



St. Munchin's College Parents' Council
7.30-8.30pm on Monday 24th January 2022
Via Zoom
Minutes of Meeting

Attendance:

Present: Kathleen Daffy, Carmel Naughton, Mariajean Geary, Valeria Fahy, Cynthia Hassett, Orla O'Sullivan, Trevor Brewer, Marian Keane, Ian Moore, Dearbhla Cahill, David Quilter (Principal)

Apologies: Michael O'Regan, Sinead Nolan

Minutes of last Meeting:

Kathleen Daffy (Chair) opened the meeting and queried if there were any matters arising from the last meeting. No matters arising.

Principal's Update re: COVID-19

David Quilter gave the following updates to the meeting.

School Re-opening following Christmas break

The last few weeks since school reopening after the Christmas break have been very challenging for everyone in the school community. The Board of Management want to acknowledge the support, good wishes and patience displayed by all of our teachers, students & parents and are extremely grateful to everyone. The school continues to do the very best to keep school life as close to normal as possible while at the same time trying to balance all of the stress and anxiety around the spread of the Omicron virus.

Following the Government's announcement on Friday evening last, there has been a significant easing of Covid-19 Restrictions in the country. However, it is very important to note that there has been no change to restrictions in school settings and so we must all continue reinforcing our school's safety protocols with both staff and with the boys daily i.e. full mask wearing when inside the school building, sanitizing work stations, hand and respiratory hygiene, etc.

In addition, we continue to have a significant number of students out each day either isolating or restricting movements due to Covid and therefore it essential that we continue to post up classwork, notes,

presentations, homework, etc. onto TEAMS.

Leaving Cert/Junior Cert

Currently there has been no correspondence received from the Department in relation to the Leaving and Junior Cert other than to say both are going ahead this year. Dates have been delayed for the completion of project work and Orals will be going ahead during the Easter holidays and the boys will be updated.

Two changes have been made to the school calendar:

- The Pre-Leaving and Junior Cert have been rescheduled to allow for teachers to finish courses and the boys to study. The exams will replicate the actual exams with two being held each day. They will be finished by 18th February.
- Parent Teacher meeting dates have been changed and will go ahead in the month of March. They will be held on-line, and the school will consider holding the meetings in a similar fashion next year.

Supports attending matches this term

David Quilter outlined issues that have arisen at matches over the last number of years and in particular the recent Charity Cup match held before Christmas break:

Over the past number of years we have seen a major deterioration in the behaviour of a small number of our students when they attend rugby matches. Over the years the school has paid fines that our students have incurred at matches, by releasing flares, invading the pitches, interfering with other schools' property and the list goes on. In addition, we have always had a long tradition with "Munchin's Chants" being sung by our supporters at matches. In recent years, however, we have seen an increase in non-SMC chants being sung by a small number of our students. Such chants can at times be in very poor taste.

On Friday December 17th, the annual Charity Cup match between Crescent College Comprehensive and St. Munchin's College took place. The match itself was a treat for all spectators. Our players put their heart and soul into the match which led them to victory and of course, their coaches, mentors and all in SMC were thrilled for them. This level of commitment must and should be acknowledged and commended and to say that we are grateful and proud of the level of sportsmanship displayed in our school is an understatement. At the above match the behaviour of a few took the shine off the heroic effort on the field of our players and coaches. It is important to point out, that the behaviour displayed at matches is by a minority of our students.

However, the reality is such that, a small number of our students have misbehaved, and this has led to a situation where our school's reputation has been brought into disrepute.

While any student identified in this episode has been spoken to severely and suspended where deemed necessary, we feel that we must make the very public point that St Munchin's College has no truck with such conduct. It has therefore been agreed unanimously by staff, coaches and discussed at student council meeting to prohibit our students from attending the next two cup matches which are due to take place over the month. This action is taken unilaterally by the College without any outside influence brought to bear. It is done to punish the wrongdoers, to hammer home the seriousness of the College stakeholders in this matter and to uphold the reputation of St Munchin's College where all the excellent work of so many can be undone by so few.

The Parent's Council queried if the issue could be addressed at individual level only. The Principal advised that it was felt that the only way to get the message across was across the whole community.

The Parent's Council also queried what was match protocol and was advised that for all cup matches

wristbands will be sold/have to be purchased in the school by students to attend matches and all students will leave/return to the school at the same time.

Key dates

Senior Cup v Castletroy, 2pm Friday 28th January, Thomond Park

Junior Cup v Ard Scoil Ris, 2pm Wednesday 2nd February, Thomond Park

Parent Teacher Meetings

David Quilter advised that Online P-T Meetings for 1st, 2nd & 5th Year Parents have been deferred till later in the term due to the high levels of absenteeism after the Christmas break.

The running of online P-T Meetings in December with both 3rd & 6th Years went extremely well and received very positive feedback from both parents & teachers.

School Jackets

The Parent's Council discussed the quality of the school jacket in relation to cuffs and flap inside the jacket and the possibility of some additional features to the jacket.

The school noted the following improvements to the design of school jackets which were suggested by members of the Parents Council tonight- Inclusion of a Name Tag, Hook to hang up jackets, Reflectors on the outside of all jackets, waterproof coating if possible.

The issue of stock availability was also discussed. The Principal advised that the school order 120 of everything for first years and 50 extra for everyone else. An order form is sent out in April for September and an extra order is sent in October. There would be stock but depending on sizes available.

The Principal also advised that the school had obtained a sponsor, Hungry Lyons, for the next three years for the school Cup jerseys.

School Policy in relation to COVID-19/other absences and missed schoolwork

The Principal advised as we continue to have a significant number of students out each day either isolating or restricting movements due to COVID-19 it is essential that all teachers continue to post up classwork, notes, presentations, homework, etc. onto TEAMS

The Principal also advised regarding school absences, that there is a specific code used for student absences for Positive/Self isolating cases. This is to address the requirement on the school to report absences greater than 20 days twice yearly to the Education Welfare Officer. Absences coded for COVID-19 will be ignored for the 20 days requirement.

The school also accommodated students who missed Christmas exams, due to COVID, to sit exams after Christmas in school. Exams were not sent home at Christmas in the event that credited grades would have to be used.

The Parent's Council also queried the possibility of receiving an automated text from VSWARE when a student was absent and if there was a cost in doing this. The Principal advised that there is a cost factor using facilities on VSWARE and the school had this facility three years ago but wasn't providing the reaction hoped for from some parents. It was decided instead to provide more information on VSWARE. The school is currently using 75% of VSWARE but may look to re-activate it again. Currently after 3 days absence the Year Tutor contacts parents/guardians.

AOB

Fundraising

Used Clothes Collection-

Contact will be made with Coppertail (Mariajean Geary) in relation to organising a collection for used clothes to raise some much-needed funds for the school. Carmel Naughton will send contact details for Coppertail to Mariajean.

A query was also raised in relation to uniforms. The Principal advised that the school does accept these and that they are dry clean on receipt. It was suggested that this also would be advised when details of the Used Clothes Collection are circulated.

Reminders to parents will be sent out on Lorraine Shiels' Friday emails over a number of weeks and final date for submitting bags of used clothes will be Friday 8th April, 2022

6th Year students

Parents and 6th Year students will be encouraged to donate any unwanted uniforms and books back to the school in the coming months.

Transition Year students

It is hoped that if there is further lifting of Covid-19 restrictions around school settings, then the College hope to explore the possibility of running some kind of musical with our TY students before the end of the school year.

2nd Year students

The College Chaplain, Tom Conneely, and the 2nd Yr Year Head will be organising a special bonding day for all 2nd years before the Easter break.

CPD

All teachers will be attending a full day of CPD for the new Junior Cycle course on Thursday 3rd February and therefore school will be closed to all students on that day.

WhatsApp

It was agreed that a WhatsApp group would be set up for the Parent's Council. Kathleen Daffy to set up with note in relation to GDPR. David Quilter to send on Parent's Council contact details to Kathleen.

Date of next meeting

The Parent's Council agreed that meetings would take place on the last Monday of each month subject to change.

The date for the next meeting is provisionally booked for **28th February 2022**.