Extraordinary Parent Council Meeting – Wednesday 19th February 2020

Clerkhill School, Peterhead

Mrs Ann-Louise Murray addressed the parents present and gave a short presentation.

The current roll at Clerkhill is 464, excluding nursery pupils.

The learning Estates Team oversee school capacity and out of zone applications. There is a large number of P1 applicants for starting in August this year, with only 53 P7s leaving, therefore the roll will increase significantly. The capacity of the school is 484 and the projected school roll for session 2020 – 2021 is 483. This is why the Authority is capping the roll. They look at the configuration of classes and so we will still have 17 classes instead of 18 but will have 18.0fte teachers. Due to increasing numbers in recent years it has been necessary to convert the ICT suite, Support for Learners Room and Library into classrooms but there is physically not another space in the school which could be used as a classroom. Both dinner halls are very crowded at lunchtimes and this is even with a split lunchtime.

Maxine Booth is the Lead Officer for Learning Estates and proposes that this year the school will be capped for one year. She has proposed a paper to cap the school and year groups. The proposal is to reserve 2 spaces from P2 – P7 for in-zone families. . The paper initially will be presented to the Buchan Area Committee and then goes to full Education Committee for consideration. Next year (July 2021) 82 P7s (currently P6s) will leave which will alleviate pressure on the school roll.

P1 this year will not have reserved spaces, but all in-zone applications submitted prior to the deadline of January 2020, are likely to be accepted. The projected roll for August 2020 is 483. The capping is necessary to ensure high quality of teaching and education continues.

Questions were invited by Ms Danica Smith (QIO), however 2 common questions were initially addressed:

Q. Why were out of zone allowed into the school? A. Parents are entitled to apply for out of zone – if there is space, they will be accepted.

Q. Why not use portacabins? A. This is a time issue, not a cost issue. It has to be passed by planning which takes a lot of time and because this situation is only projected for a year, it’s not worth doing that.

Questions from parents –

Q. What will class sizes be for next year? A. P1 ( maximum 25), P2 and P3 ( maximum 30), P4 and upwards( maximum 33) however if it is necessary to take these numbers above the legal maximum then an additional teacher would need to be placed in the class for which this is the case.

Q. Will there be more P1 classes? A. At the moment it is looking likely that there will be 2 P1s and a composite P1/2 but final configurations have still to be established.

Q. My child is in nursery at Dales Park School, but we have applied for a P1 space at Clerkhill. Will we be accepted? A. If you are ‘in-zone’, you will be successful.

Q. Are any other schools capped? A. Only one other school in the authority is capped.

Q. Is it realistic to cap the numbers for just one year? A. Yes, otherwise the Authority would cap for however many years needed. The predicted forecast is only for one year.

Q. Would portacabins be used in future? A. No, as the high pupil numbers are not predicted beyond next year and out of zone will not get in. Reserved spaces this year will just be for ‘in-zone’.

We will wait for a decision from the Committee and parents will thereafter be informed.

There were no further questions.

Mrs Murray closed the meeting and intimated that if any further questions come to mind to get in touch.