

**Newbattle Community High School - Parent Council Zoom Meeting
20th May 2020**

Present

C Park	Parent
K Maynard	Parent
A Donaldson	Parent
A Westaby	Parent
S Fairley	Parent
P McIntosh	Parent
G McMillan	Head Teacher
M Hume	Depute Head Teacher
C Philp	Depute Head Teacher
M Davidson	Depute Head Teacher
J Fair	Depute Head Teacher
C Greig	Depute Head Teacher
J Connell	Business Manager
L MacLeod	Clerk

Apologies

J McGhie

Welcome and Thanks

Gib wanted his thanks to Parents/Carers noted during this time.

Whole School Overview – G McMillan

- Over 700 Free School Meals were delivered to families at the beginning of lockdown for NLC. Now funds are being sent directly to their bank accounts.
- Over 300 devices have been given out to families, along with wifi accessibility. In some occasions more than one device has been given per household.
- Newbattle is lucky that Google Classroom is part of the usual school day so pupils are used to how it works. Participation level is high, however the engagement level is lower than we would like. We are looking at what makes pupils want to do the work that is being set.
- Weekly staff meetings and quizzes have been a massive success.
- SQA estimates will be submitted next Friday (29th May). Grades are looking very good, with some being 20-30% better than the previous year. We have lots of evidence to back these grades up, in some cases 6 or 7 pieces for the SQA. Everything being sent has been checked and double checked.
- We still don't know what the school will look like when we do return. There has been some suggestions around different ways we can work ie enter building via PE site, use the Ashleigh Gray Theatre as classrooms, Breaks and Lunches won't be the same, buses will be an issue, desks numbered so pupil always uses the same desk. These are just some of the discussions, no final plan has been laid out. Newbattle is at an advantage as we have been operating as a Hub so have been used to changes the past 9 weeks.
- A question was asked around the summer holidays being cut short. Gib advised that he is unsure if this would work as the teaching union has been heavily involved, but awaits further clarification from the Government on next steps.

SQA, Coursing and Timetabling – C Philp

- Staff have put a lot of work into making passes and quality assuring work, ready to be sent off to SQA.
- All senior phase pupils started their 'Wider Achievement Award' in May. There has been a lot of research put into this and it means pupils will leave with a bank of qualifications. Once the pupils have achieved their 'Wider Achievement Award', this time can then be changed to a study period closer to exam time to ease the pressure slightly for pupils.
- 92% of pupils have managed to get their first course choice.
- More information will be sent out next week for pupils' timetables and course choices.
- Pupils in S6 with heavy timetables will likely attend other schools to take up some of these subjects. At the moment, we are unsure what this will look like however we are in talks with other schools across the authority trying to work through this.
- We are working towards getting pupils automatically set up on their new Google Classroom at the timetable change, rather than them manually having to set this up.

Pastoral – M Hume

- The House Teams are missing being as 'hands on' with pupils, however they have been making contact with home for every pupil.
- There is a form on our website that parent/carers can complete should they need to talk to someone (as the phone lines aren't always manned at the moment). Our school email box is always manned too.
- The House Teams have also been supporting with the coursing, phoning home and discussing different options for pupils.

- Mhairi has been part of a strategic group who are looking at how things will look once we return to school for both staff and pupils.
- Mhairi has been working with our pupils who are due to leave school and ensure that they have a 'positive destination'. The college is supporting our young people with courses making the transition simpler. There are also blended programmes that support young people whose jobs have perhaps fell through.
- Primary Transition plans are well underway. We are lucky that we have had the primary 7 pupils up for 2 workshop days in November and February, so they have been in the school when it is at its busiest. A Virtual Tour has been created and will be shared with the primary pupils. This outlines the finer details such as 'where do you get a bus', how the bitesite works etc. A Google Classroom has been set up for all primary 7 pupils. The 2 virtual transition days are on 11th and 12th June where more activity will be presented on Google Classroom.

J Fair / C Greig – Learning, Teaching & Assessment

- Jim confirmed that he has now returned to working at Newbattle, and works alongside Crawford until the Summer when Crawford will go back to his previous role as 'Head of English'.
- Prior to Jim changing roles, he had been gathering information on the best way forward with the Learning, Teaching & Assessment policy and had started to put this into action. This was then picked up and taken forward by Crawford. The policy has been shared with Teaching Staff, who are now using everyday within their classrooms.
- The Attainment Champion roles within the school has created a positive impact on pupils.
- House points and the School Values are still being put into practice during lockdown.
- We are looking at the Awards Ceremony that usually occurs in June to see how we can do this virtually.
- Paper packs of school work has been delivered to pupils who aren't as experienced with Google Classroom.

Action – Send Learning, Teaching & Assessment Policy to members of Parent Council.

M Davidson – Digital Centre of Excellence

- Mark and his team have been supporting families with no access to technology and/or wifi. We have also been looking into the possibility of every pupil given a device to work with going forward.
- Newbattle received the 'UK Digital Schools Award' just before the lockdown commenced. The school received a glowing report with the highest score in the UK. We have since been invited to apply for the 'European Award for Digital Schools'.
- Work is being done to look at how we can make engagement better with Distance Learning. Teachers are focused on providing pupils with detailed feedback on their work.
- A question was asked around how much time pupils should spend on work each day. **A** - It is important to get the work completed, however it is not realistic to say pupils should spend the same amount of time on each subject that they do in school. It is hard to engage pupils on practical subjects eg. Home Economics, CDT, PE as there is only so much written work they can do.

At this point, Pam's internet cut off so Gib has taken the action to phone Pam and discuss fully.

Update – called and discussed the consultation paper (sent on 28th May) around Distance Learning tasks, time per task, expectations etc. A really useful paper in draft format being sent in final very soon. Pam expressed her thanks again to all staff for what we are doing.

J Connell – Business Manager

Joni had to leave the meeting early however wanted to share some positions that have been filled recently:

Business Teacher – Louise Docherty – replacing Axel Ammann.

Drama Teacher – Karis McDonald (who has been our NQT this last year and has resulted in a bigger uptake for the subject).

RE Teacher – Alison McKay (Who was again our NQT this last year. Jim Mutch plans to retire next year so Alison will be a great replacement).

Technician – Andrew Cranston – replacing Dave Baur.

G McMillan – Newbattle Hub

- The Hub was initially set up for Newbattle Pupils and was originally attended by pupils in S1-S3. It has now grown to pupils ranging from Primary 1 to S3. We have Primary Teachers who come and work with the younger pupils.
- There are approximately 40 pupils each day who attend.
- School work is done for 2-2.5 hours, then the rest of the day is spent doing activities. Pupils created post cards and sent these to the elderly within the community and care homes. They have posted out quizzes and now sunflowers. We have been receiving responses to these post cards too.

AOCB

Louise advised the group that 'The Dean Tavern' have donated £300 to Friends of Newbattle. This was originally for the Swaziland trip, however as this is not going ahead The Dean have said to move the donation over.

Catherine wanted to pass her thanks, on behalf of the Parent Council for taking the time to meet and talk to them. She advised they all really appreciate everything that is being done for our young people during this time.

Share the above with staff.

Gib closed the meeting saying that another update would be arranged for June.