

**Grove Parent Council
Ordinary meeting minutes**

Virtual meeting, Tuesday 22 September 2020, 7:30 pm to 8:45 pm

Attendance

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Louise Abercrombie | 12. Elaine Hodge |
| 2. Kulsam Ali | 13. Graham Hutton, Head |
| 3. Stephen Bain, Treasurer | 14. Tara Javed, Chairperson |
| 4. John Blicharski | 15. Clare Jefferson, Clerk |
| 5. Shady Botros | 16. Fiona McLaughlin |
| 6. Carol Blues | 17. Selu Mdlalose, Deputy Chairperson |
| 7. Kevin Cordell, Councillor | 18. Deepa Narayanan |
| 8. Andy Creamer, Deputy Head | 19. Derek Scott, Councillor |
| 9. Elaine Dawson | 20. Hannah Steel |
| 10. Andrew Fraser | 21. Fiona Watson |
| 11. Karen French | |

Item 1 Welcome

Tara Javed, chair of the Grove Parent Council, chaired the meeting. She welcomed everyone.

Item 2 Apologies

1. Lindsay Crosbie
2. Ewen Jenkin
3. Philip Scott, Councillor

Due to a technical mishap, a number of attendees who had indicated they would attend were erroneously emailed at the last moment to say the meeting was cancelled. This was an unfortunate technical hiccup. These attendees are also marked down as apologies, as follows:

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| 1. Jim Cochrane | 4. Craig Duncan, Councillor |
| 2. Arlene Cuthill | 5. George Gilvear |
| 3. Jennifer Gallagher | 6. Doreen Phillips |

Item 3 Approval of the previous minutes

1. The minutes from the previous PC meeting of 21 January 2020 were adopted without changes: proposed: Deepa Narayanan; seconded: Elaine Hodge.

The parent council meetings in March and June 2020 were cancelled due to COVID.

Parents held a virtual consultation (via Zoom) on 4 June 2020 with Mr Hutton and Mr Creamer on various options for blended learning should pupils return to school on a part time basis. The agenda dealt with this single item and comprised a presentation by Mr Creamer and followed by question/answer session chaired by Mr Hutton.

Item 4 Matters arising from previous minutes

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

Item 5 Correspondence/meeting attended

Tara reported back on the Conference Call with Convener of Children and Families Services Committee held on Tuesday 22 September 2020 at 10:00. In attendance were Stewart Hunter, Convenor of Children and Families Services Committee, and Paul Clancy, Executive Director of Children and Families Service, as well as the chairpersons of the various parent councils at a city-wide level.

Key points mentioned in this meeting were as follows:

- All the pupils that had COVID have returned to school across the city.
- The plan is to keep all schools open as a national priority, although no one can see into the future.
- If required, Dundee City Council will use the blended learning approach.
- Some schools may be required to use additional buildings in order to deliver a blended learning approach, however Grove Academy is not affected.
- Dundee City Council hold daily meetings with Public Health.
- All cases of COVID are dealt with by Public Health, who trace close contacts and inform persons in near proximity to self-isolate. The schools assist, wherever possible, however the primary response is Public Health led.
- Secondary schools are looking at how to open snack bars to allow for greater access to food during the school day.
- There are no extra-mural / after school activities planned for the winter months as this would entail additional cleaning requirements.
- For the time being exams for National 5, Highers and Advanced Highers are still scheduled. However, there is on-going consultation on the feasibility of holding exams. At the moment, the only exams in jeopardy are the National 5 exams. Education Scotland will try make the announcement as early as possible.

Grove Academy is looking at the feasibility of providing a wider range of snacks and meals. However, there are a number of constraints including staggered lunch times, keeping pupils in year group bubbles and limited table seated areas in the vicinity of the cafeteria. At the present time there are restrictions on the provision of hot meals.

Item 6 Report by Rector, Graham Hutton

Graham Hutton, Rector of Grove Academy, presented his report on achievements, events, future events and staffing since the last meeting in January 2020. The main items discussed are as follows:

Blended learning model: Mr Hutton provided us with a review of how Grove Academy responded to the challenges that arose with the rise of COVID and the closing of school buildings on 20 March 2020. Teaching continued online via teams for the remainder of the 2019/20 session.

A great deal of time was put into the planning of a blended learning model for use when the school building re-opened. However, these plans were never implemented but remain in reserve in the event that circumstances change.

Under the current plan for the 2020/21 session, pupils in different year groups are kept separate in bubbles. Grove rejected the idea of staggered start to the day in favour of using different entrances in the school building and using staggered breaks and lunch times for the junior and senior school. A main constraint to the plans is the lack of S3 area.

In order to facilitate the flow of pupils and to keep the junior and senior pupils separate, the school use bell ringing to release the junior pupils earlier than senior pupils after each period.

Currently the school has 1305 pupils and 120 staff members. It is a real challenge to get pupil flow and the school design does not permit a one-way system.

Social distancing: Youngsters do not need to socially distance from each other within their year group at school, however they do need to socially distance from staff. Youngsters are required to socially distance outside of school.

Face-coverings: From 31 August, face coverings became mandatory in schools. There is a high level of compliance within Grove Academy. The school need to supply approximately 50 masks per day.

PPE: There is hand sanitiser at the entrances to the school and classes. After lessons, pupils are required to wipe down surfaces.

Assemblies: To date, Graham has conducted 3 virtual assemblies and a number of class visits.

Complaints from the Ferry: Grove has received a number of complaints about the conduct of pupils at lunch time within the Ferry. He has written response emails to all correspondence. Graham has spent four lunch times in the Ferry trying to enforce measures. Prior to 22 September, no group of more than six persons from 2 households were allowed to congregate. Now the rule allows for any 6 youngsters aged 12-17 years to congregate.

COVID cases in Grove Academy: There was a single case of COVID contracted by a S6 pupil. This pupil provided all the necessary information on their contacts to the Health Protection Team, which made all the necessary decisions. In total, 9 young people were asked to isolate and 2 staff members. The guidance was that any person that had come within more than 1 meter of this person would need to self-isolate. Furthermore, anyone who came in contact within 2 meter for more than 15 minutes also needed to isolate. Within Grove Academy there are fixed seating plans within the classrooms to assist in the track and trace.

PE during COVID: PE is not allowed inside under the COVID guidelines. When schools resumed in August this was a problem since some of the fields at Dawson Park had been allocated as a biodiversity area including the games field which was problematic as pupils could not use them. Once the fields were prepared, it turned out that the pavilion change rooms had not been checked for various requirements following lockdown and hence could not be used by pupils. As a result, the PE department were required to use the plaza and playgrounds for PE. Graham extended a sincere thank you to the PE department. Currently pupils are back to being bused to Dawson Park for PE and using the Dawson Park facilities.

SQA 2020: Graham explained in detail how teachers prepared the estimated SQA results based on prelims, class tests, course work, visible improvement indicators. These estimates were moderated at a city-wide level and then submitted to the SQA. Mr Hutton compared the results at a S4, S5 and S6 level to previous years, and felt the results were good.

Exams 2021: Currently no one knows what will happen to exams in 2021. There are many options on the table. It is possible the exams will be cancelled at a Nat 5 level and the Higher and Advance Highers will be shortened; or moved two weeks later. The announcement on this is expected before the October holidays.

The following questions / statements / discussion were made on the report:

- With regards to the preparation of pupils, praise should be given to the staff who are preparing pupils to be sensitive to the changing situation and to hedge their bets with regards to the National 5 exams.
- If there are no formal National 5 exams, will there even be a need for prelim exams. Grove cannot provide any clarity until the decision is made by the DFM (Deputy First Minister / Cabinet Secretary for Education).
- Some parents completed the survey issued by the SQA. Graham explained that the SQA have looked at the results but the DFM is holding from releasing the results until the Priestley Enquiry is complete and the decision on the exams is made.
- Parents felt that there could be a knock-on effect of cancelling the prelims as it means that pupils will lose out on the experience of working in an exam setting.
- The Advanced Highers could well be pushed two weeks later. However, this will result in a knock-on effect as the marking will end two weeks later, hence the universities and colleges will get the Scottish results two weeks later. This may result in a bottleneck in the placement of Scottish students in universities and colleges; disadvantaging Scottish applicants.
- A parent asked whether there have been any changes in the curriculum to take into account the reduction in teaching time. Currently the SQA are looking at options to reduce what is required for the exam / curriculum. This has not yet been released. Teaching staff are still trying to help pupils catch up on work missed. This term is all about consolidation of learning. Having said that, there was a good uptake in learning by Grove pupils online during lockdown.

Achievements and Events

- Grove received the award as an Incubator School. We are on track to be one of 15 schools across the UK to be a Microsoft Showcase School.
- There are 8 senior pupils undertaking teaching in Mandarin and a further 4 senior pupils in Arabic. The intention is to expand the Mandarin lessons to S3 during the master class lessons
- Rotary Young Photography Award
- Sophie Hunt and Gaby Prudom received their gold ties
- Finlay Hazelwood beat Ross Alexander to the Ballumbie Junior Golf Championship
- Captaincy teams announced.

Staffing

Graham provided an over view of the current staffing at Grove Academy.

Future activities

- The OECD Review of the Curriculum for Excellence will be conducted by two professors that will undertake a virtual visit of Scotland. Grove Academy was asked to be one of the eight case studies. This will take place in October.
- Art and Design Competition
- Reports will be issued for S5 this week and S4 the following week
- A number of events have been cancelled due to COVID including the Final Fling, the Prize giving and parents evenings, study support and extra curriculum activities. An in-school prize giving will take place next week.

The following questions / statements / discussion were made on the report:

- A parent asked about the criteria used for deciding on which languages are offered at Grove Academy. Graham said it was a number of factors including financial drivers such as offers by the SILT Project, as well as the viability of the classes giving the staffing profile.

Item 7 An update on Grove's Duke of Edinburgh programme

Graham provided an update on the attainment of pupils engaged in the DoE programme. Currently there are 21 pupils that set up for the Bronze 2020 DoE during lockdown. Due to staff capacity and COVID restrictions no other groups can start this year. Some pupils from Silver 2019/20 have moved into gold. Some Gold 2019/20 pupils have done their presentation component. There will be NO expeditions during this time.

Item 8 Parents' Evening

There was a thought-provoking discussion and ideas were shared on the best way forward to deliver parents evening. Various options were discussed on how best to conduct a virtual parents evening. Graham explained essentially one of the largest constrains was insufficient wifi within the school to host such a number of online consultations. Parents felt that we should take action to assist in improving the wifi capacity at Grove. Andy explained that a representative from Corporate IT was in school today to try address the issue. There was a suggestion that we explore the options around EduRoam too.

Parents were in favour of a parent evening and suggested that either online face to face meetings or phone calls would be acceptable. Parent deemed it as important to have personal contact with teachers at least once a year.

It was decided that we should take action around this issue of the wifi. It was suggested that we draft a letter to Paul Clancy to raise our issues around the inadequate wifi.

Item 9 Any Other Current Business

None.

Item 10 Items for the next meeting

Items for the next meeting include:

- Wifi in Grove Academy

Item 11 Dates of next meeting

For the 2020/21 session, these are the proposed dates of the Parent Council meetings:

Tuesday 17 November 2020

Tuesday 26 January 2021

Tuesday 23 March 2021

Tuesday 1 June 2021