**McLaren Parent Council meeting**

6pm. 30th Sept 2024. McLaren High School.

In attendance in person - Hannah Sanderson (Chair), David Donaldson (Vice) Megan Ross, Moira Russell, Jamie Stoddart, Barclay Milne,

School Staff in attendance – M Flemming, P Heel, M MacMillan, R Underwood, S Dunn

In attendance online – Stpehen Bell, Pauline East, Lara Rawson, Lisa Taylor, Erica MacKenzie, Abbey Arkotxa, Claire Civil, Karen Freeman

Hannah Sanderson welcomed all parties to the meeting.

1. **Action on mobile phones.**

LINK TO PRESENTATION
https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1q8zjgh5CxTPIbYNmFnJo3s7BqzqxFzof/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=106562540521778654613&rtpof=true&sd=true

The meeting started with a presentation from teachers (Underwood & Dunn) about the impact of mobile phones on young people – presenting findings from research into the consequences for learning, sleep disruption, cyber bullying and the effects on academic performance. Data was presented from a survey of pupils, highlighting the extent of phone usage (e.g., 10% of pupils over 6hrs a day; 54% between 2 and 5 hrs a day) and pupils' attitudes to phones. The presentation also covered details of discussions between teachers about the effects of phones on learning, and experiences from other schools about ways of dealing with phone use.

Discussion focused on the ambition to become a 'phone free school' – and what this would mean in practice. Members of the PC expressed a range of views both for and against the different approaches, ranging from banning phones within the school building, to installing lockers for phones to be dropped off at the start of the day.

*ACTION: After extensive discussion it was agreed that the management team would pursue the ambition of becoming 'phone free' and would return to the PC and present concrete options for implementation.*

*ACTION: It was agreed that the presentations would be circulated to parents, and that Mr Fleming would continue to share information from the research and surveys, to better inform parents about the reality and consequences of phone usage (e.g. through the weekly email round up).*

2. **Performance Insight – Exam outcomes**

LINK TO PRESENTATION
https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1O5VQVVFEhCovc0e3P1Pe6UpwbCrifx38m0aw0bxtix0/edit?usp=sharing

Mr McMillan presented an overview of the latest data on School exam outcomes, based on the last years Nat 5, Higher and Advanced higher qualifications. The presentation outlines how data was calculated (based on tariff points that allow different types of qualification outcomes to be combined) and how comparisons are made (e.g., from year to year, and compared to Stirling average and national average, as well as against a virtual national benchmark that is scaled to match pupils at McLaren). The general outcomes suggest that the school is performing well, including against the baseline comparator. Mr McMillan detailed areas for improvement, for example highlighting relatively poor performance in the lowest performing pupil groups, and relatively good performance in the highest performing group. Emphasis was placed on the variability in cohorts from year to year – but stressing that the results are generally positive and suggest that McLaren is performing well. Discussion focused on how SQA data compiled and used, with stress put on the School's use of the data to plan activities going forward – to address areas of weakness and ensure the School continues support all students in achieving the best outcomes possible for them.

*ACTION: The presentation is to be shared with parents; Mr Fleming to highlight key outcomes in communication with parents.*

**3. Issues of Concern from Parents**

Hannah raised a number of issues based on correspondence from parents:

a) Study leave during prelims – when will this be, how will it work this year? Mr Fleming clarified that the exam diet will be extended this year and that discussions about study leave are still being made – but the outcomes will be communicated with staff before the Oct break. M
*ACTION: McMillan to communicate with pupils and parents before Oct break.*

b) Work experience for 2024 – when will this occur, how will it work this year? Mr Fleming clarified that this would move to May/June 2025 – this change in the timing will be communicated to pupils in due course – and is motivated by concerns over timetabling and the difficulty experienced in obtaining work experience when more pupils are under 16 that were experienced when the work experience was done earlier in the academic year.
*ACTION: Mr Fleming to communicate the new system to pupils and parents.*

c) Friday email communication – can parents have an easy to digest summary of key dates, or an executive summary, as well as the long form message that is currently sent round. Discussion focused on how valuable parents find the weekly emails and how important the communication is. It was suggested that a summary calendar with key event dates would be useful for parents to get an 'at a glance' overview of upcoming deadlines and dates. Mr Fleming agreed to pursue this as an addition to the existing communication.
*ACTION: Mr Fleming to develop a new short form/summary highlights addition.*

d) Letter of Thanks from Mrs Heel to the Parent Council for the effort in helping with the Summer Fair £1002.60 was raised

e) Fizzy drinks – parents concerned that a change to catering in the school has re-introduced expensive fizzy drinks. Mr Fleming explained this was a consequence of change to reduce plastics but was not sure if alternatives were possible.
*ACTION: Mr Fleming to investigate and report back to the PC.*

f) Lack of proper 6th year common room – parents and pupils have raised concerns about the lack of a proper common room area. The current area is in an open space – subject to complaints from adjacent teaching space about noise, and open to younger pupils interfering with the space. 6th year pupils would like a separate space and feel that they are being punished for bad behaviour by previous 6th year cohorts. Mr Fleming explained that this was not possible due to constraints on available space. It was agreed that there is a need to communicate with the 6th year pupils and parents about why there is no better space and to explain why the pupils should not feel that they are being punished. Discussion included the possibility of investigating alternative options (such as 'pods' within the grounds) that would avoid concerns about space within the main building.
*ACTION: Mr Fleming/Mr McMillan to investigate alternative options and communicate around this issue with pupils and parents.*

**4. Parent Council AGM and official admin**

Minutes of the Parent Council meeting in May 2024 and the Parent Council AGM Sept 2023 were approved and seconded by David Donaldson and Hannah Sanderson.

Hannah invited parents to join the Committee: the following posts were agreed:
Collette Ashworth volunteered to take on the role of Secretary (not present; communicated via email)
Pauline East agreed to taken no the role of Treasurer with guidance and training from previous Treasurer Collette Ashworth
David Donaldson agreed to continue as Vice Chair
Hannah Sanderson agreed to continue as Chair

Treasures report:
Opening balance in Aug: £186.52
Income (vast majority from Stirling Council contributions with £1.77 of interest) : £531.47
Outgoings (solely Secretary payments) : £140.00
Closing balance: £577.99

**5. On-going action around school toilets**

Mr Fleming outlined changes that have occurred in the School around the use of school toilets, following concerns raised by the PC last year. A new approach of increasing staff monitoring around the toilet areas and keeping the outer doors of the toilet blocks open has proved to be effective at reducing vandalism, decreasing vaping, and making the toilets more accessible to the wider pupil body. Mr Fleming explained the transformational nature of this simple change – and highlighted effort to investigate approaches at other schools, and to work with the council to upgrade the existing facilities. The PC agreed to support the school in this change – either by providing support, consultation or working with the PTA around fund raising (a 'spend a penny' campaign was mooted).
*ACTION: Mr Fleming to pursue further changes and return to PC with updates over the year, and to work with PC as required.*

**6. Primary school relocation and development**

Mr Fleming updated the PC about the lack of progress regarding the new 'campus' development; the planning proposal has still not been put before the national park, and so is no further forward at present. Building is unlikely to occur during this academic year. Progress updates will be provided when they become available.

**7. Katrine House development**

Mr Fleming shared about the ongoing development of the facilities required to support pupils with additional needs; work has been delayed but pupil and teacher numbers have increased, reflecting the increasing importance of this aspect of the school. Incorporation of present staff offices and redeployment of other spaces will go ahead.

**8. Pipe Band – standing item**

It was noted that there is a range of activity going on with the pipe band – including pupils playing at local remembrance service and during a visit from Ukrainian school.

**9. Dates of future meetings**

Future PC meeting dates were agreed as: 25$^{th}$ November 2024; 27$^{th}$ January 2025; 31$^{st}$ March 2025; 28$^{th}$ April 2025. Future meetings will continue to be both in person and online. Mr Fleming suggested that additional meetings may be necessary to support ongoing work around mobile phones – a separate working group could be arranged.
*ACTION: Mr Fleming to organise in association with Chair.*

**10. Thanks to all concerned and close of meeting**

Hannah thanked teachers and parents for their time and input.