



**Parent Council Meeting of Cults Academy
Tuesday 18th August 2020 7-8:30pm**

Attendees: David Barnett (DB) Head, Rick Sansom (Chair)(RS), Robert Brew (Secretary)(RB), Sonya Angus, Julia Crighton, Tony Brady, Vannin Bloch (VB), Kay Drummond, Kirsten Gove (KG), Ros Harper, Susan McGinty, Ijeoma Okoliegbe, Yat Sandilands,

Non-Members: Marie Boulton (ACC Councillor), Petra Bodig (school captain), Anshav Pancholi (school captain)

Apologies:

Agenda items	<u>Updates and discussions</u>	Action
1.	<p><u>Head Teacher Update:</u></p> <p><u>School Return</u> COVID Risk Assessment is available on the school website.</p> <p>The school is issuing daily updates to parents along with requests to reinforce particular messages about some of the measures.</p> <p>The gentle, soft-start has worked well with the orientation held last week. This has also allowed for a more comprehensive induction for the P7s.</p> <p>Today, Tuesday, was more settled with the different entrances, one-way system and different external areas for breaks working well</p> <p>Q: VB asked what the contingency was for lunch arrangements in the event of bad weather and if external seating could be provided as lunches were being eaten standing up. A: indoor wet weather alternative space allocations within the school had been identified, but guidance was evolving. Seating outside would present an additional hazard as seats inside were being wiped down by students before and after use. The “Spanish Steps” were being used as seating. The whole matter will be kept under review.</p> <p>Q: VB asked about transport from Milltimber as public transport was not suitable for pupils who might be shielding. A: If any parent had specific questions or issues then they should be encouraged to contact the school directly.</p> <p>Q: VB raised the thought that in some cases the one-way system necessitated lengthy detours that could have the effect of lengthening the time spent in the corridor for particular journeys. A: The advice was that briefly passing someone in a corridor was considered low risk and that the one-way system prevented pupils coming face-to-face. (Anshav) – the one-way system kept people moving, otherwise there would be the temptation to stop and wait for friends or to chat. (Petra) – the middle staircases used to get quite crowded but with the implementation of the one-way system this was no longer the case. There is still the option to use facemasks in the corridor.</p> <p>Teaching was having to adapt to the new circumstances with more of the traditional “chalk and talk”. It was also difficult to give individual feedback.</p> <p>Overall, the school is guided by the government guidelines that are in turn guided by the science. The school is taking each day at a time. The guidance had some inconsistencies in that teachers were required to socially distance from pupils and each other in the school, but pupils are not required to socially distance from each other, unless they are in the community such as at ScotMid at lunchtime.</p> <p>The school has been impressed with support from staff, pupils and parents.</p>	DB

Marie Boulton noted that DB had gone to speak to the shops in the area which was appreciated by the shop management.

Sainsbury's were planning to have queues to the rear of the shop. Tesco had been a bit overwhelmed on the first day. There is the potential for support from the city wardens.

Q: When would lockers be available?

A: This is still being thought about.

Q: Road congestion – Culter School has seen safety issues with parents congregating outside the school gates. Has Cults Academy seen similar problems at pick-up and drop-off time?

A: Parents are not coming into the carpark and are being asked to take a "park and Stride" approach. This seems to be working well with only two instances where a reminder was needed.

SQA Results

31 with 5 As at Higher

53 with 6 As at Nat5 (or Nat5 and an early Higher)

10 with 3 As at Advanced Higher

The concern with the SQA generated grading was largely at the C Grade level with many becoming Ds. Had the Scottish Government not amended its approach the school would have been seeking to appeal in excess of 200 results.

The SQA is now following the school's estimated grade except where the grade had been moderated upwards by the SQA, in which case the higher grade remains.

The school had been asked by the SQA to share the new grading with pupils which was a significant drain on resources just as staff were focussed on planning for the return to school.

Following the revision to grades there will only be three grounds for appeal:

1. If a school discovers that an administrative error was made when they submitted their estimate or entry information for a candidate.
2. If a school's internal review process discloses that a candidate's estimate was affected by discrimination or other conduct by the school that is unacceptable under the Equality Act 2010.
3. Where a head teacher believes that there has been an error within SQA's internal processes for confirming results to schools following the 11 August announcement, they can also appeal.

It is the head of the centre that can submit an appeal, not the parents.

Parents may ask why the school submitted a certain estimate.

Lessons for next year

The SQA has launched two consultations to gather feedback on modifications to qualifications and adjustments to the 2021 exam timetable. The link is: <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/94837.html>

There is no plan for a new lockdown, but the new plan needs to be flexible.

With the 2021 exam diet in mind, the school started gathering evidence from May 2020 onwards.

COVID Funding

The school has been allocated funding for pupil support (for example filling hand sanitiser, providing coverage if a pupil has symptoms).

Additionally, there has been an allocation of one extra FTE teacher and the school is considering the best way of using this resource. It could be for general cover as a staff member may have to self-isolate.

Staff Morale

Pupils and staff are proving to be very resilient. Some staff members are naturally more anxious than others and the staff room is currently closed removing one element of mutual support. However, staff are supporting each other. Some teachers are concerned that the circumstances impair their ability to

	<p>deliver education as they would wish, but the key message to staff is that they can only be expected to do their best in the circumstances.</p> <p>Q: is the school getting its fair share of resources? A: yes – each school is getting one additional FTE staff member</p> <p>Q: Marie Boulton was asked if Aberdeen was getting its fair share of the additional resources A: While it is generally a constant complaint that Aberdeen City receives less than its fair share of resources, in this case it is difficult to suggest that Aberdeen City is getting less although it is difficult to tell as one pot of money covers multiple needs. It was noted that the Council will be providing Chromebooks to every S4-S6 in the city.</p> <p>Q: KG raised a concern that there will be a return to physical distancing. A: Contingency plans remain in place.</p> <p>Q: Given the identified issues with the contingency plans, particularly the difficulties delivering a blend of online learning and in class learning with a limited number of teachers, would it be the school's preference to return to online learning in the event of a further lockdown/ A: Home learning has its own difficulties, particularly with practical subjects and course elements and SQA assessment.</p> <p>It was noted that pupils who would ordinarily participate in City Campus learning (taking subjects at other schools) are currently unable to travel and are required to stay at their school. This is a particular problem for Bucksburn and Dyce who share delivery of many subject options.</p> <p>It was noted that supervision of COVID arrangements is taking a greater share of Senior Management Team time necessitating reduced focus in other areas.</p> <p>NESCol is not starting courses until September, which is affecting those pupils taking options delivered by NESCol.</p> <p>Q: VB asked if consideration was being given to allow computers and typing for examinations, as the increased proportion of online work makes speedy and neat handwriting more challenging. A: This would be at the discretion of the SQA. It was noted that one possibility being floated for Nat5 in 2021 is to not hold an exam at all. Another possibility was a reducing course content.</p>	
2.	<p><u>Minutes</u> To be approved by exception</p>	RS
3.	<p><u>AOB</u></p> <p><u>Parent Council 2020-21</u> All 13 parents participating agreed to form part of the coming year's Parent Council in addition to the 3 parents who could not make the meeting are likewise happy to participate. [POST MEETING NOTE: the Chair emailed asking attendees which years their young people are in so that any gaps in representation can be identified].</p> <p>All office holders (Chair, Secretary, Treasurer) indicated it would healthy if roles could be rotated around the Parent Council as current holders had served 2 to 3 years already.</p> <p>The deferred AGM will be held as a part of the next Parent Council meeting.</p>	
4.	<p><u>DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING AND AGM</u> <u>Next PC MEETINGS -</u></p> <p>To be decided. The regular meetings will be set with the potential for additional meetings if there is a major change in circumstances.</p> <p>Outline agenda to be agreed in advance and circulated Local Councillors and student representatives will be routinely invited to all future meetings</p> <p>Any parent or guardian of a pupil at Cults Academy is welcome to attend any Parent Council meeting.</p>	

The Parent Council can be emailed at PCultsAcademy@aberdeen.npfs.org.uk



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