

Braes High Pupil Council
Minutes Monday 8 March 2021 on Zoom

Present

Heather McManus (Chair), Kirsty Baird (minute taker), Amanda Anderson, Craig Duncan, Kenneth MacKinnon, Alison Mitchell, David & Gillian Surphlis, Deborah Veitch, Morag Lang, Neil Macaulay, Fiona Robertson, Ailsa Johnson, Donna Ainslie

Staff

Iain Livingstone (Head Teacher), Kevin Smith, Linda Cranston, Julie Wilkinson, Jillian Shaw

Young People

Holly, Chrissie and Logan

Apologies

Lynne Robertson, Diane Dagger

Introduction

The chair Heather McManus welcomed everyone to the meeting and minutes from previous meeting were proposed by Craig Duncan and seconded by Kenneth MacKinnon.

Vice Chair Tim Gollins is stepping back from the role and his vacancy can be filled at the next meeting. This item will be taken forward to the next meeting in May and any persons wishing to be considered can contact the chair.

Craig Petty kindly volunteered to represent the school at the appeals panel.

Matters from Previous Minutes

The digital leaders who presented at the last meeting have continued to produce video tutorials which has addressed troubleshooting for IT and Teams. Thanks was offered on behalf of the parent council for their hard work.

Update from school

Staffing

Julie Wilkinson has been successful in her appointment as Depute Head Teacher.

Christopher Barr has been appointed as a new music specialist for the braes cluster.

David Ironside will return to Braes High in April following his secondment to Denny High. Kevin Smith will return to his role as faculty head for Health and Wellbeing.

Scottish Government Insight Data

The data has been released which provides information on performance of young people, previously this was year group data, however this also includes outcomes for departure. Braes performing well above normal expectations and statistical information and school wishes for continuous improvement of our young people. We have also performed well in respect to additional support.

The school is working with Kit Gilbert, attainment advisor as there is likely to be an HMIE inspection at some point in the future.

Overseas Trips

Italy trip - Parents have all been refunded.

Madrid trip - Council advises not to cancel at present and there is still ongoing work in relation to refund. Awaiting Scottish Government confirmation in respect to next steps.

Equalities

The group carried out work in relation to LGBT awareness month as per the SWAY presentation. They have recognised International Women's Day today and the last week of this term there will be a celebration of Autism Awareness Week as well as a non-uniform day on the last day of term

SQA Update – Kevin Smith

A message of reassurance was provided that all young people will be well taught, well versed and ready for upcoming assessments and they will be prepared to be able to demonstrate all learning and attainment. Prior to assessments there will be full course coverage and consolidation of learning. It will be a busy period but want to ensure you people are not overburdened. The assessments will be spread out and there will be communication of all provisional grades in advance to ensure a no surprises approach.

Three senior pupils Holly, Logan and Chrissie attended the meeting and provided the group with their personal experiences of remote learning. This was welcomed by the groups and showed how the young people and staff have risen to the challenge and created a positive learning experience within the Braes community.

Communication went out today detailing the assessment window from 19 April to 4 June 2021. There will be a limited number of assessments prior to Easter but this will be mainly in Science. The full assessment calendar will be released 2 weeks today (22 March). There will be focus groups, supported study and easter school to assist pupils in demonstrating attainment.

David Surphlis asked if practical work already being undertaken is included in this evidence. In essence this will form part of the evidence but the calendar of assessments coming up is mainly for theory work.

Kenneth MacKinnon informed the group there is a PFS webinar on 25 March at 1945 covering SQA assessments. Mr Livingstone detailed he would circulate this information. There is also links to other webinars already conducted and the PFS You Tube channel for useful information.

Plan for return of pupils

The first minister announced that between 15 March and easter holidays (1 April) all pupils will spend some time in school, with priority being given to senior pupils. A positive opportunity to begin working again with pupils face to face.

The model will involve each year group having certain days to come into school with four days allocated to S4, four days allocated to S5-6, three days allocated to S1-2 and three days allocated to S3. 2m social distancing and masks will be required and this means smaller class numbers and more teachers required to cover lessons. There will require to be a blended approach and while the timetable will be broadly followed a teacher may not always be available to those working remotely on particular periods as there teacher may be involved in face to face teaching with a different year group within the school.

There will be an extensive reference document compiled and also a shorter summary note and pupil Q and A document. Hopefully communication will go out tomorrow but awaiting a broader local authority announcement in the first instance.

Craig Duncan asked if there would be a diluted timetable similar to other local authorities. Mr Mackinnon asked if the children would be in consecutive days or split across the weeks. Mr Livingstone reiterated that the style of remote learning will change as teachers will not be available 100% of time due to face to face teaching commitments however the will support remote learning by teaching a lesson where possible, being present for questions or tasking independent learning of young people to do at home on the days they are not in school. It will be a blended model rather than the current remote model. The year groups will be split across the 3 weeks rather than consecutive days.

Jillian Shaw reiterated that the days of attendance have been chosen to provide the young people with a greater spread of face to face learning in as many subjects as possible. Mr Livingstone reiterated the focus is on welcoming the pupils back into a happy environment where they can focus on directed study and return to seeing friends and regaining a social experience.

Support for Well Being – Julie Wilkinson

The team have been concentrating on a high level of health and wellbeing support for young people and staff. Young people are still seeing PSE and engaging in core skills, attendance tracking is being carried out and contact made with families and young people for support, confidential listening service ongoing, the pastoral team are available and course choices and parents evenings have been continuing. The transition group, 1 2 1s, family learning programme and digital learners have been continuing. Ian Bleakley the new school based officer is in post and will be in the school over the next few weeks getting an opportunity to know the young people. The peer support and mentoring scheme is successful and will continue once young people return to school.

Staff wellbeing is being focussed upon and all senior management team have an open door policy. Staff CPD events have been well attended.

School Improvement Plan

The areas of priority will be circulated to parents and carers to comment upon and the staff welcome additional items being added for consideration. Deborah Veitch asked when this would be circulated and it will be in the next couple of weeks.

AOCB

Donna Ainslie asked if lateral flow testing kits can be picked up any day to allow for testing 2 days per week to begin. There was an announcement today that S1-S3 pupils will also undertake this after easter, however Mr Livingstone said this has still to be ratified as it is not in the reopening of schools guidance thus far.

Wendy Mcpherson treasurer made mention of Wallacestone Primary receiving a grant however Braes High did not and informed the group she would progress this and bring the outcome back to the group.

The chair thanked the staff for all their hard work during these unprecedented times.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 5 May 2021.