



Largs Academy Parent Council Meeting Wednesday 26th April 2023, 6pm, in the school

Minutes

Present: C McKee (Chair), J Doherty (HT), C Frew (DHT), S McNamara, L Hunter, L Cameron Finn, D McNeil, L Beveridge, A Milner, E Beattie (minutes)

1. Apologies: Shaukat Aron, John Blair, Sarah Waterson, Jane Wilson, A Raymond, Analene Swan

2. Minutes of previous meeting: 8th March 2023 – proposed by L Hunter seconded by L Beveridge

3. Head Teacher's update (J Doherty, C Frew)

a. Exams – exam diet has started and have been running very smoothly, invigilators have expressed their approval with arrangements, accommodation of exams across the school is working well.

Timetable change next week. Several Monday holidays and an in-service day upcoming. DOE practice expeditions upcoming. June is set to be a busy month which includes a summer fun run, P7 open evening, S6 last day (grad ceremony in morning then BBQ with inflatables), P7 transition day, school show 18th-21st June. Prize giving has been split for senior and BGE- BGE prize giving will also take place before the end of term. Prom also coming up.

b. UCAS updates (C Frew)

UCAS changes – 4 major changes to 2024 cycle.

Main changes – entry grade tool, removal of single application fee (£27.50 for all applications- this has increased from £26), gender – man, woman, prefer not to say, use another term available for selection regardless of Seemis, reference has changed. Reference – look at how they can pick out important info from the reference. Part 1 info about the school, same for all pupils. Part 2 - if applicable extenuating circumstances eg young carer, health problems. Part 3 any other supportive information that will be relevant to the reference. Previously PT pastoral would write the reference, approx 15 members of staff are now involved in providing UCAS references to pupils.

Advisor tool available – historical grade entries provides grades and proportion of accepted applicants (eg what do you need to get into this course). This has never been available before to pupils, courses have typically only provided minimum entry requirements. This will be shared at the UCAS info night ran by C Frew. Stats available for 2023 entry however these are historical and not 100% accurate. Data is very positive – 91 applicants of which 96% have offers as of beginning of April. Only 1 person unsuccessful due to competition on course, met requirements otherwise. Most offers are from Glasgow and Strathclyde. 3 pupils have accepted offers to Aberdeen universities. Some pupils who have completed HNC have

been accepted into 2nd year at UWS – this is not reflected in this data.

UCAS process will start in new term.

UCAS dates released – 31st Jan equal consideration date, various other deadlines for Oxford, Conservatoire etc, medicine dentistry etc. Cut off dates for applications particularly early application.

Concerns raised over staff being unable to meet deadlines with required information – this can be due to some difficulties with staff contacting universities/institutions. Request for more teachers to help with references and personal statements to avoid last minute submissions.

Concerns raised over courses with additional requirements as school did not provide detailed information regarding requirements for courses such as dentistry eg clinical aptitude tests which require payment and preparation. Can pupils be told earlier when open days are available – noted that some other schools have organised group outings. Medicine prep group suggested in earlier years from S3 – eg when doing subject selection.

Upcoming changes to personal statement expected in 2026 cycle.

c. Vacant Posts

Librarian term time full time to be advertised due to retirement. D Gibson job advertised PT guidance as well as biology, drama and geography posts. Applicants for drama would ideally also be able to teach English. Interviews in next month or so.

4. Questions to the school:

a. Glow OneDrive usage (A Milner)

School IT – previous discussion on teachers use of one drive mentioned. Some teachers are still using school drive as the primary file storage. Another communication will be sent out. Some files are only available at school. This could possibly be due to software available on school PCs such as design software.

b. Weight of school bags (A Milner)

Heavy textbooks in bags, use of lockers questioned- are pupils using these appropriately. Can textbooks be kept at school? Varied bag weight – depends on the child. Some children do not like going to locker as it is so busy in this area. Areas are available in classes to store items such as folders. Transition from home to school is a particular concern.

c. Musical artist visit (A Milner)

Artist gave out a mobile number to pupils- this has now been added to groups or other communication. Safety and security concern – who is using this number? - C Frew will follow this up.

d. Buddy system

Will S6 pupils be able to buddy? Concern over current buddies being too close in age and S6 pupils missing out on opportunity.

S6 have leadership options as an alternative to PSE – one of these will include P7 transition. This will be selected in May/June. Possibility to blend senior and junior buddy groups mentioned.

5. Treasurer update (C McKee).

PTA accounts have been closed at bank. 50/50 account £5414.20 transferred to Parent Council. PTA account to Parent Council £5725.38. Current balance £13507.67. Moving forward will use only one bank account – this will make processes easier.

6. Bids

S6 leavers day – bid requested. J Doherty will send to C McKee

7. Date of Next Meeting - Tuesday 13th June at 6pm on Teams.

8. AOCB – J Blairs last meeting, thank you to John for his input in Parent Council.