

Trinity Academy Parent Council - minutes of online meeting – 9th September 2020

Intro:

Mike welcomed attendees and thanked Matthew Perren for helping set up Teams platform for the meeting.

Warm welcome to Mr Nick Burge, acting HT.

HT Report:

First thoughts on Trinity Academy after busy 13 days in post: large, diverse, school ; his priority at present safe and sensitive return to school for learners and staff ; roll of around 890 pupils : SIMD 20% 1-3 (more impoverished), 28% 4-7 (low-mid), 50% 8-10 (more affluent) ; pupils on free school meals 11% ; English as foreign language 17% ; no attainment data to share at present given other priorities ; dealing with inequalities remains important eg cost of school day and extra curricular activities.

Digital learning: thanked those who fed back on recent TA/TPA parent survey on the experience of digital learning, which has been collated along with feedback gathered by Mr Todd's IT audit.

Issues raised – inconsistent experience of digital learning, inequity in devices for staff plus learners.

Mr Caldwell been appointed Digital Learning Lead and already embarked on staff review of digital learning. Scot Govt funding has delivered 162 ipads to the school which can be redeployed in event of further lockdown.

Communication and Leadership: Mr Burge is reviewing how to consistently provide the right communication to staff, pupils and home. Whilst there were lots of positive achievements during lockdown also acknowledgement that communication was not as good as it could be.

Currently offering:

- all staff minimum weekly HT update with strategic and operational info (at present doing this twice weekly).
- parents/carers – all communication to go out via school App and email (twitter to be reserved for positive publicity/pics/good practice).
- website – being updated.
- Pupils – weekly meeting with captains for half hour, and has met Pupil Voice reps and awaits their proposals re Pupil Leadership.
- Introducing “5 a day” – meeting a selection of 5 learners/week to find out how they see the school through “learner lens” and hear their feedback and ideas.

Covid:

5 main strategies in place to mitigate risks of Covid in school: face coverings (communal areas, hallways and practical subjects like DT) ; one way systems ; wiping down hard surfaces ; hand hygiene ; social distancing where possible.

Masks – great uptake first thing in morning on arrival at school, however use/correct use of masks (not hooked on an ear or over chin!) wanes through school day and weaker in senior cohort S4-S6. 1 pupil is refusing to wear mask, 8 have medical exemptions. School have given out >1000 masks

since start of guidance which is not sustainable – although have managed to reduce from around 160/day to 70/day. Encouragement rather than disciplinary approach being pursued.

Question was raised whether teachers remind pupils on leaving classroom to put masks on – yes. School considering building a picture of learners who consistently do not use masks etc – letter home may be future option.

Distancing – seniors less good at this than juniors. Staggered lunch and break going very well. Now have chairs set up outside dining room to use external space when weather allows.

Cleaning – twice daily cleaning communal areas. Electrostatic fogging every 60 days.

Feedback from those Edinburgh schools that have had positive Covid cases is that Health Protection teams delivered strong support and guidance – note that it is a public lead in this situation, not education.

Q and A:

Mike thanked the 186 Trinity Academy families who responded to the PC digital survey done jointly with Trinity Primary, and thanks to Helen Duncan Chair of Trinity Primary School who set this up and collated results. Mike also thanked those who submitted questions in advance of PC meetings, with themes largely around sport/extra curricular activities, resources, exams.

1. Are there resources to provide work @ home if a child has to self isolate?

Teams will be the digital platform now and in future, whether a learner self-isolating with symptoms/awaits results/via test and trace. Cannot produce tailored digital home learning for individual pupil absences – not possible as teachers have no time allocated to produce personalised digital learning as well as staff the school on 100% timetable (also some impact of staff absence/childcare issues). However, new agreement to give each member of staff additional time (5 hours each member of staff) to create online resources that can be used across department, within staff Working Time Directive and with union approval – this has gone live. If a pupil is off for 2 weeks they will be provided with some work on Teams but not tailored home learning.

2. Will there be Face to Face Learning if a further lockdown? (noting the lack of 'live teaching' during lockdown)

Awaiting direction from City of Edinburgh. NB notes that in his former school (Kaimes) that special education drove demand for face to face digital learning – particular need for pupils with special educational needs to see a face to go with the voice.

3. Variation within Departments

Back to discussion on inconsistent learner experience during lockdown – some factors were inequity in staff devices at home, individual/home circumstances/home schooling, technical confidence. Consultation to all staff is about to launch – “What do staff need support on?” – with view to delivering training for those who need it post-Sept weekend.

4. Any plan to reschedule prizegiving?

Not clear when this will again be possible, would welcome PC suggestions, but NB own preference is not to stage yet another virtual event as so many live events are now virtual.

5. Leaver Destinations

Mike noted that Liz Blair and Morag Reid had done work on this last year, with a template questionnaire to gather stories about leavers' pathways.

ACTION: PC please email any volunteers/ideas for volunteers to participate in this piece of work – we are looking for a range of school leavers with positive destination stories to tell to answer a few simple questions

6. Music/Drama/Musical Theatres – impact on these subjects inc. accreditation

NB noted some development on doing practical work in PE, FCT, CDT – but not re music/singing as yet – Govt advice for singing is still to “avoid during return” in this period from last update 25th August. Do not yet know how this will affect accreditation - national guidance (not CEC) awaited.

7. Instrumental Tuition

Allocation of instrumental teachers has now happened and service back up and running. Some mismatch with provision which doesn't match school needs – a request has been put to council to review this to ensure the best provision possible in current circumstances.

8. Sports

Indoor PE resumes next week, outdoors provision preferred but need to be pragmatic going into autumn/winter. Note sport governing bodies guidance differs from schools which have to provide statutory PE – hence guidance must apply across an entire class/year group within a school - this is why school sports will differ from private clubs. NB does not yet know when school hockey and rugby will resume as ideally they are minimising the mixing of groups of pupils.

9. Duke of Edinburgh Award – query re how the award will continue with expeditions not being allowed

NB has met with Dave Blevins and Outdoor Learning leads for City of Edinburgh (note: Mr Burge is ex DoE leader and gold award holder himself so knows a lot re DoE). Some good news on this front – plans for delivering expeditions being developed allowable within certain distance of school on foot. 264 pupils currently enrolled at Trinity Academy, 64 due to do expedition which were cancelled pre-summer / during summer because of Covid. Mr Blevins expects to be able to share guidance on expeditions soon – he is happy to be emailed directly if queries re awards. Dave.blevins@trinity.edin.sch.uk

All involved should join the Microsoft Team for DoE “TRI All D of E Participants” using the code “Ofqcq7c” if they have not already done so as they will then receive up to date info and news on developments promptly.

10. If parent not happy for pupil to do indoors PE, what happens?

School will listen – direct any queries to Mr Burge via school office – that pupil would need to stay indoors within a “bubble”.

11. When will practical work resume in science?

Pupils not currently participating in practical work in science – NB is meeting Dr Robertson CL science to discuss this soon. There are particular issues in science relating to cleaning of equipment/workstations in practical work. School exploring possibilities like extra provision of equipment, dishwasher etc.

12. Who pays for Covid extras – council or devolved school budget?

School charges ledger number for each order of masks, sanitizer and so on. No clear definitive answer on this, expectation is that this ‘Covid cost heading’ will be paid centrally by City of Edinburgh (Cllr Campbell noted expectation that direct expenditure for Covid extras paid for by Scot Govt).

13. Resources during Covid

School has been given 160 ipads via Scot Govt funding. Also Trinity Academy is being funded to create Enhanced Support Base for 10 learners with ADS/LD who would benefit from blended approach at school – less transitions between periods, some at the base, some in class – the funding will support the appointment of a Principal Teacher plus PSA. Funding of around £80 K till summer 21 – hope is that it would continue thereafter to improve local resource.

14. 2021 SQA exams

No SQA or Govt guidance yet re changes to exam diet or adaptations to coursework. NB currently consulting with staff on timings of prelims and will feedback to us. Learning and teaching will need to react dynamically and quickly once SQA guidance released.

15. What is Mr Burge’s initial impressions of Trinity– ‘feel of the school’?

Good feeling on steps in morning – pupils who come across as positive, hopeful, ready to embrace school and life. Pupil focus groups – consistent feedback that they enjoy school, and feel safe. NB thanked parents and carers for their response to the recent brief online consultation he had posted – 440 responses (300 within an hour!).

Mike thanked Mr Burge for coming to the meeting and for his detailed update, and answering questions from parents and carers. Moved on to next items:

Retirement Gift:

Mike thanked those who had given generously for the retirement gift for Bryan Paterson. He noted the warm thanks received from Bryan for the gifts and the support of Parent Council over the years.

Fundraising:

Our methods of fundraising (events, 50:50, easyfundraising, TACT) will be curtailed by Covid, esp events and big fundraisers. Small regular donations more helpful than ever.

Current PC funds = £4822. We discussed how much to offer to school now – overall consensus was to keep some back in case of unforeseen needs in 2021.

ACTION: PC agreed to offer half of our current funds (ie around £2411) to school, with the other half kept in reserve. (Dave/Mike)

ACTION: Mike to note to school that this fund is available if there are specific items required

Welcome to S1 Event:

Mike noted the PC had organised this event for the past few years for new S1 families, with parent and pupil speakers, and members of SLT. Happy to explore provision of alternative online event.

ACTION: canvass opinion/demand for Welcome to S1 online event (Mike)

A.G.M:

Our annual PC AGM meeting will be held on Wed 7th October at 7pm.

AOB:

Is it possible to donate clothes to school at present? Anecdotally some parents have donated recently, suggest contact Jane Liggate via school office first – all donated clothes quarantined.

End of meeting.