

**Parents & Citizens Association – Excelsior Public School**

**464th General Meeting**

**Tuesday, May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022 @ Time: 7.15pm**

**Venue: School Library**

**Attendees:**

Lalana Chulatunga  
Chamila Chulatunga  
Sonia Dorairaj  
Catherine Cynthia  
Jooti Bala  
Kate Wurth  
Amruta Ghode  
Tanya Kysa  
Radhika A  
Shadi Arabi  
Emma Escott  
Laura Asford  
Nicole Wang

**Staff:**

Sandra McKay  
Georgia Couque

**Apologies:**

Steph Whittington (Events)  
Pallavi Bhagavatula (Treasurer)

**Absent without notice:**

Band subcommittee  
Nidhi Kaushik (Secretary)

On-Site Meeting (at School Library) Commenced: **7.19pm**

Minutes taken by: Sonia Dorairaj

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**ACTIONS TO REVIEW from Mar 22 Meeting:**

- Mar 22 meeting minutes accepted

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

- Casual office staff advised parents can collect new working with children exception form from the office

## **REPORTS:**

### **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT: Mrs. McKay**

1. **Lack of staff** continues to be an issue and it hard to find casual teachers to cover classes. Office staff have only 1 full time and the rest of staff are part time. Eol is put out for reliving AP early stage 1, closed at the end of last week. Ms. Adam, will be taking maternity leave in week 3 of Term 3 and with the shortage the school has decided to go to State-wide Eol (in prog). Teacher shortage is effecting ability to cover classes with casual teachers. This has resulted in split classes. Our EALD teachers, support teachers have been asked, this is not ideal and disrupts the program. If this is not the case, then more split classes occur daily.
2. **Covid – RAT Tests** – we keep a stash if we need it, but now there is excess and we are choosing to distribute them and parents can opt out
3. **Playground improvement** –
  - a. Still waiting for a quote for **near canteen area**
  - b. **Mural** -waiting for assets to approve.
  - c. **Space near green room** – waiting for quotes. Green room (near kiss and drop. It was old nurse room; prior it was uniform room). The toilet was renovated by the department and the kitchenette will be soon plus recarpeting and painting it. In the interim - it might be useful for storage and SRC. Later on when we need to use the Emu Blue Café for a classroom then we can use it as a community room (it is small however)
  - d. **Lower quad** –has been resurfaced, just waiting for dry climate to do the line marking. Painting of handball courts and dots for Monday morning assemblies
  - e. **Gate 7** – gate where children need to walk and there is the car park to cross. It is dangerous, as sometimes we have trucks there and things happening that can be dangerous. So, the school is paying for a new entry on the other side of gate 6 (which is the driveway gates). Children will be able to walk into the school, and a fence will be there, so that kids cannot cross the driveway to enter.
  - f. **Automate Gate 6**– and to have an intercom plus camera installed. Pedestrian gates themselves – will be automated so that gates are opened and closed promptly based on a timer.
  - g. **Student reports** – teachers have started writing them and they will be uploaded onto Sentral in Week 10 (no paper copy reports). Hard copies will be printed on request to save paper. For families wanting copies of older reports for OC/Selective, it will be available through Sentral going forward.
  - h. Next year - K-2 will be working with **new English and mathematics syllabus**, in 2024 – K-6 will be using new syllabus documents. Year 1 – have been selected as part of a trial because of good results in literacy and numeracy and they began using the new syllabus a year earlier. Lot more teaching in phonemic awareness. It was reassuring because Excelsior has already been already doing this as part of the syllabus. English is broken into speaking and listening, reading and viewing, writing (with focus on typing) and responding and phonics and phonemic awareness is now part of the new syllabus. There will be more reporting of how students are going in those individual areas rather than broad areas. Handwriting – there is a strong focus in the new syllabus
  - i. Mrs. Couque – **Forge** – is a wellbeing survey for the kids at that point in time with smiley faces (done online). Usually happens at the end of term (takes a few weeks). The school is working to align it with the chaplaincy program. With COVID and

students working from home has brought about certain wellbeing issues and have impacted the children in various ways. It happens in Years 2 - 6. It helps monitor students over time. Results are analysed over time, and over the 8 areas. This can help with certain students whose name pops up regularly, so they can help accordingly. The parents will get informed if they are going to get involved in the program. Questions are –

1. I feel happy and calm a lot of the time
2. I feel safe and loved
3. Good things will happen in my life
4. There are people in my life that love and care for me
5. I always try my best and I never give up
6. I can get really interested in what I am doing and forget other things
7. I like myself and I feel happy being me
8. I try to be kind and helpful

People in each class who have scored quite low are highlighted and shared with the teacher who does a 1:1 check in with the student to ensure it is general feel or just a bad day. If it is general, then we arrange the chaplaincy program to work with the particular students. It has been happening around 2 years. Most of our kids are compliant, this gives them an avenue to ask for help, if they choose to.

4. **NAPLAN** – was successful and it went fairly smoothly. This year there were technology glitches. Some parents need NAPLAN for selective. There is two weeks to do make up test, but in reality, by the time we do the tests, schedule catch up test, they can only do one type of test per day, there is a supervising teacher that needs to be present, equipment, a space to do it in, these are the reasons make up tests need a lot of co-ordination, resource and time to organise.

#### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Extract from Lalana Chulatunga**

Last time we met two months ago, 22 March. There have been lots of important things happening since our last meeting.

On 7th of April, I had a great opportunity to participate in this year's school Anzac Day ceremony on behalf of the P&C at the school hall. Thank you to the school captains for inviting me to the event. I am so proud to see all our kids showing their respect at the Anzac Ceremony.

On 8th of April our wonderful Events team organised a fantastic morning tea for all the parents and carers that attended the Easter Hat Parade at the school.

Having some nice hot tea or coffee on that cold rainy day was just lovely, and it was a great opportunity for many parents to get together, chat and catch up, after so long being away from school events.

This term, our Events were kicked off with a very successful Mother's Day Stall on 5th of May under the Cola, where our students got the chance to buy lovely little gifts in preparation for Mother's Day.

After that, on election day on Saturday, we had the Election Day Fundraiser with a BBQ and Cake Stall. I think it was a very successful event with plenty of volunteer's support.

Thank you so much for all the Events ladies for all your hard work and also all the volunteers who gave their support for all these events for this year. I would like to say I am so impressed about the outstanding organising skills of our events team. Well done, and please keep up your great work for our P&C events!

Activity at the Uniform Shop is also beginning to ramp up and our uniform shop team not only look after all the online ordering successfully but also have been opening the uniform shop for in-person orders.

Over the last two months I have been speaking to the bank to get an EFTPOS machine to help make payments easier for in person purchases as unfortunately, the previous EFTPOS machine and service had been cancelled by the bank.

Although the previous EFTPOS machine wasn't used for some time, there had been \$47.90 deducted as EFTPOS service fee from the Uniform Shop account every month until November 2021, and then stopped, I guess when it was cancelled.

We also recently noticed a bank charge for "Equipment Fees" of \$467.00, and after asking the bank I was told it was a fee for not returning the previous EFTPOS machine, but as we still have the machine, I'm waiting to hear back from the bank about how we can return it and get that fee refunded.

Regarding the new EFTPOS machine, I got an update today that they are hoping to send it to us before the end of this week, but we'll have to wait and see.

Thank you very much to the team for their hard work running the Uniform Shop!

I am very happy to see lots of great news from the Canteen as well. It's nice to see the canteen re-opening for over-the-counter purchases again. From talking to Radhika, I understand there are currently 7 volunteers rostered for helping at the canteen, which is fantastic, but there is still more help needed, so we will be putting out some notices to ask for extra volunteer help soon. Perhaps we can use the Google Docs spreadsheet approach used by Events team for filling volunteer spots for the Election Fundraiser, which I think worked really well for everyone.

Thank you very much for our Canteen Team for their hard work to run Canteen smoothly, especially with re-opening the counter this term!

I can see our ERA team are really working hard too, with lots of enrolments being updated for this term and growing a really healthy balance in the ERA account as a result. With lots of extra funds, I am happy to say we were able to transfer \$10 000.00 to our P&C main account last week that can now be spent for school improvements. I know they are currently looking for a new teacher for Art classes and hope to hear more about this in ERA update. Thank you for all your hard work, ladies! Keep up the good work!

We have been in further contact with the Auditors about starting on the outstanding audits for 2020 and 2021. I'll let Chamila provide more detail in an update shortly, but I'm sure there will be some activity for all our treasurers from it, so thank you in advance to the treasurers for that!

Speaking of Audit, we noticed that there weren't many old records that we could find in our main P&C email history, and I think this is because some things were often discussed using personal email

addresses. I would like to encourage everyone to try and use the different P&C group email addresses as much as possible to help reduce this problem for future, as well as to help keep all the people in each committee able to see the communication history. Personal emails are fine to keep using where needed, but please at least also CC a relevant group email address to keep that history available, or you can go the other way and send to the group email but CC personal emails – whichever works.

Finally, I would like to finish my update with a big thanks to Mrs McKay and all the teachers on behalf of P&C for their enormous effort to keep school running smoothly and also a big thank you to all of our volunteers, not only new volunteers but of course all our wonderful existing volunteers, who help keep the P&C running, and give such a big help to the school, our students and community.

#### **TREASURER'S REPORT: by Lalana (in Pallavi's absence)**

Taxes and super are up-to-date. Balance is \$250,000, we need to work out effective ways to use the money (can be discussed further)

#### **SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

##### **Canteen – by Radhika**

We opened the counter sales. We need a volunteer for Wednesday

- a. We opened the counter sales
- b. Volunteers need on Wednesday – 12-1:30 as there are huge queues and they do not want the kids to go without getting a turn to order at the canteen. Lalana to help place a notice in the newsletter for a volunteer.
- c. The small freezer used to store Ice blocks– not working. They are going to have to purchase one which, she has got quotes. In the budget that was created last year, they have already accounted for a new freezer and an oven so it should come out of that, but I will send the quotes through as well.
- d. The canteen secretary has resigned, so they are looking for a new volunteer and possibly adding a notice in the upcoming newsletter
- e. She has 11 volunteers that are not available for canteen timings, but can be used for other areas that might need help and she will share it. Lalana requested that they ask these volunteers for the canteen secretary role.

##### **Uniform – Shadi**

- a. 2 ladies open the shop – every second and fourth Wednesday of the month
- b. New Treasurer – taking over from Nikki
- c. Girls pants – big order in 2018, it had to be refunded, style not working. They have ordered new samples, will be brought to the office, and she might bring it to the meeting to discuss. They have contacted a few suppliers and asked for samples, which will be sent to the office shortly. We can discuss further next meeting – to see if the samples are acceptable and maybe some of us who have daughters can try it on to confirm that they are suitable

- d. Space – that the uniform shop has – there are lots of boxes, very large, and it is not safe, sometimes, people can trip over them. Some boxes are very large and they are placed overhead and not many of us can reach them. It will be good have new shelving. Boxes come 50 in each.
- e. Lots of unwanted things are also left in the uniform shop, which might be best to remove

### **ERA- by Amruta**

1. ERA is seeking permission from the P&C insurer to see if the ERA Yoga, Tennis and Dance – all these need their insurance renewed. It was an enquiry and now has advanced to an audit. They are in audit stage at the moment. If it does not happen that way, then the teachers can insurer individually, but not sure if it will work that way. P&C is using Andrews Insurers. ERA will make enquiries that Chamila will share, so they can get in touch with Andrews.
2. Art Tutor has resigned. They are now actively looking for another tutor within the community
3. STEM is also being looked into as potential replacements if ART cannot be arranged in time for Term 3
4. ERA wanted to understand – if ERA was to showcase in the Hills Music Festival? Mrs. McKay – it is the school that will audition at the hills festival. Nicole wanted to showcase at 3 different assemblies with 3 different classes. Mrs. McKay will be in touch with the teacher in charge of assemblies and get back to us.
  - a. ERA – Yoga – they want to increase participation. They want to combine classes, so that attendance is up. So they want to showcase classes to help with this. Mrs. McKay – said it might be try outs – or a day where the teacher comes along. They will need permission slips sent home. Mrs. McKay said – she will like to show in the newsletter with photos (with permission). Amruta mentioned that they needed to update contacts for ERA – so she will be reaching out to other sub-committees to get a format that might also be available that is more elaborate than what they have. Lalana– can send a copy of the contracts that can be used
  - b. Re – Band – 3 Tutors – 3 WWC are not valid, email has been sent and Amruta will again follow up

### **Events - by Emma–**

- a. Re – the election BBQ - \$1,600
- b. It was going to be cash only, but then a new EFTPOS machine was purchased and \$280 sales came from the machine.
- c. Thank you to the volunteers – for helping out!
- d. The amount raised will be used for other events

- e. Thank you to the volunteers - Cans, Cakes etc., was a much appreciated contribution

### **OTHER DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

1. **Current Secretary** – according to P&C federation rules, if members do not participate for more than 3 months, another person can be elected. New secretary is required – Sonia is now moved from VP to Secretary role. It has now been seconded by Kate.
2. **Treasure Position** – Pallavi does have a demanding job and Nicole has volunteered, so Pallavi will be stepping down from that role. Nicole will be doing both ERA Dance co-ordinator and Treasurer for some time. Chamila will help for now and will work out a plan of how to hand over. The volunteer list can be looked into – for a potential ERA Dance co-ordinator. Pallavi will do a handover with Nicole in the next few weeks.
3. **Audit update – Chamila** – Chamila has reached out to auditors who require further documentation. All sub-committee treasurers have been contacted to ask for financial documents from 2019 up to September last year. Bank statements have been downloaded. We still need receipts, invoices, cash deposit slips. Uniform shop has placed all that on the google drive. Emma has given me documents. Band, Canteen and ERA documents are still to be consolidated – either hard copies/copies uploaded to google drive/emailed will be helpful. Once we have all we need, then we will be able to submit to the auditor to save on time/money going back and forth.
4. **New Books for Classrooms** – Silent reading program happens daily in classroom. As kids are bored of books in classroom, the class teacher has requested book to be brought for reading in class. Lalana suggested that P&C can help to get more books (for home readers as well) however the class teacher has mentioned there is not enough space to store them. As some technology books are outdated in the class room as well, so we were hoping to use the P&C funds to get more books, across all classes equally. Mrs. McKay mentioned that 2-3 years ago the English committee has shared funds for class libraries so we can access where the need is. Teachers do bring their own books in. Some teachers – possibly new ones may not have enough. However, all teachers may not have the same needs. However, what we want is for it to be equitable across the school. Mrs. McKay to talk to teachers about this. DoE has released book list of Year 1 and they are waiting on the rest. The school already has funds set aside for this. Parent suggested the use of second hand books – however storage, will still pose an issue. Mrs. McKay to talk to staff about that suggestion. Children level 16 and above will be asked to go to the library for books and not limit themselves to the class room libraries as there are higher level books provided there.
5. **Devices in classrooms** – Chamila - as there are a funds in the P&C account, that can be used to help the children. Can it be used to increasing the availability of devices in the school?  
Mrs. McKay – mentioned that Mrs. Mistry has a plan in place for procuring devices. A lot of schools have gone down the road of BYOD, Mrs. McKay does not support that, as she does not believe primary schools students should be responsible for an item that is that valuable and it might cause issues at home. The device ratio in school is currently 1:3. The plan is to get to 1:2 and eventually 1:1. Mrs. Mistry does have a long term plan to support this. Last year, with extra funds at the end of year was used to procure more devices.

**Fairy Garden** – question from parent - seems a bit run down and fairies are missing. Mrs. McKay mentioned that that Mrs. King does look after it. Every now and then Mrs. King does remove them, as sometimes the fairies go missing! She then returns them as long as things are not taken from the garden.

**Working Bees** – Question from Parent - Is this program something that still continues as we can see some areas that might need attention around the school that might need some gardening help – such as area near the cola? Mrs. McKay - due to COVID and then the rains, our working bee has not happened in a long time. We could pick it up during spring. When it rains the area is filled with mud, we are getting a retaining wall to stop that and place drainage in. In the holidays, the steps in the green are getting professionally gurney and painting slacks on the cola with bright colours.

Parent suggested – as so much is being done, instead of paying for it, we can try and get some volunteers to help get it done

**Parent asked** – We missed out on a kindy welcome party and we are hoping to have some time to all meet. Emma mentioned – in some schools there is muffins with mum and donuts with dad. We are looking to start potentially from mother's day next year. There is still the Halloween disco and the 50year Excelsior celebration event. We Mrs. McKay we are still looking at doing a 50(+1) year event during education week. It seems to take a while to get back into the rhythm of things. We can brainstorm what can be done during the next meeting.

**Grow your mind** – Parent enquired – if that was well received and if it can continue with the P&C funds to help? Mrs. McKay – Yes, we still have the subscription included with our PE lessons (Term4) and Mrs. Couque mentioned that it is built into scope and sequences, but last year it was modified due to home learning. This year, it should be on track. (Mrs. McKay) It is already funded by subscriptions that we already charge via school fees.

**During rainy days** – Parent asked - they can go on iPad to go on their iPad, Is there parental control within apps such as – YouTube?

Mrs. McKay – all the devices are connected to the DoE. The parent said that her child could watch YouTube with ads. Mrs. McKay– said that even YouTube is filtered via the department. Mrs. Couque is going to investigate

**Oval** – Emma - how is that looking? Mrs. McKay mentioned – that it is not looking great and no one is willing to grow grass and place irrigation in an area that will not grow grass. Artificial grass is an option – or an option to melding in with normal grass as well. However, it is expensive and the upkeep of it, is also a consideration as we already pay significant amount to maintain 3 artificial grass areas around the school. It only last for a certain amount of time and the removal, also incurs an environmental levy. So, it might be high maintenance for the future. We might



consider it for the area near goal post. We could move the goal post, however not everyone is in agreement on this.

**BUSINESS ARISING:**

**CLOSING OF THE MEETING: 9:09 pm**