MAT Student Council meeting number 18 at Dobwalls Primary School on Friday, 31st January 2020
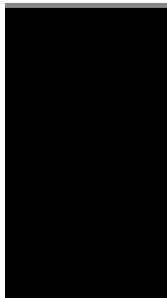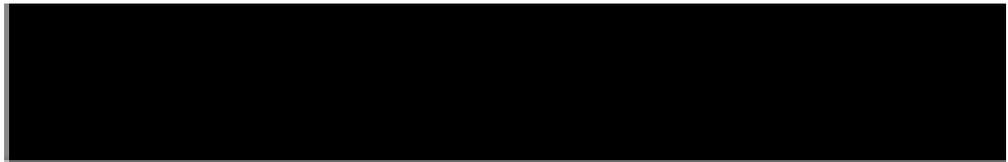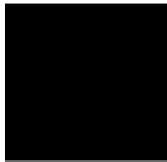
Students present:

Kai, Callum, Megan, Ruby, Ed, Fionntan, Erin, Jowan, Ashley, Shyla, Will, Isla, Lexi, Molly-Rose, Oscar, Chloe, Cody, Kieran and Tobe.

Mr Buckley facilitated the meeting with Mrs Yelland as note taker.

Actions agreed from this meeting
As a group, aim for 5 completed level 1 tasks by the next meeting.

Agreements reached in this meeting
Following discussion about 'labelling' of pupils, the group agreed that if there was a case that it may help a child then it could be used but only with extreme caution.
The reward and sanction systems in each school were agreed to be working well. Most felt the number of cautions given were appropriate and rewards were meaningful.
The group used observation, interviews and discussion to assess if the ethos of Dobwalls school was the same in practice as it was in the school posters. The team confirmed they had seen 100% agreement with the ethos by staff and pupils. One group describing the conduct of pupils as 'incredible'.
Three independent leadership projects were confirmed by vote. One litter collection project led by students in Landulph and two whole school competitions led by students in Liskeard.

Minutes of the meeting

Mr Buckley introduces himself and Rachel to the new members of the meeting. He then summarises the purpose of this group for the new members. He also explains that to earn a level 1 badge a student needs to have attended 3 training sessions (at school or these meetings), 3 level 1 leadership tasks and be actively involved in a school group. Mr Buckley advises the group that leadership is the one skill all top 100 companies believe is essential and a great deal of money is invested in it internationally.

Items for today's meeting include a Trust Behaviour Policy and learning about ethos. Mr Buckley explains that he will take agreements and suggestions from this group to the Headteachers' meeting on 6th March. Mr Buckley also informs the group that their Student Voice will also be taken to the Trust Board meetings ensuring that students' views are heard across all of the Trust meetings.

Mr Buckley explains that the Councillors will also visit classes today and can also have an opportunity to speak to the students at break time.

These Trust Student Council meetings give the students an opportunity to meet and discuss initiatives that are taking place at all the schools and the reps have two roles:

1. Give their own personal opinion and

2. Represent their school by giving their fellow students' opinions.

The second one of these takes a great deal of skill and is hardest to achieve but we have taken big steps towards this over the past few years.

The group play SPLAT! Using their names rather than the word SPLAT to get to know each other.

The reps get together in mixed groups ready for the next session.

Ethos

Mr Buckley explains that ethos is the number one thing that leaders begin working on. Ethos is a set of statement that leaders agree on. The ethos can be as short as just four or five words. The words and people's behaviour (students and teachers) should match.

Mr Buckley asks the group how could they demonstrate two examples to work out what their ethos is they are describing.

For example, if the school said in their ethos they were friendly but you were greeted by someone who said "what are you doing here?" in an unfriendly way then your first impression of the school would be that the ethos was unfriendly, not friendly.

The group work in sub groups to discuss their ideas.

The group looked at the ethos posters produced by Dobwalls (Dobwalls Diamond Rules) and discussed what they could look for around the school that would either 'Agree with the ethos' or 'Not agree with the ethos'.

Pupils compiled lists of both.

Mr Buckley asks the group that at break time their challenge is to use the lists they have made to test out the ethos of Dobwalls and come back with examples of when they saw the 'Diamond Rules' being applied and examples when they were not.

After break the group discuss what they observed. They all agree that Dobwalls are true to their ethos and gave examples which included:

- Good manners
- Teachers following the ethos
- Well looked after chickens
- No-one appeared unhappy
- A child fell over and others came to their help straight away
- The Dobwalls student leaders gave tours to the other leaders without having been asked to
- Children's work was displayed all over the school and no other students had damaged it
- Equipment was being well looked after
- Children were following instructions straight away

Mr Buckley explains that as leaders the Councillors are all protectors of the ethos of their schools and if they see something that goes against this, it is their duty to challenge it or inform a teacher.

Councillors agreed this was a useful exercise and something we should add to future MSC meetings in other schools.

Behaviour Policy

Mr Buckley reports that the Trust are currently writing a Behaviour Policy and that the Councillors starting points will be taken to the Headteachers.

Mr Buckley asks the students to think of their own words that they would include and then discuss these on their tables.

Examples included:

- No vandalism or theft
- Complete everything to the best of your ability
- Respect
- Resilience
- Punctuality
- Achieve goals set
- No bad language or violence
- Supportive

Mr Buckley notes that some are written positively 'things it would be great if you did' and some negatively 'things people can't do'. All ethos statements are written in a positive form to help praise people for what they do. It would be an enormous list if you added absolutely everything you can't do. This is what the laws of the country try to do and there are whole libraries of these books.

It is an unwritten rule that everyone (students and teachers) follow the ethos. Mr Buckley asks the Councillors what are their expectations of teachers? The group discuss on their tables of how they think teachers follow ethos. What are the things you expect teachers to always do, what would some do and what would you expect that they shouldn't do.

The students then come up with examples of their expectations of their teachers, such as:

- They are there for you
- Trustworthy
- Understanding
- Effective communication (e.g. using the student's name when they are talking to a student)
- Help children who need help
- Praise and recognise a student's work
- Give students equal attention
- Assertive (but not dominant)
- Instructions should be given respectfully
- Punctual and organised
- Wants the best for every child

Mr Buckley asks are some children 'naughty' or is bad behaviour when people make mistakes?

Following discussion, the term 'labelling' is introduced and the students asked if they know what this is. The students describe it as putting someone in a category. 'Naughty' would be a label the opposite of labelling would be to describe the behaviour rather than the person.

Mr Buckley asks the group to discuss their views about labelling.

- When should it be used?
- When should it not be used?
- Is it useful or helpful and should be included?
- Is it not useful or is it unhelpful or should it never be used?

Discussions on the tables suggested some interesting points and these were discussed with the whole group including;

- Wouldn't a label make it really hard for a child to ever change? Would they feel they needed to be like the label said they were?
- If you tell someone that something they do is a bad mistake and then they keep doing it again and again shouldn't we help them understand how bad it has got by using the label
- How can a label fit all the time? They may be different in different places or with different classes.
- I would feel that if a label was used for me that they didn't know who I was
- Pupils use labels and it would be hard to stop them using them
- People may be using labels and not realising – how could we change that?
- What if people thought a child was 'lazy' because they didn't pay attention in school but they didn't know they were having a really hard life outside school and not being lazy at all?

The group voted unanimously that if there was a case that it may help a child then it could be used but only with extreme caution.

Manners

Mr Buckley asks the group to think over this question – if we are teaching children to be good in the adult world, thinking of the vast majority who are good citizens, what should we be teaching them to be really good citizens?

If you make a mistake, should there always be an apology? If there is a behaviour problem, should there always be an apology?

What should we decided to put in the behaviour policy around this?

- Agreement that it was good manners to tell people you were sorry when you did something wrong.
- Discussion about what you should do if you had not done the wrong thing and someone thought you had. Should you still apologise?
- Agreed it was always the right thing to do to care for other people and show them you care.
- What happens if there isn't the time to find out who did something?

This discussion ran out of time before coming to any firm conclusions. We will come back to this at a later meeting.

Things to report back from last time

Landulph:

- Oscar has completed regular litter picks at the school and has run an assembly on it. The Head and teachers had reported back the council that his leadership was 'amazing' and he had moved the whole school to think about the issue.
  The group voted unanimously that this should be signed off as a level 1 task.
- The school will also be raising money to help the devastation of the Australian bush fires. These tasks will be organised by member of the Student Council who will use this as evidence for their level 1 tasks.

Liskeard:

- Kai and Callum ran a competition for the whole school where a question was put up on the board in and students attended at lunchtimes to answer the question by writing the answer of a piece of paper and making it into a paper aeroplane. The furthest flying aeroplane with the correct answer won (they received a House Point and some chocolate). It was aimed at years 7-9 and promoted in assemblies. Overall, between 50 and 60 students took part.
  The group voted unanimously that this should be signed off as a level 1 task.
- Megan asks if she can use raising money outside of school as a completed task. Mr Buckley agrees, as long as a teacher can countersign the form.

Looe:

- Erin reports that she completed her bake sale but unfortunately lost her paperwork. Mr Buckley advises that she could recomplete the paperwork and bring it to the next meeting.
- Ed has been chairing the Student Council meetings and writing the agendas. Mr Buckley advises him to write this up and bring it to the next meeting.

Dobwalls:

- Will explains that he ran a 'design a Christmas card' competition but as there were only two entries, he didn't complete the paperwork. Mr Buckley explains that it doesn't matter if it didn't work, he still gave it a go and should complete the form for the next meeting.

Mr Buckley reminds the group that they need to make sure that one of the signatures on the form is a teacher's.

Mr Buckley helps the students with some ideas they could use as their task:

- Dobwalls – leading the Rainbow Room
- Looe – running the shop without a teacher
- Landulph – running their own Student Council and assemblies
- Saltash – room managers

After lunch, the students take a tour of the school and watch lessons.

Mr Buckley recaps what has been discussed today:

- Ethos
- Expectations of teachers
- Views on labelling
- Views on manners and our discussion about apologies

Rewards and sanctions

Finally, Mr Buckley asks the group their opinions on how they feel their reward and sanction systems are working in their schools.

- Dobwalls have introduced a raffle ticket system and the winner gets to pick a privilege. Pupils are happy with this new system and how it is working.
- Landulph have a leader board and the winner gets a mufti reward. Pupils like this.
- Liskeard have a raffle system for 100% attendance and 0 behaviour points. The winner of the raffle of 100% attendance gets a paddle board. Pupils like this system.
- Saltash – the winning house gets time on inflatables at the end of the year. Pupils like this.

The secondary schools discuss whether house points work for the older years (9-11). Looe councillors felt that year 10 and 11 needed different incentives. For example, how many house points are needed to buy something like a pencil in the shop. If older pupils receive less housepoints then this may not be a fair currency as you have to earn a lot of house points.

Sanctions:

- Liskeard have a strike system which they think works well.
- Saltash have three warnings before they have to move classrooms. This used to be straight to 'RR' (recovery room) but all councillors felt the move to being 'parked' in another classroom was working better.
- Looe have a similar warning system (C1, C2 and C3). This includes 'parking' as well.
- Dobwalls have a traffic light system and it works differently for Y6s (there are less warnings before it goes to red). Pupils believe this works well.
- Landulph have a warning system and then they are 'parked'. This system works well.

The group take a vote on if they think there are too many warnings, too few or about right. The majority vote that it is about right.

The meeting finishes at 13.35.

The next meeting is on 17th March at Looe Community Academy.