

Knocknacarra Educate Together NS
Board of Management Meeting
28th April 2020, 20.00 (Google Meet)

Present: Maggie Hall (patron nominee), Liz Daly (female parent nominee nominee), Aneil Rawat (male parent nominee), Paul Adams (chairperson and patron nominee), Elaine Keane (community nominee), Louise Shields (community nominee), Vivienne Kelly (teacher nominee) and Matt Wallen (principal and secretary)
Paul chaired the meeting.

Principal's Report

Enrolment

- There are currently 157 pupils enrolled in six classes.
- We have been in a holding pattern regarding the enrolment for senior classes. As the closure extends, we will look at contacting families this week or early next week to offer places.

Staffing

- All employees paid directly by the school have continued to be paid as normal.
- SNAs have been required to complete an online survey for potential redeployment. Recent clarifications have suggested that their role will be to support the transition back to school for children with special needs, most likely the ones under their care already.
- Weekly staff meetings have been held online.

Health and Safety

- The school remains closed, even for teachers, at present.

Attendance

- Attendance for the year to date remains 93.3%. Formal attendance has not been taken in any manner since the school closed on 12th March. 13 children continue to have perfect attendance so far this year. Seven children have missed 20 days or more, most of whom have or are spending time abroad. Letters have been sent out to children who have reached 15 or more absences reminding parents that absences of 20 days or more will be reported to Túsla.

Curriculum Development

- I am working on collating information for the Arts Plan (Music, Drama and Visual Arts), which should be complete next month.

Building

- We are on hold with the two big projects. The doors are on order. It is likely that the production line has stopped at present, delaying their delivery. Tenders for the contractor for the pipes replacement have been received and given to the consultant who is due to provide a tender report.
- Any potential repairs to the roof are on hold at present.
- A window was broken, and we arranged for replacement last week.

Policies

- The draft Admissions Policy was discussed at length by the staff and distributed to parents. We now need to agree the draft policy and send it to Educate Together for consideration.

Misc. Events/Information

- Weekly newsletters are being sent out that include a link to a video message from me.
- Teachers are sending weekly learning plans. We have discussed trying to find ways to make more personal connections with families in a manner that is comfortable for teachers.
- We are grateful to the efforts of teachers to provide plans, the parents for their ongoing support and the children for managing this unusual situation with great positivity and flexibility.

Financial Report

- It was decided not to send out Voluntary Contribution letters to families in light of the ongoing economic uncertainty for many families. The Spring Fair, the main fundraiser, had to be cancelled. Both are substantial income sources, but due to less spending requirements and careful management, the budget targets should be able to be met.
- It was agreed that parents will be invited to make a voluntary contribution in a future newsletter but formal letters will not be sent out this year.

- All grants expected from the Department have been continued to be received. All staff paid directly by the school will continue to receive full salary.
- The water bill was paid.

Draft Admission Policy

The draft policy was discussed, and it will now be sent to Educate Together for review.

Distance Learning

The Board discussed the current approach to distance learning. Matt explained it was a rapid and unexpected turn of events and that a bridging approach was in place. Many Board members felt that a broader approach with ongoing and regular feedback and interaction, particularly in light of the fact that distance learning may be required on a long-term basis, was needed. This will be discussed with the staff in a meeting this week, and decisions will be communicated back to the Board and the parent community.