



Hunter School of the Performing Arts

P&C Minutes

Date	Monday 6th April 2020
Time	5.00 pm
Location	Remote via Zoom

ATTENDANCE

Emma Walker-Coon, Gwen Flanigan, Malini Stephen, Bree Harvey-Bice (Deputy Principal), Jo Grey (Principal), Michelle Offen, Holly Foot, Natalie Peattie, David Donnelly (President), Guy Pitkin, Dee Morison, Darren Ponman (Deputy Principal), Cherie Watters-Cowan, Mark Pegler, Julie Hoey (Secretary), Felicity Ferguson-Tate, Harriet Ferguson

APOLOGIES

Lynne Kentish

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Jo Grey led a discussion around the school's response to the Covid-19 pandemic, in particular the government advice of 23rd March for students to stay home from school if possible.

It has been a massive journey and is ongoing. Staff have never worked so hard; likewise many students. In some cases, workload for students has been too high, and the school is working on a sustainable model for both staff and students going into Term 2. They will be giving students more ownership of the pace they work at, and providing extension work for students who need it. Assessments also need a complete re-think, as many of the planned assessment can't be done due to the nature of delivery. There is lots of planning and preparation going on. In Term 2, lessons will finish 10 minutes before schedule to allow students to have a break, do something physical, get a drink etc. The school is planning to have one rotating tech-free day each fortnight; students will have activities that don't require being online.

It was hoped staff would be given this week as planning and development days, but on Thursday last week they were told by the Department that this would not happen. For that reason this week, Year 7 – 10 classes are being given work to do, but the teachers won't be present at every lesson. This is to allow time for faculty meetings and Term 2 planning and preparation. They are hoping to get some formal staff development days early next term.

Bree Harvey-Bice noted that students are being well supported from a welfare perspective. Counselling sessions have been set up so students can make appointment, with regular reminder notifications going out. Students are struggling in many ways, especially the Year 12s who feel a bit like guinea pigs. The school is trying very hard to support them by keeping them up to date with all

the latest information and emphasising to them that no matter what happens they won't be disadvantaged, they won't miss out.

Jo added that the key message to Year 12 students is to stay on task and stay on track with study and assessments. They *will* be finishing Year 12 in some form this year, and it may be that their school assessments become even more important than usual in terms of HSC/ATAR/rank. So they should definitely stay focused and committed.

P&C feedback:

Staff are doing an amazing job. Students enjoy being able to interact with other students and utilise group chats; they work better and faster in this environment than working alone. It has really helped that the students were already familiar with Canvas and were able to hit the ground running. The information sent out for parents on how to check-in and debrief with their children was very helpful. Having a 10-minute break between classes from next term is definitely a good idea. Have definitely noticed that the workload is quite heavy and they seem to be getting more work than under normal circumstances. Also, there is inconsistency in teacher involvement; some interact quickly and effectively with students during class time, others not so much.

Response from Jo Grey and Darren Ponman:

Regarding the workload, the school has realised this and, as mentioned, is working on it. Note that teachers are somewhat flying blind in the online environment; it's not so easy to monitor student progress and tweak the workload accordingly. It will be really helpful if students can give polite, specific feedback to their teachers, and communicate openly to help them get a better sense of how things are working. Parents can also send in feedback, including what they hear from others e.g. in Facebook groups, etc., but the more specific it is, the more the school can respond to it.

In terms of teacher interaction in the online environment, the school is working on getting more consistency here. The Senior Executive went around to the faculty meetings today to help with staff skills in the various platforms including things like Zoom and Microsoft Teams. Social distancing requirements make it harder/slower to work with all teachers on these issues.

A key thing parents can do to help in this environment is to continue to show an interest in what your child is doing in their school work; this is so important to student engagement.

CANTEEN STAFF WAGES AND OPERATION

- The P&C has applied for government support and has been notified that our application has been received. Will keep an eye on the outcome.
- First payments: first week of May
- Possibly will be reimbursed for wages we have paid since canteen shut down

Emma reported that the canteen closed on Tuesday 24th March following the government's announcement asking students to stay home if at all possible. Stock that that would have gone off by the end of June was sold at cost price to staff. This morning the stock situation was revisited; items that would go off by July/August were likewise sold to staff; left over items will be donated to charity.

MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

ACTION: The Minutes of the AGM and the regular March meeting were accepted as an accurate record.

NOTED: that the February Balance sheet provided in the Minutes was an updated version to that provided at the meeting, due to Dee discovering an error by the accountant (petty cash had been set up incorrectly.)

ACTION: The February Balance Sheet aspect of the March meeting minutes will be voted on at the next meeting.

BUSINESS ARISING

Australia Road

The school has been asked to put together a proposal. Work on this had commenced, but understandably has come to a bit of a standstill at the moment.

Local Schools, Local Decisions.

The Minister had come out and said that Local Schools Local Decisions was a bad thing. Should we respond formally? Not now, with the current situation.

CORRESPONDENCE

Newcastle Writers Centre sent an email to the P&C regarding two current competitions with some good prize money. Julie to forward the email to Bree Harvey-Bice.

The Office of Children's Guardian sent a reminder that once employees have renewed their WWCC and provided the number to the employer, the employer must then verify the approval. It may be that one of the canteen staff is due to renew this year. Should a member of Executive coordinate this? Or should the P&C review at each AGM?

Dee reported that Paula Greentree had forwarded to her a letter from the Civic Theatre offering the theatre as a Year 12 Formal venue. Jo noted that a deposit has already been paid to another venue.

REPORTS

Treasurer's Report

March Balance sheet and Treasurer's report attached. Noted that the canteen was only open until 23rd March.

Motion: To accept the Treasurer's Report.

Moved: Gwen Flanigan

Seconded: Harriet Ferguson

Approved.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Jo reported that the shade sales funded last year by the P&C are now up, over the old Bini area.

Canteen Wages – Will continue to discuss on a week-by-week basis.

Canteen

Emma reported that the canteen had planned to apply for a grant, but the process was confusing and poorly communicated, resulting in the application being submitted late.

Emma also reported that when she came into the canteen this morning, she discovered the Streets freezer had blown a fuse and the top layer of food had started to defrost. A technician will be out today or tomorrow to fix or replace the freezer. All Streets stock will be compensated. There was not much non-Streets stock in there.

Primary

Dee expressed awe at the amazing way the primary staff have interacted with their students in the online environment. The Zoom classes have been brilliant and have really helped her daughter feel connected. Jo to pass on the feedback.

Dee noted that the planned Pyjama Day and Easter celebration obviously won't be going ahead. The Easter eggs will be donated to charity.

Other

Malini asked if perhaps the canteen could cater for the teachers on the first day back next term (professional learning day) as a way of saying thank you for all their incredible hard work, but Jo said schools have been instructed to cease all canteen operations.

Harriet mentioned the concept being promoted by James Morrison in lieu of Anzac Day parades: that musicians around the country play The Last Post at the end of their driveways at 6.00am on Anzac Day, and suggested HSPA get on board. David noted that Kylie Gardener has already sent an email about this to the Music students' parents.

David finished by asking Jo to pass on to staff a huge thanks from the P&C for the work they are doing; they are putting in an amazing effort and doing an amazing job.

Meeting finished: 5.55pm

Next meeting: May the 4th