

# St. Matthew's Academy Parent Council Newsletter

2022



## Dear Parents

Happy New Year from the Parent Council, I hope you find this newsletter useful and informative. I am your new Parent Council chair and on your behalf, I would like to first thank and commend Mr Colligan and all the teaching staff at St Matthews for continuing to deliver a safe environment and a high-quality learning and teaching experience for our young people throughout the ongoing Pandemic.

In recent communication from the school, parents may have seen the trend continuing in both attainment and achievement improving for all. In particular the number of our young people entering positive and sustained post-school destinations.

I would also like to thank our outgoing Chair Andrena Hughes, and Parent Council members Frances Gemmell, Alison Tarbet, Kathleen Rennie, and Francesca McLaughlin for their time and hard work over the years.

Finally, the Parent Council is here to be your voice and represent your views. All meetings are by zoom at the moment due to the ongoing restrictions, but any parent can join by simply getting in contact with the school office. Please email [stmatthews@ea.n-ayrshire.sch.uk](mailto:stmatthews@ea.n-ayrshire.sch.uk) and leave a contact email address and I will get in touch with you to provide joining instructions.

The proposed dates for the Parent Council meetings are as follows:

17 January 2022, 21 February 2022, 28 March 2022, 16 May 2022, 13 June 2022

If you would like to be more involved in the school by joining the Parent Council, we have five vacancies now and we would welcome your participation. Please drop a note to the same e-mail address above expressing your interest.

Thank you, Paul Meechan, Chair St Mathews Parent Council.

The Parental Involvement Act 2006 gives parents the right to receive information about their children's education and to be represented and have their views expressed through the Parent Council. All parents/carers/guardians are members of the Parent Forum; the Parent Council are the representatives, elected on behalf of the Parent Forum.

New guidance was issued on the 6<sup>th</sup> January with regards to self-isolation. Please click the link below to access updated guidance in the event of a possible positive case:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/test-and-protect/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-infection>

## Supporting Study

The following links may be useful in supporting your child at home.

<https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/learning-at-home/supporting-study/>

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/mental-wellbeing/stress/coping-with-exam-stress>

**All 5-21 year olds resident in Scotland are eligible from 31 January 2022 for Young Persons' Free Bus Travel, using a National Entitlement Card with the free bus travel product on it. You can apply for your free card at the following link.**  
<https://getyournec.scot/nec/>



Just a reminder that we're still using Easy Fundraising UK to raise funds for the school. Simply shop as normal with over 4,200 retailers, just start your shopping journey first at [easyfundraising.org.uk](http://easyfundraising.org.uk), or get the App or browser extension which reminds you when a donation is available. Once you make a purchase, our retailer partners will make a small donation to our cause to say 'thank you'!

## Fundraising

Due to the ongoing situation with Covid 19, we have not had the opportunity to contribute funds towards events for our children but this year we were able to pay for the buffet at the end of year event for the Sixth Year pupils and they thoroughly enjoyed it!

AS WELL AS CONTRIBUTING TOWARDS EVENTS, SOMETIMES WE ARE ASKED TO SUPPORT A WORTHY CAUSE. THIS YEAR MR ROSS TAYLOR, PT WELLBEING, HAS ASKED IF WE WILL FUND HIS INITIATIVE TO BRING IN A COMPANY CALLED 'DUAL FITNESS FOUNDATION' TO WORK WITH OUR YOUNG PEOPLE TO IMPROVE MENTAL HEALTH. WE WILL BE APPLYING FOR FUNDING THROUGH THE NAC PARTICIPATORY BUDGET LATER THIS MONTH TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN.

## CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Welcome to this year's AGM and Chairperson's Report for session 2020-2021.

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the commitment and dedication of Mr Colligan and his staff within the school, in what can only be described as another very difficult year. Covid 19 has undisputedly brought so many challenges, and I am sure you will agree, the support and commitment from the whole of St Matthew's community must be commended. Secondly I wish to thank all members of the Parent Council, who give generously of their time to support the Parent Council of St Matthew's, and also to Fr Mark Kelly for his time in the role as Church Representative.

All parents/guardians/carers are members of the Parent Forum with the Parent Council being the elected reps of the Parent Forum. The Parent Council have a page on the school website and produce a regular newsletter to communicate directly to the Parent Forum. The Parental Involvement Act of 2006 gives parents the right to receive information about their children's education and to be represented and have their views expressed through the Parent Council.

During this session the Parent Council members were:

Andrena Hughes Chairperson

Paul Meechan Vice Chairperson

Teresa Goggans Treasurer

Fr M Kelly Church Rep

Kathleen Rennie Suzanne Gillion

Donna Hunt Shelley Stewart

Alison Tarbet Vicky Corbett

Frances Gemmell Joanne Shaw

Francesca McLaughlin Tracey Murphy

Aileen McDermott John Hume

Eileen Murney Jan McGarry

Lisa Vint Michael Lafferty

A special thank you to Kathleen, Alison, Frances and Francesca as they step down after many years supporting the Parent Council. This, as many of you know, is also my time to step down.

The Parent Council meet approximately every 5/6 weeks, usually on a Monday and currently via Zoom. Mr Colligan is always in attendance. The Minutes of the last meeting are usually available on the Parent Council notice board in the foyer of the school, on the school website and in our

local parishes. All parents/guardians/carers are members of the Parent Forum and can attend our meetings, and any member of the Parent Forum can request a subject for discussion at a Parent Council meeting providing the request is regarding a general school issue or development issue, rather than an individual child, and it is made in writing to the Chair or the Head Teacher, no less than two weeks prior to the next meeting. Usual topics for discussion at our meetings include:

- School Development Plan
- SQA results and attainment
- CfE, BGE, Senior Phase
- Staffing/Budgets
- School diary/events
- Fundraising

The Head Teacher also uses the meetings of the Parent Council to consult on proposed developments for the running of the school and/or the curriculum.

Parent Council members are usually present at all events within the school, however, as you are already aware, most events have moved 'online' and our own Parent Council meetings have been conducted via Zoom. This was definitely a challenge for me and took me way out of my comfort zone, thank you to all the Parent Council members for your patience with this one.

Prior to Covid, the PC carried out various fundraising projects, and I am happy to report that we continued to provide financial support to the school. We successfully applied for a NAC grant on behalf of the school Participatory Budget and we were successful in receiving £1200.00. This money was used to bring Counsellors from Barnardos, into the school, to encourage and support the Mental Health and Wellbeing of our pupils. We also made a donation of £100 to help support the Uniform Fund and a further £700 towards to cost of the S6 Senior last day lunch.

In session 2021/2022, I am confident the PC will continue to support Mr Colligan and our school community, specifically to:

- Promote and communicate the role of the Parent Council
- Support the day to day life within the school
- Provide financial support where possible

The Parent Council is independent of the school and its members each bring something different with their individual skills, knowledge and experience. If you feel you could add something to the Council please contact the school in the first instance, we currently have 5 vacancies. The Parent Council gives parents/guardians/carers a voice and without a Parent Council, there is no voice. Please consider joining the Parent Council, our school needs Parental Involvement.

As I have mentioned this is my last term on the Parent Council. I first joined my sons' primary school 18 years ago when we were the School Board, I remained an active member when we

joined with the PTA and became the Parent Council as we know it today. The past 18 years have flown by and I can honestly say I have enjoyed every minute of my involvement. I have worked alongside lots of amazing teachers, pupils, partners and parents, and I have found this very rewarding. I have been involved in the recruitment of all, but one, of our Senior Management Team and have proudly represented St Matthew's at many events, within NAC and our school community. In the last 2 years I have been heavily involved with the day to day running of the school due to Covid restrictions and the impact of the pandemic, on the school day. During the summer holidays, I had weekly communication with Mr Colligan, regarding the safe return of our pupils, the exam diet, the withdrawal of exams as we know them, the exam awards, social distancing and so much more. I am grateful to Mr Colligan for the respect and commitment he has shown me, and also for keeping the Parent Council involved in such matters. I am sure you will agree no one will forget the last two years, and as I have told my own boys, when their grandchildren study History in the future it will no longer be The Plague they study, it will be The Covid 19 Pandemic, of which we can all say 'we lived through that'. I am sure the Parent Council, and the new Chairperson will continue to work in partnership with the school, to ensure the best for our children, and that it will continue to work with our parents, our community and the Church to ensure this excellent partnership continues.

To conclude, I would like to thank Mr Colligan and everyone who has supported me over the years as Chairperson, I have enjoyed every aspect and I will miss it very much.

To be part of the Community of St Matthew's has made me very proud.

Andrena Hughes

Chairperson