

Madras Parent Council

**Wednesday 28th October 2015
7.00pm – Kilrymont Campus**

Minute

1. Apologies received: Karen Barnett; Lynn Christie; Charlotte Kirby; Vicky Louchran; Calum Mcleod; Rachel Naismith; Susan Simpson; Jo Secker Walker; Sally Walker; Cllr Tim Brett; Cllr Bill Connor, Cllr Dorothea Morrison; Cllr Brian Thomson.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting. Adopted.

3. Matters Arising.

3.1. Leaver Destinations.

See: <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/> with national statistics reported on <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/statistics/school-leaver-destination-returns/>

The School Careers Officer (Chris Simpson) explained his role within the school, and clarified that his post was funded by Skills Development Scotland; this organisation sets the targets for the role, which is to ensure that pupils are tracked to 'positive destinations' on leaving school. These priorities are informed by the government's 'opportunities for all' policy. The school supplies data for inclusion in the School Leaver Destination Report, with census points in the first weeks of October and April. This snapshot shows the status of all 16-19 year olds and is searchable by school, local authority, age, gender, ethnicity, etc.

- The first (October) checkpoint shows the point of entry to HE; any pupils who do not have a 'positive destination' at this point (education, training or employment) are identified, tracked and 'case managed'.
- The April census checks if pupils are sustaining their destinations (i.e. haven't dropped out of education, training or employment) – again, case management of those who are struggling.
- Madras has to work hard with tracking due to a higher than average proportion of pupils coming to and leaving the area; efforts are made to track these after families move away.

The following organisations contribute to the national school leaver destination database: schools (via SEEMIS and local authorities); SAAS (higher education funding); colleges; ScotXEd (Scottish education department data exchange); JC+ (unemployment benefit); modern apprenticeship training program.

Data for 2014-15 is currently with the national audit office for confirmation, except for UCAS HE destinations. Data presented therefore reflected 2013-14.

Table 1: Year on Year comparison of positive leaver destinations for Madras pupils

These figures show a recovery after a slight dip in 2012-13.

2013-14		2012-13		2011-12	
October	April	October	April	October	April
94.7%	94.7%	89.8%	88.3%	92.2%	93.4%

Table 2: Positive Destinations for 2013-14

	HE	FE	TR	EMP	VOL	AA	UNS	UNNS	PosDest
Scotland	38.6%	26.3%	4.1%	21.7%	0.4%	1.1%	6.3%	1.1%	92.3%
Fife	36.5%	34.6%	3.8%	16.1%	0.1%	1.3%	6%	1.4%	92.4%
Madras	48.6%	21.9%	0.4%	23.5%	-	0.4%	4.9%	0.4%	94.7%

Key: HE (Higher Education - university); FE (Further Education – college); TR (training, although ‘modern apprenticeships’ come under ‘EMP’ as waged); EMP (employment); VOL (volunteering – may include some of those on gap years); AA (Activity Agreement e.g. school early leavers/refusers, etc); UNS (unemployed and seeking work); UNNS (unemployed and not seeking work e.g. health issues); PosDest (overall % positive destinations).

Madras scores higher than average for positive destination, and significantly higher than average in HE destinations. Compared with other schools in Fife, employed leavers are higher than average (although the quality of jobs is not shown). HE destinations in table 2 are for *all* leavers.

Table 3: List of HE and FE destinations for Madras S6 leavers 2014-15

Almost 70% of those staying for S6 at Madras go to HE or FE.

Of those going to University ...		Of those going to FE college ...	
Edinburgh	18%	Dundee	61%
Robert Gordon	13%	Fife	17%
Glasgow	12%	SRUC (Scottish Rural Colleges – e.g. Elmwood Agric.)	17%
Dundee	11%	Other	5%
Aberdeen	8%		
Napier	7%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents should be reassured that these represent high quality choices. 	
Non-Scottish *	7%		
Abertay/St Andrews/West of Scotland	3%		

* including Oxford, Imperial etc.

Table 4: HE courses 2014-15

Arts and Social Sciences	18%
Science and Maths	16%
Business	13%
Engineering	12%
Health and Medicine	11%
Law	8%
Art and Design	5%
Education	4%
Sport and Leisure	3%
Performing Arts, Hospitality	2% each
Social Care/Computing/Languages	1% each

Table 5: Those in Employment or Modern Apprenticeships

Full-time	47%
Part-time	27%

Modern Apprenticeships 23% (including hair & beauty; land; sport; engineering; hospitality; construction; finance; retail; IT (University of St Andrews scheme) –may include SVQs and lead to FE or even HE.

Parent Questions:

Q: How/do pupils know about career guidance / job opportunities? Does this need more promotion?

A: They can make appointments to see the career guidance counsellor or drop in on Monday afternoon drop-in sessions or at morning break. Most of the career guidance effort is focussed and getting ‘targeted pupils’ working towards positive destinations.

Q: Which pupils are ‘targeted’ for priority support from careers guidance, and how?

A: Skills Development Scotland provides a ‘risk matrix’ (criteria e.g. social deprivation index, drawing on flags in SEEMIS) and this is augmented by internal school referrals from the Guidance staff. The School also has a ‘support for learning register’ which can help identify vulnerable pupils. ** Pupils may also self-refer (ask for help).

* The Rector reinforced the point that support WAS available for all pupils on request. It was noted that advice to pupils on University and College application processes currently is provided in the first instance by the Guidance team.

Q: How can job opportunities be promoted to parents as well as pupils?

A: Mr Wishart is now compiling a monthly digest of opportunities which is being circulated by group mail. Parents should be aware that many opportunities released through Fife Education Service concentrate in west and central Fife, and so are not so accessible to NE Fife pupils. It was also suggested that the school ‘Diary’

in the Citizen newspaper might also contain some news items relevant to education/job/training schemes and deadlines.

3.2. SQA remarking requests – outcome from 2015 exams

Mr Wishart summarised the results of the remarking requests.

64 submissions

8 of these priority cases – 0% success

56 normal – 11 successful (17%)

This is down on last year's success rate (32%). Some pupils still got university places through clearing, and all ended up in 'positive' leaver destinations (see statistics in 3.1. for definitions).

The school is analysing the successful cases to see if this can inform future remarking policy.

1 mark below grade threshold	43% successful on re-mark
2 marks below grade threshold	31% successful on re-mark
3 marks below grade threshold	17% successful on re-mark
4 or more marks below	0% successful

The Madras data-set is now being combined with Bell Baxter's to see if this grade boundary statistic is robust.

This year, requests are not to be charged directly to the school but from 2016-17 they will be.

The Head Teacher proposed a refinement of the policy on re-marking, taking this data into consideration alongside discussions minuted at the last Parent Council meeting and the following draft policy was agreed by the PC and adopted.

3.2.1. Draft Madras Policy on Grade Re-Marking Requests

- If a grade is (3 or less than 3) marks of a grade boundary, the School will be prepared to support a request for a re-mark. *n.b. all re-marking requests must be formally made by pupils (with parental help).*
- A result that is (4 or more) marks below a grade boundary will not normally be put forward by the School for re-marking, unless the professional judgement of a staff member suggests that this grade is very unexpected.
- In all cases, pupils and parents should be made aware that re-marking may result in a grade going down rather than necessarily going up.
- The current cohort affected by the transitional arrangements for CfE exams should be helped where possible to overcome implementation glitches by sympathetic hearing of re-marking requests in 2015-16.

- Parents not content with a school decision on whether to progress a re-mark request can appeal to the area education officer; the school will respect the recommendation of the education officer.
- The policy will be uploaded soon to the School website at http://www.madras.fife.sch.uk/pupil_parents/publications.html

3.3. SEEMIS implementation

3.3.1. Merit and Demerit Flags

Mrs Angela Robertson presented the new system capability for recording merit and demerit points. S1 pupils will still have the stamp reward cards, but this was not working so well further up the school, so this new computer system has been introduced initially this year for S2 to S4.

Staff can record the points in class.

The system then holds a clear summary of points which can be used not only to reward pupils but also to track cases.

Categories can be defined by the School and currently are:

<u>Merit</u>	<u>De-merit</u>
Good homework	Lateness
Improved Behaviour	Poor Effort
Good effort	Punishment Exercise
Madras Blue	Unprepared for Class
School service	Uniform

This can be analysed by PUPIL [totals, or within a class], allowing guidance staff to track behaviour patterns, or for a COHORT to identify behaviour problem areas which need to be managed. i.e. the data shows staff at a glance which pupils may need to be given behaviour support.

- The 'scores' are not released to the children.
- This is not linked to the 'House' system in a competitive fashion as the merit-based flags probably don't get entered quite as often as the de-merits, and because currently the 'Blue' merit doesn't recognise achievement in all activity areas (concentrates on sport and music – could potentially be expanded to include e.g. ecoclub, debating etc in the future).

3.3.2. SEEMIS grade reporting

One parent suggested that the lay-out and content of the interim report received at the start of the October break was not very helpful. The HT acknowledged that the categories were not nuanced but advised that the school had no option currently to redefine the fields or format. i.e. SEEMIS is a Scottish-wide school data system.

3.4. SPTC Paper on Partnership Schools

The Chair and HT have both now read this, and it was argued that the paper as currently stands is too vague to be adopted. While it provides a framework for thinking about parent engagement (categories of parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and community collaboration) the scheme currently has no information on resources, dissemination methods and resource implications.

Of the areas listed many are already being looked at by the School in other ways.

The proposal was accepted that the scheme would not be adopted at this point in time, although the PC would be interested in hearing about the findings of the pilot school implementation.

3.5. Tracking attainment for pupils doing 4 Advanced Highers

The HT reported that this was already being tracked, both for 4 and fewer Adv. Highers; that no problems were currently being experienced by those at 4, although some taking 3 are struggling.

Pressure points tend to occur post-Christmas – dissertations due.

The message was received that parents should not be over-anxious about this, or in a hurry to drop subjects; that upper school workload should anticipate HE transitions, and that parental fear of failure can result in pupils losing confidence and becoming less resilient.

4. Office-holder Reports

4.1. Chair's Remarks – n/a.

4.2. Treasurer's Report.

From last minute: request for summary of Quadfest income (2012-13): £1,118, with donations rising to just over £1,500.

No change on current bank balances against last minute.

Following last meeting's request for spending suggestions, the HT repeated that the school budget would be stretched in 2016-17 and that the following indicative list of projects would need some additional support. Nb this list is indicative only; all requests will be discussed on merit, and PC subsidy will only cover part-costs of those listed.

- **First Aid Training from Skillforce:** this weekly course available as an activity to S5 and S6 pupils costs £32K this session, and is currently being funded by Fife Council Education Department. The School will wish to re-run it (possibly for a smaller group of pupils) next year.

- **Pipe Band:** historically supported by the PC. High equipment costs.
- **Transport subsidy** e.g. for sports teams, music, competitions, etc, and also addressing possible out-of-town access to Easter and October study schools.

4.3. Secretary's report – n/a.

5. Rector's Report

5.1. October Study School

This ran successfully with numbers of 65-75 each day, mostly comprising S5 pupils.

The PC expressed thanks to teachers for giving up their time to this worth-while effort.

Next year, the School will look at targeting specific groups and subjects.

5.2. Statistics

- A glitch in recording exclusions data has been fixed (exclusions are down on last year and the year before).
- Attendance is up on last year.

5.3. PE.

The HT reported that PE was currently experiencing a **staffing shortage** due to illness; that it was difficult to get qualified supply teachers in this area and that a non-specialist could not be expected to teach PE because of risk assessment. It might be necessary to reduce the junior school PE by 1 period weekly, substituting activities, while this problem remains.

Problems have been found in **South Street Assembly hall** with asbestos tiles so that ball games cannot be played there; relocated to the Cosmos Centre games hall for certificate groups (N5 and Higher).

5.4. Buildings

Fire alarm testing at South Street is being re-done to check decibel levels – the external company that carried out the first test suggested these were lower than ideal, but the evidence is not conclusive. Costs for a complete refit (by this company) would be £200K so a second opinion is being sought.

Kilrymont Stage – health and safety concerns about curtains and current light fittings mean that the stage can only be used at the moment with full hall lights and no curtains.

5.5. Budget

The HT asked that the Parent Council record that the Fife Schools' Head Teacher Association minutes show that there was an understanding across Fife that savings made (as requested) in 2014-15 were to be rolled over into the 2015-16 budget and not clawed back.

However, the impact of the overall budgetary savings required for Fife Council had meant that the Council was forced to make an on-the-spot decision to claw back monies without prior consultation with Schools.

Nb costs associated with repairs etc listed under 5.3. PE and 5.4. Buildings, above.

5.6. Numeracy Policy: consultation for numeracy 'toolkit' for Madras and Feeder Primaries.

The HT circulated documents on supporting numeracy through common terms and concepts, and asked for a consultation period through November and December on these.

A common framework will help with the transition from primary to secondary school.

This will also be shown to the HT of feeder primaries, Madras staff and the PC focus group.

Action: parents received the report; comments to Mr McClure by the end of term.

* The policy is also available on the School website at

http://www.madras.fife.sch.uk/pupil_parents/publications.html

6. AOB

- Rachel Naismith requested that the **annual school diary** should be put on the main school website – to date, only on the Parent Council website.
Action point: HT to discuss with School Office (refresh diary) – now done.
- Clarification on **selection method for prefects** - carried forward to next meeting.
- Study leave will be available for S5/6 prelims in January.
- S3 tests – there has been some delay in getting all pupils through these.
Action point: HT to discuss with PTs.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 20th January 2016