

## PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

29/03/2021

On Monday 29 March 2021 at 20:45 the Parents' Association was convened with the following agenda:

1. Presentation of the newly-elected committee
2. Discussion of the letter the Committee wished to send to Dr Graziani in the name of the Parents' Association (letter attached so parents could read in advance and thus discuss during the meeting)
3. Online learning update
4. Report on current activities
5. Proposal, as of the next fundraiser, for funds to be held by the Parents' Association, and no longer separately by each school
6. Any other business.

The meeting started at 20:54 in the presence of 30 parents (during the meeting, the number of participants rose to 39).

President's thanks to representatives

1. **Presentation of the newly-elected committee:** Barbara Ferré, Parents' Association President and Committee Coordinator; Francesca Colacrese, Representatives' Spokesperson Galgario, Francesca Poliani, Representative for Borgo Palazzo; Silvia Zerbini Representatives' Spokesperson Arcobaleno, Cristina Colombo Representatives' Spokesperson Rosciate; Micol Angeloni Representatives' Spokesperson Codussi; Tiziana Pozzoni Representative for Borgo Santa Caterina (arrived at 21:05); Roberta Patelli Representatives' Spokesperson Girasoli (absent).

Whilst awaiting Tiziana Pozzoni we went on to the next item.

### 2. Online learning update

Difficulties with internet connections are caused by the network, today the Parents' Association reported a number of issues to the local council; it is hoped that schools will reopen immediately after Easter.

The parents present reported on online learning:

- Codussi - Micol Angeloni: no huge problems, at the secondary school there can be issues with the video cameras but nothing insurmountable;
- Da Rosciate – Micol Angeloni: more problems here, also because of external works which caused the second year's connection to drop.

Barbara: other than network issues, how is online learning going?

- Codussi: Micol: as representatives' spokesperson I haven't received any complaints, during the first period of online learning, a request was made (and declined) to avoid lessons on Saturdays, now the [programmed] Saturdays will go ahead and no one has complained, we haven't carried out any survey, so we don't actually know what the parents think. The second years are happy, including in relation to Saturdays, with online learning and the fact it was activated with a full timetable right from the start.

The local council is working to enhance wi-fi for all schools.

- Galgario: no complaints, apart from the theft of a PC from the secondary school, everything is fine; moving Saturday to a lesson in person was discussed by a few parents at the secondary school.
- Ghisleri: no complaints about the timetable.

Barbara: do any of the representatives present have anything to report?

- Rosciate: the 5<sup>th</sup> year is working well, children are participating actively and there is positive feedback;

The Headteacher seems very attentive to issues of this kind.

- Ghisleri: in 1°B the pupils participate, but learning is very slow, some children have difficulties with the language and in using the various tools (classroom, electronic register...), how can they be assisted? When they are at school in person they receive extra help with the language; Tiziana Pozzoni: online learning reinforces differences and difficulties, the Rosciate 2<sup>nd</sup> year's team works very well; Elena Buelli, currently representative in Ghisleri's 2<sup>nd</sup> year, reassured the current 1<sup>st</sup> year representatives, recalling the excellent relationship with the class coordinator last year: maths managed to keep up, italian was behind, difficulties for first year pupils are more obvious, they require more attention and parents need to learn how to use the various platforms. Two hours are just right for first years, any more would not be sustainable.
- Matilda Bilangu, representative Infants' School: online learning is all but inexistent, but in line with the children's age and the Institute's decision, there are weekly video calls to maintain contact with the children. Compared to last year, the teachers are more organized, the material is more structured and continuous which is certainly positive, but for children at infant school, this is not school.

### 3. Report on current activities

The course offered by the Parents' Association on the use of devices attracted 10-12 parents, who were all contacted directly by the two mothers who had volunteered their time, to identify and provide solutions to each parent's particular difficulties. If there are still parents who are in difficulty in using devices/platforms, they can contact the Parents' Association, which will put them in contact with the two parents who are ready to provide assistance.

The Parents' Association is organizing class photos, currently evaluating whether such photos will be taken at school at a social distance without masks, or alternatively as last year with photos provided by parents: the photographer from last year has been contacted who will work with all the schools, the plan is to place the pupils on a "chessboard" to ensure distancing, if schools reopen on 7 April this can be done for all pupils from infants up to first year pupils at secondary school, if on the other hand school doesn't reopen before the end of April, then we shall opt for a photo collage. The photographer is willing to work with either eventuality.

*Question: Last year class photos were donated ... may we ask the cost of class photos, and how you chose the photographer?*

The photographer has offered his services free of charge for preparing the photographs either in person or as a photo collage; the price of the photograph has always been 3€.

The Parents' Association is in contact with the Liceo Manzù regarding the creation of a logo.

Francesca Poliani, Borgo Palazzo: the Open School Project organizes extra-curricular workshops at both primary and secondary level, a local council project which has been running for three years, and which is improving over time; the two neighbourhoods run different workshops; after Easter these

will be assessed; for the primary school: choir, pottery and for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> years, internet workshop; for the secondary school: newsletter, Green Pink group for the environment, creative writing; workshops that can be undertaken both online or in person, but after Easter it is hoped they will return to being held in person.

Tiziana Pozzoni, Borgo Santa Caterina: for the primary school: either online or in person the transition project for those moving up to secondary school; for the secondary school: "Lunch at your desk" and "Let's Talk" about issues of interest to the students, the project has previously been a success, and so it was decided to repeat it for 1st and 2nd years; for the 3<sup>rd</sup> years, there is the "Prisma" project (story-telling and video-making), suspended during online learning, but it is hoped it can be resumed before the end of the school year.

Francesca and Tiziana took part in a meeting with the CSV [Centre for Voluntary Services] and the local council's psychologist to discuss the Open School Project; very positive view of the project as it enables school to be experienced in a different way. Different schools have different needs leading to different proposals; each neighbourhood's educators base their work on the needs of the students and their families. The project is largely funded by the local council. The possibility of funding is currently being considered not only for the second half of the year, but also for the first, funds are needed.

**4. Proposal, as of the next fundraiser, for such funds to be held by the Parents' Association, not by individual schools:** some ideas generated by the Committee, sell gadgets, acquire a logo...

Perhaps suggest to the Headteacher the idea of a concert for the 3rd years (secondary) with their parents at a park ...

From now any fundraising to be done in a coordinated way between the two neighbourhoods (for example, going for a walk, photos), so as to have just one Parents' Association fund to lower the costs payable by families for projects, using such funds to support the various schools. We would think as an Institute, and no longer as individual schools, as every school is a common good for the Institute. Any suggestions, even in the immediate future for fundraising, will be welcome.

**Voting via the chat function for the creation of a Parents' Association fund: 31 votes / 31 in favour / 0 against/ 0 abstentions**

**5. Discussion of the letter that the Committee would like to send to Dr Graziani in the name of the Parents' Association (letter attached so it can be read in advance, and thereafter discussed at the meeting)**

Over the past few weeks, the Parents' Association has received several requests to participate in various protests; the Committee has also been asked to be more proactive and not just a channel for information; in response, the Committee has drafted a letter to decide together whether to sign it in the name of the Parents' Association, whether to involve other institutes, whether to join up with other networks that have formed in this period.

Responses from those present:

- Very much in favour of creating a network because this is a problem which affects us all. Together we are stronger!
- What are we hoping to achieve with the letter??
- The letter is very well-written, but it lacks a conclusion, no one can answer our questions, they can agree with us, but how can they respond if there are no questions? What do we want to achieve? Do we have any proposals?

- The letter is very emotionally-charged, but it leaves us hanging, it doesn't contain specific requests, such as saying clearly "this will never happen again!"; have other Parents' Associations sent letters? Barbara will find out what other associations are doing.;
- Tiziana Pozzoni thanked the person who drafted the letter, the decision to leave it less specific was to make it more acceptable to everyone, if anyone wished to change it, this could be done, alternatively it could be sent as currently drafted;
- Francesca Poliani saw the letter as an opportunity for reflection, how was the pandemic handled, the conclusion could perhaps take the form of a question: "now what can be done for the children? How can we reflect on this? What can be done for the future of these children?", as ever the question of the nature of the individual teaching teams arose, the headteacher could raise the issue of a project on how to manage the return to school after this experience? And so a two-dimensional analysis, at both a scholastic and social level.
- Perhaps an Open Schools project for next year could be psychological support for children and teenagers who need to talk over and work through the two years of Covid??

Voting via the chat function: 30 votes / 29 in favour / 0 against / 1 abstention

Through the vote held via chat, it was agreed that the conclusion would be redrafted to reflect the comments above, and will be sent to the representatives for their speedy feedback.

## 6. Any other business

*How is the mandatory voluntary contribution used?* Every year, a report on expenses deducted from these contributions is published. The contribution goes to the Institute, not to individual schools.

The parents were reminded of the three ATS meetings on internet dependency, a flyer for which can be found on the home page of the Parents' Association's website.

One method to join a lesson would be preferred: the way in which lessons are notified is considered to fall under the label "didactic", in some classes, each teacher uses a different method for joining a lesson. The question will be raised so as to identify a single method.

School washrooms: this needs flagging continuously, to enhance the pressure on the need for renovation for Ghisleri and Galgario. The headteacher has stated that the only solution is to redo them from scratch. Given the importance of the topic, it was proposed that a letter be drafted to submit to the Committee of the Parents' Association, to be sent to the local council. One parent, via the chat function, suggested a hygiene committee, along the lines of the canteen committee. It is considered unacceptable that there is always another school before us in the queue. Barbara stated that it was unnecessary to go up against the headteacher who through his role has direct contacts. Tiziana Pozzoni suggested that the Ghisleri and Galgario representatives write the letter and inform the headteacher that the matter can no longer be postponed; the letter would be sent to him, the local council and ATS which can check whether the washrooms are compliant with minimum hygiene standards, especially in light of Covid legislation, based on this it could be boosted to a priority issue. Diego Lupo's father (3rd year Ghisleri) offered to write the letter and send it by email to the Parents' Association's Committee.

The meeting ended at 23:05 (34 present at close).