

Trinity Primary School Parent Council Meeting

Tuesday October 10, 2017

1. Introductions and Apologies

HD welcomed the group. Attendees were:

Helen Duncan (Chair), Angelica Lorenzo, Karen Stevenson, Catriona Regan, Jacqueline Scott, Derek Masson (City of Edinburgh Council), Mandy Crosbie (City of Edinburgh Council), Councillor Jim Campbell, Councillor George Gordon, Kev Head, Ben Powell, Jacob Stojek, Clare Sharp, Angela Davidson.

Apologies were received from Kate Nelson, Kate Goodall, Christiaan Hofstra, Colette Woods, Siobhan Tyrrell and Councillor Eleanor Bird.

2. Parentpay

This has been discussed at the previous two meetings.

A meeting has since been held to discuss the practicalities of using this system. DM said it had been beneficial to meet with the school and DM and MC updated the group on the key issues raised at the meeting. These included:

Reports from the Parentpay system

The school lunches reports, for example, were felt to be very long.

Feedback will be provided to the school office, as well as an early release of the Parentpay system for them to look at.

P1 children start date at the school

Because details for new P1 pupils have not been loaded into the Parentpay system by the time they start school, this has meant that parents are unable to order school lunches for them for the first two weeks of term. Parentpay are currently looking into options to address this for next time round. One option discussed in this meeting is to provide a letter to the new P1 parents in advance of the new school term, for example, when parents attend for the induction day in June. Parents who can confirm their children will attend the school can be asked to register on Parentpay in advance of the new term, and will be able to order school lunches before their child starts P1. JS will speak with school office about setting this up for next year.

Information for parents

Information explaining the system, including transaction fees is being prepared. An electronic copy of the material will be sent to the Parent Council and school for our comments on the content. Any feedback from parents will be useful.

Information to parents via Parentpay

It was felt that information needs to be labelled clearly so that parents know it is coming from the school. Subject headings, special templates and school logos would facilitate this. MC was willing to help office staff with setting this up.

Minimum £2 payment

Currently there is a minimum transaction amount of £2 in Parentpay. This means that for costs which are under this amount, a parent will nevertheless need to round up to £2, with the surplus money remaining in their account. This was viewed as impacting unfairly on parents who may have financial difficulties. MC and DM will feed back this issue to Parentpay, although it is set as part of the contract with the Council.

'Pay what you can'

It was noted that many parents in TPS have been very happy to pay more than the required amount for school trips and activities, on the knowledge that any surplus money will be used to help other families in the school to participate. It is unclear how parents can continue to do this via the Parentpay system, and it was agreed that a TPS parent briefing is needed to explain how parents can contribute additional money if they wish. This process would need to be checked by the office in advance of briefing parents.

Parentpay fees

There is a transaction fee taken by Parentpay amounting to 1.53%. BP pointed out that taken cumulatively (for example the total amount for the Ben More school trip), this could amount to a substantial amount of money which would be lost to the school. JC pointed out that all the online payment systems incur a fee. However, the issue is that many parents are unaware that a fee will be deducted from any payment they make, rather than all their money going to the school.

How to deal with this issue? Cash option –paying cash directly to school would bypass the fee. However, this needs to be weighed up with the administrative costs to the school office in dealing with cash payments. JS said that although initial reports were that the administrative burden had not eased due to Parentpay, that this was getting better and is expected to improve with time.

A maximum fee was suggested for larger items such as school trips.

GG stated that they need to investigate this matter more to identify the best way forward and cheapest tariff and will speak with colleagues about this.

Other points on Parentpay

Noted that a phone app is currently being developed.

Almost all (97%) of parents at TPS are registered on Parentpay

3. Minutes of meeting held 30th August

Minutes were approved (thanks to Ben for these).

Brief update from JS re the item on P4 music lessons: Given the confusion among pupils and parents about the selection process, there is a need to consider how this is administered in future years. A letter about this was to be sent to parents of children who were not selected. Unclear whether this has been sent yet; JS to check on its status.

4. Correspondence

HD summarised the correspondence she had received:

1. Correspondence from NSPCC and O2 in relation to running internet safety briefings for parents. There may be some interest in this but it was noted that the format is just for 20 people. HD has emailed to check if can cater for larger groups/run multiple events/come to Scotland. Also suggested times from the organisations were Friday mornings or afternoons during school time. JS pointed out that evenings were better for parents, and this possibility should be checked. She also mentioned that Gillian Chalmers in TPS would be willing to run a similar session for parents. HD will discuss further with JS.
2. Request from parental engagement on August 15th to share the email addresses of Chairs with senior colleagues. HD replied asking questions about how the data has been used and have agreed to this as a way to support the Locality Group process
3. Next Locality Group Meeting is in November. Nobody could attend the meeting in September but despite repeated requests for minutes nothing has been forthcoming. GG mentioned that the issue with communication with PCs is something that is currently being discussed. Angela/Colette to go to the next one.
4. Meeting between Angela and Helen from the PC and Liz Blair, Steve Hodgson and Andrew McMillan from TA PC.

Update on their Feasibility Study

Outcomes: Support for a campus approach – same community, same families, same facilities. Have spoken to Bryan Patterson and are keen to organise a joint meeting. Think we might propose invitation from both HTs and PC Chairs to the Rising Rolls/Feasibility Study Managers and Local Councillors.

Purpose: to emphasise the importance of a campus approach.

TA is 125 years old next year – presumably so is the Primary School “department”. Would we be interested in a joint celebration? JS will liaise with staff at TA. General interest in a joint event/collaboration/sharing of fundraising expertise at the Primary school – HD has passed info on to Laura Lewis (PSA Chair).

5. Email from the City of Edinburgh Council with a briefing about the Named Person legislation. Core messages for current practice:
 - The Named Person is the single point of contact in relation to the child, and has responsibility for the provision or coordination of services to that child.
 - The City Council and the NHS can continue to nominate a Named Person.
 - Advice, information, support or help offered to the Named Person is “voluntary” in nature and does not have to be acted upon.
 - Permission must be given for the sharing of information about the child, either by the child itself (over the age of 12) or by the child’s parents.
 - Child protection cases that require an urgent response are treated differently but information shared must still comply with Data Protection legislation.
 - Parental or child consent or refusal must be recorded.

Legislation to provide a named person for every child is currently being redrafted and anticipated to pass through Parliament in 2018.

It was unclear what the PC was supposed to do with this information. Given the complexity of it, and the fact that it is anticipated to change again, it was decided to keep it on file for now.

6. Parent Helen Court works for an optician and is doing a lot of work related to shortsightedness with children and its relationship to a lack of outdoor play. Offered to send a briefing to school/parents/staff.
7. School holiday survey: HD was sent information about a survey asking about school holiday arrangements. The questions in this were viewed as being unclear and badly designed. HD has asked whether some additional questions can be added to clarify the responses before it is circulated.

5. Head Teacher's Report

The HT report (attached) was delivered.

JS asked for PC members to be involved in the interview panel for Natalie Mack's post. For interested members, there is a 1.5hr training session. HD will send to any interested members.

6. Rising Rolls Update and Next Steps

HD reported on the parent consultation which took place at the school during the PSA cinema night in September. The main issue discussed relates to the loss of outdoor playground space resulting from the additional buildings which are planned. One suggestion from parents to address this was to extend the school playground slightly into Victoria Park, although it was noted that this is not part of the formal consultation.

JC pointed out that if this suggestion is pursued then there would need to be another consultation as it involves the use of a public space. GG added that some discussions were already taking place at the council in relation to the 'park' option, but that there would be many different interest groups involved.

7. Scottish Government Consultations

HD had received communications about two surveys aiming to collect parent views.

- National Improvement Survey for Parents
- Fair Funding Consultation

Initial feedback from some members of the PC was that neither of these survey instruments were very clear and would be challenging for most parents to complete. The timescale for the Fair Funding consultation is very tight (due on Friday 13th Oct).

JS reiterated that these consultations need to be clear for parents and that sufficient time is allowed.

It was decided that the PC would prepare a response that outlined the difficulties in completing the consultation paper. HD will circulate a draft for comment. The National Improvement Survey cannot be completed at a PC level. It will be circulated to parents and carers after the October break.

8. Lunchtimes

This had been raised at the previous meeting, where concerns were made about the P4 pupils having insufficient time to eat their lunch. Feedback from the pupils has since been obtained and it appears that this is no longer an issue. Feedback from some pupils suggested that part of the problem was the length of time it was taking to escort pupils to the dining hall, but this appears to have been addressed now.

9. Road safety

Given the recent road-crossing incident involving a TPS pupil the other week, road safety around the school is currently being discussed. It was felt that as school rolls get bigger it will become an increasingly important issue. Issues for Newhaven Road and Craighall Road were discussed:

Newhaven Road – parking on the zig-zags is still a problem

Craighall Road - some concern that this is still a 30MPH zone. JC pointed out that a traffic count on Craighall Road had taken place previously and it did not meet the criteria for a puffin crossing. A review of the 30mph roads is unlikely until a year after the 20mph scheme has been rolled out across the city (still ongoing).

GG and JC mentioned that it may be possible for community police officers to come to talk to the pupils about road safety and their presence as well as parking attendants may act to deter people parking on the zig-zags. JC to follow up with the community police officers.

JC also noted that parking attendants rotate around schools in the area and he will see when they are next due to come to TPS.

10. Communications

HD mentioned that a new Comms team has been formed for the Parent Council. Catriona Regan and Karen Stevenson would be assisting HD on comms. Developments will include a new PC dedicated email address; a revamped website and a possible newsletter.

11. Accounts

CH was away so not discussed.

12. Meeting dates 2017/18

The next meeting dates are:

Tuesday 5 December

Tuesday 23 January

Tuesday 13 March

Tuesday 22 May