**Chief Education Officer meeting with Parent Council Chairs 17th June 2020**

Eleanor welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance. She talked the group through the last 4 months and acknowledged the considerable efforts from staff and from Parent Councils in supporting their school community.

Eleanor recognised that a series of interviews held over the weekend were leading to a little confusion at the moment with word of 50% attendance being required. Implementing the published guidance leads to around one third attendance although there is local variation.

Eleanor acknowledged that national guidance may change and that any change would trigger a change in our planning. Our current planning is based on the guidance already published.

**Considerations when determining capacity**

Sadly it is not as simple as securing physical space, a range of other factors need to be taken into account:

* Capacity of all spaces in the school – this could lead to 8 for classroom (7+1 teacher)
* Large spaces in the community including outdoor space
* Provision of toilets
* Provision of transport
* Safe routes to school
* Staffing availability (a class could need as many as 3 teachers to achieve 50% capacity)
* Ability to clean spaces

All options are being explored although we do have to work to budget. Additional finance from The Scottish Government may help us improve some capacities (through spaces owned by others and if we could secure more staff) but this wouldn’t lead to an increase in capacity in all schools.

Schools hope to publish plans next week although the current national debate may impact on that timescale.

**Blended learning**

The implications of blended learning were discussed. Implications include:

* In- school learning will be quite intense so children and young people will be tired
* Work across the BGE will focus on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing
* Staff will be creative around seeing work, we could see heavier use of show me boards for example
* School day may be different (longer day and no lunchbreak)
* There will be a pattern of attendance over a week or two weeks, this will be decided at school level and we are not in a position to enable parents to request the pattern that work best for them, we have to consider effective working groups
* Trying to keep family groups together where possible
* Schools will be open 5 days a week although some time will be required to populate google classrooms

At home learning:

* Staff are sharing best practice and helping to upskill each other
* We will continue to use Google Classroom
* The service are trying to further develop a city wide resource based on shared themes to be explored at home

The Local Authority has worked with HTs to look at different potential models, the decision ultimately has to be taken at school level as every school situation is quite different.

**Health and Safety**

* Face coverings are not recommended for schools, the concern seems to be that the use of face coverings may lead to poorer hand hygiene
* Face coverings wouldn’t reduce distancing requirements
* The use of face coverings could make schools scarier for some children
* If parents choose to remove their child from school we will not be offering the full digital curriculum offer
* Teachers won’t have the capacity to do what they are doing now and deliver in school learning
* Hand sanitiser will be available in all schools

**Funding**

Additional funding may be made available from the Scottish Government but nothing has been confirmed as yet. These funds could only be used to support an increase in the capacities of schools.

**How can parents help?**

* Strong desire to support schools with mention of helping to clean or supervise children

**Requests from parents**

Parents highlighted the good support they had received and made a number of suggestions.

* Request for virtual timetable to support in home learning
* Support with resources for in home learning
* Some guides on how to support areas of learning to be posted on the Parent Hub
* Continue to work on developing consistency of in home learning
* Set pattern of when work is posted for at home learning
* Greater clarity on how Google Guardian can help parents
* Digital delivery has worked well for many children, don’t lose this
* Don’t lose the quality of recent months
* Continue to use Google Classroom for homework

**Provision of childcare**

This is a great challenge as increasing numbers of parents are seeking childcare. More than 1000 families have been offered childcare over the last 3 months.

* There is likely to be a reprioritisation by Scottish Government to help Local Authorities plan
* For in-school learning to happen we need to ensure that staff have access to childcare too
* Current rules require both parents to be key workers
* A number of providers will start opening up again soon and this should help as will further relaxation of restrictions as we move through the route map
* If you have a provider already it is worth getting in touch
* Childminders continue to offer flexibility
* We await updated guidance from the Scottish Government.

We don’t want to make promises that we can’t keep, it is going to be a challenge.

**Support for children with additional support needs**

* Some supports (such as Speech and Language Therapy) have not been operational
* NHS services are subject to NHS protocols Specialist services in ACC continue to support albeit virtually
* Dyslexia service will still be there for support
* Educational Psychology are still there to offer support

For children with additional support needs there can’t be a one size fits all, we require to plan at an individual level.

**Health and wellbeing of pupils**

* Digital Hub has lots of ideas to support parents
* Survey will soon be sent to children and young people to give us a baseline of how they are feeling to support planning
* Individual school plans will enable families to help prepare for the return to school buildings