

Board of Management of Gorey Educate Together NS, 3rd February 2021: report to families and staff

Attendees: Karen Loughran (Chairperson,) Colin Webb (Treasurer,) Raymond Swan (Secretary,) David Bolger, Olive Doherty, David O'Shea, Angie Dooley, Sarah Anderson

Apologies: -

This meeting was held via Zoom, hosted by David Bolger.

1. **Minutes from previous meeting adopted** (Colin Webb, Olive Doherty)

Matters arising: -

Correction to attendance at meeting of 2nd December: add David Bolger.

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Report to families and staff was agreed. Board Secretary to post on school website.

2. **Treasurer's Report**

Current account: €

School books account: €

Savings account: €

Credit Card: (€)

PayPal A/C €

3. **Teacher Career Break Applications**

The Board approved a number of applications.

4. **Teacher Job Sharing Applications**

The Board approved a number of applications.

The Board will revise the job-sharing policy further before January 2022, (revisit 'Criteria' and 'Maximum Number of Teachers.')

Olive Doherty and David Bolger spoke of the positive experiences of their children regarding Teachers' Job Sharing arrangements.

5. **Gorey Educate Together Secondary School**

David Bolger updated the Board as follows:

Parental Preference poll results: Educate Together 260; Catholic Education Trust 188, Waterford Wexford Education/Training Board 192.

Gerry McKeivitt, Educate Together New Schools Officer, has linked with the local campaign group, and a New School Committee is now in place, (led by Joanne O'Grady.)

This Board has offered its assistance to the Committee.

Recruitment of a Principal for the new school is underway, with strong interest in the position.

For September 2021, the school will offer up to 78 mainstream First Year places and 6 special class places (ASD.)

Capacity: 500 students, (with potential expansion to 1000.)

Niall Wall, Educate Together Buildings Officer, is liaising with the DES regarding temporary accommodation. Various locations are being explored, including the St Waleran's site.

Local councillors are supportive of the new school, including arrangements for temporary accommodation.

6. **AOB:**

School closure / continuity of schooling:

General feedback from parent reps:

School Closure 2020 vs. School Closure 2021: more parents are working usual workloads now, and struggling to balance everything. Some families have a regular 'school timetable' in place at home, Monday-Friday: the school work is printed and distributed over the week. Other families are doing what they can when they can.

Fear of falling behind is causing some stress/friction. Principal should reassure parents that 'catch-up' mechanisms will be in place when the children return to the classrooms.

The quantity of work being provided by the school is sufficient.

Material from teachers is of good quality. In particular, the video material gives encouragement to the children (lets them know that the school staff are there and involved) and maps out what needs to be done.

Feedback to the children from the teachers is excellent.

Weekly Work Grids: Links would be more helpful than instructions on where to find particular materials, e.g. Folens Online Resources.

Live sessions (via Zoom) are well received: weekly class meetings, reading groups, etc.

Families phone each other for help.

Families also organise virtual social activities such as 'Class Bake Off.'

Positive feedback to be relayed to the teaching staff.

David O'Shea outlined that teachers have established productive weekly routines, with much effort going into video work, and that teachers overall are now more proficient as regards remote teaching.

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Admissions (enrolments) update

This process is ongoing. Two full Junior Infant classes are expected for September. A small number of places remain available in Senior Infants, 1st and 2nd classes. Waiting lists are in place for the senior classes (3rd class: -; 4th class: -; 5th class: -; 6th class: -) and the Special Classes (-, subject to confirmation of eligibility.)

Reports from Deputy Principal and Assistant Principals: the Board found these reports to be clearly presented, and representative of a wide range of work.

Principal confirmed to Chairperson that the school remains proactive in identifying and reaching out to families who may be struggling with the current school closure. The school's Care Team is also active in putting supports and interventions in place.

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Date of Next Board Meeting:

Wednesday 3rd March, at the new time of 7.30pm (via Zoom)