

Towerbank Parent Group Minutes

Zoom meeting 12/5/20

31 participants

TPG intro:

Joanne thanked everyone for joining the meeting. The TPG will keep communications going.

Mr Friend's update:

- Lots of people are in difficult circumstances and most are not qualified teachers, we are all learning as we go along.
- School is trying to make sure that everything is as equitable as possible in terms of home learning. Some families have very limited or no devices.
- Once it was known schools were to close Microsoft teams was rolled out across whole school. The school managed to get all pupils accounts and have trained staff on how to use it.
- The school has acted on feedback and
 - introduced more worksheets; issue work on a Friday; introduced more interaction - the children can "chat" to their teacher twice a week; introduced private submission of work that only the teacher can see.
- There is a higher percentage of interaction with teams higher up the school.
- The school are looking at trying to make contact with people not able to download on website for access teams.

Mr Friend asked for questions:

- Some children have sight problems, will there be more work offline?
- Would more visual contact with teachers be possible? AF said we've agonised over this. School can't do live. Could be way around this, staff could possibly make films.
 - P5 teachers have recorded stories and they have liked that.
 - One person said not all kids can access - is that fair?
- If kids don't have access to tech, how do they get the home learning? AF said the online survey came out and there were 180 families who replied but obviously not everyone can access tech. Mrs Chad said referrals have been made and some families have been given computers.
- The school needs to identify the families unable to access work.
- AF will keep doing news letter and Friday assemblies.

- Pupils and staff have been involved in Hub schools. AF had 51 children the other day, it is a very different environment with 6 kids from P1 – S1 per class.
- School has been calling individual families – checking in with some key children and delivering food parcels.
- School is having lots of meetings and people are working hard.

Some things coming up:

- conclude reporting cycle – updating learning journals.
- Schools might return in August. School will have a recovery plan for next year with a focus on well being and how we deal with the big break.
- new school reorganisation coming. Very different system – we will use new Council procedure just issued. A range of criteria will be used to determine class make up. Small decrease in pupil numbers 20/21. One less class in school.

More Questions:

- Has there been any thinking around transitioning to new class, new teacher. AF said there are lots of unknowns about school in August, it won't look "normal". The health and well being of kids is most important part of how we transition into something like school.
- Joanne asked if P7 visits to Portobello High School would happen? AF said we can't make visits at moment, kids will be able to put 3 questions to HS and most popular ones will get a reply.
- what if P1s can't go back in August? School hopes to welcome kids in August. It will be different.

TPG update:

- Fundraising – cant do summer fair etc, and fundraising will be down. We won't have same expenses (trips). Looking at ways we can raise some funds – virtual bake sale.
- Need help fitting playground instruments in memory of Sol Barry Douglas.
- People can donate to TPG by Just Giving.

Final questions:

- would be possible to have additional material for her children that are completing all the school home learning?
 - Discussion around home learning and school try to filter the vast amount of material available online.

Thanks to everyone for attending.