identified and a fix is to be applied.
- It was pointed out that a specific experience or event for the current S6 pupils should be considered.

## **6. Next meetings**

The next few meetings of the Parent Council have been advertised on the Trinity Academy Families Facebook page and are also listed here for information:

Thursday 2 Nov – AGM (Note new date), Thursday 25 Jan 2024 – in school with online link,  
Wednesday 27 Mar 2024, Thursday 23 May 2024