

DRAFT COPY @ 25/3/21

MINUTES

Towerbank Parent Group

Thursday 25th March 2021

In attendance

Joanne Macaulay (Chair), Polly Clement (vice Chair) Lucy Anderson (Secretary), Alasdair Friend (Head Teacher), plus 36 parents.

Welcome and Chairs report

Jo welcomed everyone and hopes this is the last zoom meeting. Great to see the children back at school and the staff are doing a great job.

Tonight's theme is recruitment:

Fundraising:

As we've not been doing the usual fundraising, but we do need to crank up the fundraising for next year. This is to pay for things like the theatre trip, book festival etc ... so we need to get a fundraising lead or a team consisting of a couple of people. Andrea Barlow had the idea of a treasure hunt around Portobello to raise funds.

In the past we have a bank of people we can rely on, but some have moved on. Need to reinstate our activities when we can.

New Committee:

Joanne, Polly and Lucy will be standing down at the end of the school year so a new TBPG committee is needed to replace them. It's quite urgent so we need people come forward to start organising. PLEASE volunteer.

Head teacher update

The return to school:

Some children have benefited from being in small bubble classes. Maybe 4 or 5 children in a class. Some have benefitted from individual approach. There are some positives. Staff have had a crash course in how to use teams, some creative ways of using online and film.

Music instructors will deliver online classes in instruments.

There is a plan for all schools – a road map. Looking at what schools will be enabled to do as we move into different levels. As we go back into levels, different things will open.

ITC resources:

Towerbank has had a massive injection of tech – we have 201 iPad which are now out in classes.

There is some amazing work being done – P5s are making animations about Mary Queen of Scots

The council took decision to have one to one tech roll out p6 on. Every child p6 – s6 will receive a one to one device. All children in p6 and 7 from August will have own I pad. – 7s will take on to high school.

Class organisation 2021/22:

Class organisation for next year. Nothing in concrete. Numbers are fluid. Rolls are falling across Edinburgh – less children. That has been continuing. School has been getting smaller year on year. I think we are likely to have 20 classes. Currently the P7 cohort is in high 90s. when those children leave – we need to replace them with the same number of children. Doesn't look like same number of children coming in. schools are funded by role size. Budgets will lessen if less children. Makes job for August quite complicated.

Another thing – families have moved in area during lockdown. Reduced roll means that we won't have a composite p3/4. I think that will mean we need to re organise current 3 and 4 classes. Highly likely we will have straight 4 and 5 classes. Probably a composite p1/2 class depending on numbers.

It won't be possible for teachers to take on same classes as this year.

The budget I am working with is reduced. Need to factor in the expectation that schools give a percentage of their budget to pay for the one to one I pad role out. Around £15000. Ultimately the role out is a positive.

Looking forward:

Summer term is a short term – lot to achieve in that 10 weeks. We will be reporting to you – a summary progress report. Will come out by end of May followed up by an individual telephone call – give teachers a chance to expand on the report you will have received.

Good news – the long-awaited tepee is going to be installed as a trial for the week we return in summer term. Then will evaluate if we think it is a good idea.

P7's – all residentials have been cancelled. Council have put on epic days and all p7 children are offered an epic day – it lasts until 9 pm including a campfire. We are in the first week of this happening – we were assigned the Friday 21st May – there is great excitement in P7 for that opportunity.

We had damage at the weekend in wildlife garden. Utterly overwhelmed by assistance. We had a well-loved bug hotel – we lost fencing – turned into fire on beach. People have been incredibly generous in offering support and we could probably have the whole playground filled with pallets. but it will be replaced at

the weekend. We have had the offer of donations and I am going to consult with kids and staff about what children think would enhance the garden. It is a story of hope out of something not great. Lots of people want to help

Catherine Collier report:

Nursery to p1 transition is city wide – 6 week programme based on Julia Donaldson's Smeds and the Smoos and we will buy a copy of book for all nursery children

Questions to Mr Friend on zoom:

how about a wildlife camera?

Nice idea – although could be pinched

Any covid cases in school – will be informed if not our kids' class?

AF: We have been remarkably unaffected. Not had to have whole classes sent home.

Are next years p7s classes being changed?

I had a small discussion with P6 kids to see about testing water to see what they thought of changing classes. Current p7s were re organised last year and have a lot of positive stories and they think it has been a success for them. Less likely this year and would need to have a high level of support.

What is the time scale?

Fairly soon. Stacey Chad said she plans to put a survey together for p7s to see how they feel now compared to last year.

Can you clarify at what point a pregnant teacher can be in school from Covid point of view?

28 weeks.

Are classes routinely changed each year?

No

When will visiting specialists be allowed to deliver activities?

Don't know – this is roadmap question.

Anything about trips for next year?

Residential for schools 21/22 – Edinburgh Council have committed to both of these centres Ben more being re wired and Lagganlia

Will reading books be coming back for p2?

Hopefully after Easter?

Will current p4s have swimming lessons?

Short answer yes – time tbc

Online delivery of music – which years does this relate to?

6, 7 and some 5

Home learning grids available when?

We thought everyone had enough, but we will start after Easter hols.