Minutes NHSPA P & C Meeting
6pm May 8 2012
Staff Common Room

Chair: Darren Mitchell

ATTENDANCE
Staff: Principal Stephen Gray, deputy principal Betty Romeo, canteen manager Rose Georgio.
Parents: Joanne Bright, Rod Weaver, Ailsa Weaver, Tracey McCann, Graham Bromfield, Glen Schofield, Ross Moffat, Katie Mann, Jenni Wilkins, Tony Ryan, Peter Denholm, Michael Ripard, Abbi Cufford, Yolande Francis, Damien MacRae, Donna Huggart, Michael Manuell, Lisa Penlington, Sam Crawford, Jane Crawford, Kelly Andrews, Ken Read, Karen James, Michael Scott-Mitchell, Janet McLachlan, Kelly Burke.

Apologies: Therese Solomon, Anne Brophy, Jan Idle, Yolanda Schmiga, John Caley, Mark Rolfe, Jeremy Challen, Terry Bail.

Welcome and introduction: Darren Mitchell welcomed all parents, the principal, deputy principal and Ms Georgio.

Minutes of April’s meeting: Accepted (Katie Mann, Jenni Wilkins).

MATTERS ARISING
Donna Huggart said she hoped to obtain an update on the implications the new workplace health and safety regulations would have on P & C activities by Chris Wilkinson the following week.

CORRESPONDENCE
1. Request by Dept of Education to release correspondence under Freedom of Information between Darren Mitchell and the school education director Paul Parks regarding the proposed change of boundaries for NHSPA’s local intake of students.
2. Email from Anne Brophy requesting the school consider an online booking system for parent/teacher interviews.
3. Email from Yolanda Schmiga complaining she missed the Year 9 parent/teacher interview evening because of poor communication from the school. She suggests the school adopt an online booking system in future.
5. Fundraising proposal from Entertainment Publications of Australia.
6. Offer of one month’s free membership to P & C members from Contours Dulwich Hill.

MATTERS ARISING FROM CORRESPONDENCE
1. Darren Mitchell has contacted the Dept of Education and authorised the release of
correspondence with Paul Parks regarding the proposed change of boundaries for NHSPA’s local intake of students.
2. Organisation of the parent/teacher interview evenings dealt with in the principal’s report.
3. It was agreed NHSPA would not qualify for a community grants from Marrickville Council as the school is in the City of Sydney local council area.

**Canteen Manager’s Report: Rose Georgio**
Ms Georgio took over the running of the school’s canteen at the beginning of 2012. She has made changes to the canteen’s menu to suit the specific needs of NHSPA, including the introduction of fresh sushi, homemade pies, wraps and salad boxes. The menu is on the school website. In response to questions on getting the balance right on the menu, Ms Georgio explained how she was adhering to the healthy schools canteen policy. Questions were raised over the necessity of selling soft drinks on a daily basis. Ms Georgio said this was within the policy guidelines as the drinks on sale were low carb Solo, Pepsi Max and sugar-free lemonade. Sales of water and milk were higher than soft drink sales at NHSPA she said. It was suggested the sale of soft drinks be restricted to one day a week but Ms Georgio said this would involve having to remove the drinks from the display fridge which would be difficult.

In response to queries about lengthy queues, Ms Georgio said ordering online was not proving popular and NHSPA was unusual in that the canteen was usually busier at recess than lunch. Stephen Gray said many of the students were at school for co-curricular activities as early as 7.30am, which would explain the unusual pattern. Ms Georgio said she was planning to hire a third canteen assistant for busy periods, in order to reduce lengthy queues. The possibility of using prefects to assist in the canteen was discussed, with Ms Georgio saying this worked well in a number of other schools on her books.

**Principal’s Report: Stephen Gray**
Work has started on repairs to the roof of St George’s Hall which has been closed since late last year.
The online booking system for purchasing showcase tickets is working well. The school’s dance tour of the US was very successful, with 25 students attending the festival in Philadelphia and nine students attaining scholarships at various US institutions, ranging in value from $2,000 to $18,000 a year.
The dance faculty would like to thank the P & C for its funding of the Garfield Lemonius masterclass last year. Now at Point Park University in Pittsburgh, Mr Lemonius has signalled his interest in maintaining a relationship with NHSPA and keen to return with a new choreography this year.
The annual school report is now on the school’s website.
Attendances at the year 8 and 9 parent/teacher night were down compared to last year, possibly because the notes were given to students to take home late in term one and parents may not have got them, or forgotten about the night.
In response to parents’ complaints about poor communication Stephen Gray said he was not opposed to looking at the possibility of trialling an online booking system for parent/teacher interviews on a trial basis next year but he expressed concern that this would take another area of responsibility away from the students. He also queried whether an online system would be flexible enough to cope with
multiple bookings for multiple teachers. He added that parents who were concerned about any aspect of their child’s schoolwork were free throughout the year to contact the school and arrange an interview time with a particular teacher. A parent suggested maps of the school layout be provided to parents new to the school on interview nights.

DEPUTY PRINCIPAL’S REPORT: Betty Romeo
Skateboards and scooters in the school grounds have become a safety issue and a student was injured on a skateboard brought to the recent athletics carnival. The area set aside for storage of skateboards and scooters is inadequate and does not prevent students from accessing them during school hours. There is no secure alternative storage area. Betty asked for the P & C’s support in introducing a ban on students riding skateboards and scooters to school. Darren Mitchell recommended the P & C support her proposal.

PRESIDENT’S REPORT: Darren Mitchell.
The P & C has authorised the Dept of Education to release correspondence between Paul Parks and the P & C regarding the proposed change of boundaries for NHSPA’s local intake of students. The P & C voluntary contribution fund has already reached last year’s total of $60,000. Given it is still only term 2, it is expected more parent contributions will be received before the end of the year. Ross Moffat has been appointed to the position of P & C treasurer, taking over from Jeremy Challen. The appointment was moved by Donna Huggart and seconded by Graham Bromfield. A vote of thanks to Jeremy Challen for his extensive contribution as P & C treasurer was moved by Darren Mitchell and seconded by Donna Huggart. A more detailed treasurer’s report will be presented at the P & C meeting in May.

TREASURER’S REPORT
A treasurer’s report was tabled.

ENVIRONMENT SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT
There was no report from the environment subcommittee.

PERFORMING AND VISUAL ARTS SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT
There was no report from the performing and visual arts subcommittee.

BUILDING SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT: Michael Manuell
The renovation of the Studio Theatre foyer continues, with a new box office almost completed. The new storage area facing Newman Street is nearly finished. There are some outstanding electrical and painting jobs to be done. The committee thanks Terry Bail for his extensive time and effort in designing the plans for the foyer renovation. The P & C is awaiting project costings.

FACULTY SUPPORT SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT
There was no report from the faculty support committee.

GENERAL BUSINESS
1. A parent requested the P & C consider moving its meeting time from 6pm to 6.30pm, as it was difficult for some people to get away from work in time. Darren Mitchell explained that as the principal, deputy principals and various teachers were required to attend some P & C meetings, it would be inconvenient to them if the meetings started later than 6pm. Mr Gray said attendances at P & C meetings had increased since the 6pm starting time was instituted.
2. Newtown Public School has installed two demountables on the NHSPA’s oval. It was suggested John Caley contact the school’s P & C to discuss a joint working bee to carry out some mulching, weeding and other maintenance work in this area.
3. A group of parents of primary school-age children living in the Newtown/Stanmore/Petersham area attended the meeting to voice their concerns over the proposed changes to NHSPA’s boundaries for local intake. The concerns raised included:
   * Lack of consultation with the wider community over the change.
   * The school and the P & C’s support of the department’s proposal to redraw the boundaries to solve the problem of potential overcrowding.
   * The P & C’s letter of support for the boundary changes to the Dept of Education.
   * Confusion over the school’s mandated proportion of local and audition students.
   * The lack of close proximity of alternative high schools identified by the department to accommodate students who would no longer fall within NHSPA’s boundaries.

Stephen Gray said there was no set quota placed upon the school for local or audition students and the school was obliged to accept all local students within the school’s catchment area. This meant the proportion of local and audition students for the 2012 year 7 intake stood at close to 50/50. The principal and the P & C agreed that if the number of students living in the local area increased according to the department’s predictions in coming years, the school was in danger of losing its unique status as a performing arts high school. Many of those in attendance spoke in support of the overriding importance of the school maintaining this emphasis on excellence in the performing arts.

The visiting parents protesting the boundary change requested the P & C ask the department for a review of the decision. Darren Mitchell said he would seek a meeting with the Dept of Education and report back at the next meeting. He would also inquire whether Paul Parks would be available to address a P & C meeting to explain the decision at a later date, if that was considered helpful.

Meeting closed at 8.32pm
Next meeting: June 12, 6pm, staff common room.