

Note of meeting

Consultative Committee with Parents

6.00pm, Thursday 25 February 2021

Virtual Meeting - via Microsoft Teams

Present (As taken by Roll call at the start of the Microsoft Teams Meeting)

Elected Members

Councillors Ian Perry (Convener), Councillor Burgess, Councillor Laidlaw and Councillor Louise Young.

Parent Representatives

Alex Ramage (Education Children & Families Committee Parent Representative)

Alison Nicholson

Josephine Beech- Brant

Billy Samuel

Gail Morris

Karen Galloway

Lee Picken

Sarah Scott

Natasha Lee-Walsh

External Officer Representatives

Damien Hayes (National Parent Forum of Scotland)

Council Officers in Attendance

Julien Kramer – Interim Executive Director of Education and Children's Services

Arran Findlay, Senior Education Officer

Jack Simpson, Senior Education Officer

Anna Gray, Senior Education Officer

Lynn Patterson, Senior Education Manger for Early Years and Primary

Lorna French, Acting Head of Schools and Lifelong Learning

Natalie Le Couteur, Committee Services
Gillian Kennedy, Service and Policy Adviser to the Convener and Vice-Convener of Education, Children and Families
Jude Salmon, Active Schools Manager
Mel Coutts, Strategic Lead for Sport & Physical Activity

1. Note of Meeting

Decision

To approve the note of Meeting of the Consultative Committee with Parents (CCWP) of 25 February 2021.

2. Council Update

An introduction was made to Julien Kramer who was the Interim Executive Director of Education and Children's Services. The Council planned to appoint an Executive Director of Education and Children's Services in due course.

The Council was considering how it may resume a number of services following closure due to the Coronavirus pandemic, however priority was awarded to keeping schools open. The business plan would be presented to the Education, & Families with three main themes which were fairer, healthier and greener. Closure of the poverty related attainment gap was a focus, alongside the wellbeing and equalities work and sustainability which would be developed by building on previous successes where pupils had demonstrated engagement such as with green flag awards. The 1140 rollout of funding for early years and childcare would happen in Edinburgh from August 2021. The Council was delighted to deliver this. The flexibility model would be reconsidered following Covid. There were additional staff being employed, and delivery would take place via forest schools, through a new build estate alongside with partner providers. The value of partnership working meant that the Council had recently stepped in to support a partner provider with accommodation where there had been unforeseen events which demonstrated the value of partnership working. There was a plan to survey parents to assess the flexibility and opportunities on offer with 1140 in due course.

Regarding alternative certification model, which was in place in lieu of examinations due to Covid, the authority had been commended on the lead teacher approach taken by the City of Edinburgh Council and there had been a suggestion for further development of this across the four neighbouring local authorities. There would be sampling underway to ensure that the Council was certain the processes it had set out were robust, standards were being met and subject to continuous moderation. It was noted that the appeals process would be communicated to parents. The Interim Executive of highlighted the matter of children who had fallen behind during the pandemic and recognised that the authority had a duty of care toward these students and that the statistics on this matter would be a focus for a subsequent Consultative Committee with

Parents (CCWP). Senior phase attainment data had also showed a slowing of attainment, and remedial action would be ongoing.

The matter of examinations due to the alternative certification model was raised alongside stress which may be created for pupils and staff and how these would remain ongoing concerns.

Decision

- 1) To agree that the data on children most vulnerable formed the basis for discussions at a subsequent meeting of the CCWP.
- 2) To agree to gather pupils' views on their experiences of assessments in lieu of exams and the pandemic.
- 3) To agree to note the concerns which parents had raised through locality meetings such as the SQA appeals process for this year not being concluded, the variation of assessment arrangements between schools, Covid related absences in schools and the variation between pupil learning as a result of this, exam security issues, the issue of pupil mental health, the extraordinary pressure on schools and pupils and the matter of planning for the 2021/22 school year.
- 4) To note that the Council was keen that parents fed back concerns on an ongoing basis.
- 5) To otherwise note the Council update.

4. Covid Recovery Funding

It was highlighted that the City of Edinburgh Council had a £5.9 M Covid recovery fund primarily for staffing but could also be used for administrative staff. Plans for how the authority would use this funding would be presented following feedback from Headteachers. £850,000 had been set aside for summer activities which was focussed on health and wellbeing. The criteria for this was to build upon existing successful activity which was already underway.

Decision

To note the update.

5. Update on the Parent Council Chair Survey

The parental involvement strategy group had commenced in October 2018. Part of this framework was the locality groups which fed into the CCWP and then the CCWP fed into the Education Children and Families Committee. It was noted that attendance at localities was low, and that in turn parents across the city were not being well represented. Locality Group minutes were analysed to understand trends and to promote the survey which was underway. The survey was seeking to capture Parent Councils' Chair's awareness of forums, the effectiveness of these forums and their hopes for future engagement. The survey results would be reviewed in June 2021 and actions for the August 2021 onward session would be taken forward. David Maguire

from the City of Edinburgh Council was thanked for his support in getting the survey live.

Decision

To note the update.

6. Extracurricular Activities, Active Schools and Parent Volunteers

Active Schools had recommenced, and volunteers were able to assist again. The matter of changes in delivery model as free of charge and how this may then lead to a different level of uptake was considered. It was explained that there would no longer be a charge for activities and recruitment of volunteers and paid coaches would continue however Sport Scotland, as the main funder of Active Schools, had requested that pupils were no longer required to pay for activities. The activity would be targeted in areas of most disadvantage, in keeping with Council priorities. Concerns were expressed about the pressure being placed on Active Schools as a result of the payment cessation. It was acknowledged that capacity would be monitored on an ongoing basis. It was highlighted that the process which sat behind getting volunteers ready to run clubs with required PVG checks was lengthy. Communications had been issued to the schools however there was a need to ensure comprehensive communications coverage for the revised arrangements for active schools. The volunteer network required to support the new arrangements would be led by the Active Schools' Coordinators in a structured manner in keeping with what each school required.

Decision

- 1) To agree to monitor on an ongoing basis the take up of Active Schools.
- 2) To check whether all schools had received the communication from active schools.
- 3) To note the update.

7. School Lets from August

School lets in primary schools were planned to recommence in August 2021.

The lets team would be working with the Council's facilities management. Parent Councils would be advised of the arrangements when known.

Decision

To agree that Arran Findlay would ask the school lets teams to write to parents and Parent Councils regarding school lets from August when they were ready to take school let bookings.

8. Special Schools and Localities Update

Holiday provisions for children with disabilities would be extended. There was a focus on transitions for children was a long-term strategic project. A new school would be opening in August 2021. Thanks were placed on record for students being supported by staff during the pandemic. Playscheme provision was welcomed by parents alongside cross party Councillor support for Playscheme, and the revision of help to provide more support. The NHS support matter in a special schools report was welcomed given the significant role NHS practitioners played in special schools settings.

It was discussed the need to create a parents group for children who attended mainstream school settings, but had additional support for learning needs. It was discussed creating a new group for these parents.

Decision

To agree to form a new locality group for parents of the cohort of children with special needs, who went to mainstream schools and to bring back a report on the remit and representation on the group when formed.

9. Locality Update

The following matters were raised:

- School Crossing Guides at Bruntsfield.
- Planters as part of Spaces for People initiative- lorry had to mount the pavement to deliver school meals.
- School term dates.
- Gaelic School, the statutory process to begin, and the transfer arrangements to amalgamate pupils leaving the primary school and the timing imperative to conclude this within five years to ensure roll at James Gillespies did not further exceed capacity.
- The intention for a further Gaelic School to feed into a new Gaelic High School.

Decision

To note the update.

10. National Parent Forum

Naomi Barton and Damien Hayes were the National Parent Forum (NPF) representatives for Edinburgh. Weekly feedback was issued to the Scottish Government. A Parent Council Chairs and Chair of the NPF meeting had taken place in May 2021. The discussions which took place involved:

- Coronavirus
- Mental Health
- Alternative curriculum model, escalating the matter to the Scottish Qualifications Authority

Future events by the NPF would be shared, via email, but if there were preferred method of communication CCWP attendees should make Damian Hayes aware.

Decision

To agree that CCWP participants would advise Damien Hayes of preferred communication methods for NPF information.

11. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 19 August 2021 at 6pm via Microsoft Teams.