

# Knox Academy Parent Council



**Web:** <http://knoxparents.org.uk/>

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## **AGREED MINUTES**

**DATE:** Wednesday 30 August 2017. The school Library.

<b>PRESENT:</b>	John Wrinn	Chair	PC member
	Andy McBain	Vice-chair	PC member
	Kim White	Vice-Chair	PC member
	Louise Elder	Parent	PC member
	Caroline McKinnel	Parent	PC member
	Katrina Booth	Parent	PC member
	Janette Fairgrieve	Parent	PC member
	Anne Hunter	Parent	PC member
	Scott Sutherland	Parent	PC member
	Caroline Taylor	Parent	PC member

<b>IN ATTENDANCE:</b>	Lauren Rodger	Head Teacher (interim)
	Bev Skirrow	Business Manager
	Charli Prime	Depute Head Teacher, Meadow Park
	Calum Blair	Teacher Rep
	Cole Dean	Head Pupil
	Fergus Dickson	Head Pupil
	Kara Singh	Deputy Head Pupil
	Gregor Booth	Deputy Head Pupil
	Steve Wands	Active Schools

### **PARENTS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Jenny Riddell; Caroline McGregor; Caroline Taylor; Margot Newman; Louise Stewart; Elaine Towler; Serena Thursz; Meg Pathirana; Murray Craig; Phillip Ross; Lindsay Brown; Mandy Hockey; Susan McKinlay; Rona Segurado; Romain Segurado; Barbara Hippie; Polly Cooke; Mhari Brotherston; Fiona Dewar; Chris Carruthers; Janet Imrie; Nicola Sales; Tracy Charbonnier; Simon Riley; Fiona Dee, Vicky Cole

### **Attached documents circulated in advance of the meeting:**

- Agenda
- Minutes of Meeting on 31st May 2017
- Head Teacher's Report
- Sports Department report
- Senior Pupil Management Team report
- Staff Members' Report (to follow)
- Chairperson's Report
- PTA Report

### 1. Welcome and Apologies

John Wrinn (Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially those attending a Knox Academy PC meeting for the first time.

Apologies: Kay Boylan, Nicola Cunningham, Colin Henderson, Gillian Greenshield, Jackie Mackinnon, Cllr Brian Small.

### 2. Minutes of Meeting 31 May 2017

The minutes were approved following a small change to page 4, reference HAFC.

Proposed Kim White, Seconded Andy McBain

### 3. Matters Arising from the Minutes & Action Points

Action Points from 31 May 2017	Who	When / Notes
School Development Plan	LR	Ongoing
Purchase of Grace's signs or similar printed/laminated versions.	KB	Ongoing. Original forecast price is too expensive. KB to investigate alternatives.
Comments on paired reading	SI	LR / BS
Restorative behaviour	LR	Ongoing, being actioned in the school Improvement plan
Add structure of staffing to school website	LR	As soon as possible
Communication strategy	SS	Ongoing, 1 <sup>st</sup> meeting held, action plan agreed. To be discussed at next PC meeting
Attend P7 Parents' Consultation in June	AMcB	Closed
Wider participation in sport	SW	Closed – regular updates in Active school report
Update Curriculum Book	LR	[As soon as possible?]

### 4. Head Teachers Report:

Lauren Rodger (LR) introduced herself and gave a brief summary of her career and career path to date.

LR commented that she knows Knox Academy well, she has noted a very warm welcome to the school.

Priorities in the first week are to get to know staff, get out and about across the school and get to know people across the school and the wider school community.

Due to the change in leadership in the school that took place on Monday 28 August the Head Teacher report from Sarah Ingham was not fully presented.

The S4 exam results were discussed and the following points are noted:

- Fewer pupils were presented for N5 exams across S4 in 2017
- The pupil tracking in 2016/17 predicted a higher level of academic achievement than the actual results

- Meetings took place last week (led by SI) with 2 out of 4 of the departments that have seen a drop in performance expectation
- LR noted there are a number of contributory factors that can influence a drop in exam achievements and the 2017 results will be fully investigated
- A parent suggested that a contributory factor could be that Nat 4 and Nat5 teaching takes place in the same class
- LR noted that it was normal practice across Scotland for this to take place as it was impractical for schools to resource small classes which would be the obvious solution. LR noted that it was common practise to have Nat4/Nat5 together and Nat5/Higher together.
- It was noted that the school priority is to 'Get It Right For Every Child' (GIRFEC).
- LR noted that exam papers are not returned to schools. The school does receive component marks for the exam in each subject.
- Louise Elder noted that in 2017 there was a significant drop in the number of revision classes run by teachers in the lead up to the exams
- BS noted it was not a funding issue. The same level of funding was available as per previous years.
- Cole Dean has offered a suggestion that the S6 pupils are an untapped resource that can help tutor and coach S4 and S5 in preparation for their exams
- Bev Skirrow noted that there were evening support revision classes posted on the school website
- A parent noted that her thanks for the support given over the exam period
- A parent noted her concern that the S5 pupils had all received a negative message at their assembly in the previous week and had been blamed by SI for under achieving at S4. AH noted that many pupils had been very successful and many will have exceeded expectations but this failed to be recognised.
- LR noted that insight data from the SQA will be released to schools by the 8 September. Principal teachers will analyse this data. ELC have a very strong statistics team who support and analyse the data from the SQA and will support Principal Teachers and teachers.
- The SQA is asking for forecast achievement levels in November which all schools must comply with. This will therefore determine which levels pupils are being presented for 3-4 months ahead compared to previous years. There will still be flexibility to make changes to levels for individual pupils where appropriate.
- LR noted that some assessment modules have been removed in 2017/18
- A parent raised a concern that Nat4 and Nat5 streaming had already taken place in Art.

### **School Improvement Plan:**

John Wrinn asked for comments and feedback on any behaviour improvements and discipline issues following the launch of Knox 90 and the Respectful Relationships & Learning Process which was launched across the school on the last two weeks of the summer term 2017.

- Calum Blair commented on his reflections: improves the start and end of class, helps corridor behaviour, gives a platform for consistency across the school, the process for reflection on poor behaviour now has a platform for consistency, it settles pupils down quickly at the start of class, teachers will be monitored and parents must be involved in the process. It is designed to give a platform for consistent discipline at the start, during and at the end of all lessons.
- Scott Sutherland noted that feedback from pupils he had spoken to was that persistent misbehaviour was still going unpunished.
- CB noted that the Knox 90 is still new and will be evaluated for improvements. Staff have noted that pupils are settling down faster in class. It will support consistency and it will be

sustainable. Teachers will be monitored and he encouraged parents to play their part and continue to report where it is working and where there are inconsistencies.

- S6 could potentially be used as potential role models and could also potentially be used to monitor corridor behaviour. Gregor Booth noted Prefects could support
- A parent noted that her recent experience of the behavioural reflection process for her daughter had not worked. There did not seem to be a process for challenging consistent misbehaviour and the process for checking on returns of the paperwork from the pupil and the parent needed to be thorough. Calum Blair explained the process.
- John Wrinn noted the new behaviour/discipline has only been active for 3 school weeks and all parents are strongly encouraged to monitor feedback on how it is working.
- The Pupil leadership team noted that they had not been consulted in S5 on the design of the Respectful Relationships & Learning Process. They noted this was potentially a missed opportunity. They noted that behaviour issues in S5 and S6 should be less of a concern and that a one size fits all approach is not always appropriate.
- LR commented there are examples of simple steps that can be taken to make further improvements in behaviours both in and out of class e.g keep left in the corridors. LR to explore options.

#### Other Discussions

- CB noted there would be a text message coming out to all parents to encourage sign up to the daily bulletins
- A parent asked how long the school should expect Lauren Rodger to be in place and why an existing Deputy Head Teacher (DHT) in Knox was not put into the interim Head Teacher position.
- LR explained that Fiona Robertson (Director of Education ELC) wanted an experienced HT in position. LR noted that the DHT in Knox do not have Head teacher experience and they have their own focus on specific improvement work streams to support the school improvement plan.
- LR noted that a new DHT would be coming from Dunbar to further support the leadership team.
- LR noted that all pupils will be updated on these staff changes at assemblies.
- Parents noted the web site was very out of date including details on school dept structures and teachers. CB noted the out of date school dept/teacher structures had been removed and an update was currently being worked on.
- Action: A parent noted the calendar for 2017/18 needed updating and then communicated to parents.

#### 5. Staff Members Report

- CB led the update
- There was a consultation on homework
- A parent asked if there was any progress on a Homework policy for Knox Academy.
- LR noted the potential to run school homework clubs is being explored. Some pupils may have difficulties with home learning and this may help to support these concerns and issues.
- Homework/home learning is key to GIRFEC
- CB noted the school wants to engage parents more on learning, learning resources and communication
- Mrs Falconer (DHT) is leading these work streams
- Action: Mrs Falconer is to be invited to the next PC meeting on the 4 October.
- LR noted that home learning may be a preferred approach to home work. E.g. pupils are given a list of 10 tasks to complete across a set period of time which they can do

independently from school. LR noted this supports both independent learning and work ethic in pupils.

#### **6. Active Schools / Sport Report**

- Steve Wands led the update; due to time pressures the verbal update was brief.
- Haddington Hockey has been launched across Haddington. The Junior Hockey, Ladies Hockey and Knox Academy hockey are looking at a more joined up approach
- Suzanne Laing is leading the Haddington Hockey initiative (Community Hockey co-ordinator)
- SW and others are working to improve the gender in-balance across sport at Knox Academy
- Football for girls – further conversations are to take place with Chris Carruthers: Action CC & SW to liaise off line
- Staff from Knox have started to support extra curriculum sport which is making a huge difference to a positive change
- The elections for the Schools Sports Council have taken place and over 20 girls are involved
- A parent asked about netball coaching for S1/S2. SW noted Mr McDonald's time was already very committed to the S4/S5 netball coaching. A coach for after school netball would need to be PVG accredited and to get best value have a netball/sport coaching qualification if possible. Action: AH & SW to liaise off line

#### **7. Pupil Leadership Report**

- The Pupils explained the committee set up that would run across S6 in 2017/18
- Communities, Prefects, Improving communication, Social spaces, S6 panto. There would also be an Eco committee.
- Prefects: currently 81 prefects and the Pupil Leadership Team (PLT) would be monitoring activities and contributions from all prefects
- The PLT are also keen to introduce a Digital works committee to explore how digital and new technology can support learning
- All prefects will have to get involved in charity events
- There will not be a space for every prefect on all committees
- There are additional opportunities in buddying, working with Guidance, supporting Meadow Park.
- The PLT noted that they had not been previously consulted in the design or launch of the Respectful Relationships and Learning Process (noted above). There is an opportunity to identify if the Pupil Council and the SMT can work closer together to help broader consultation/communication
- The Pupil Council elections are to go ahead shortly
- Merits: the PLT want to explore how merits are currently used and understand areas of improvement and greater consistency.

#### **8. Chairperson's Report**

- John Wrinn led a discussion on CCTV to monitor vandalism around the toilets
- Following the discussion the show of hands indicated there was not support for CCTV in these areas. However, the issue of vandalism and behaviour in toilets to remain a focus for school staff
- JW noted that the Parent Council should perhaps have annual targets. Communication is the first priority. Suggestions on other targets are welcome. Action for all
- All other details as per the written report

#### **9. PTA Report**

- There is a continued focus to generating income to support the purchase of Chromebooks
- Please advise Louise Elder of any funding opportunities you may be aware of to support grant/funding/donations to support his priority
- The school calendar is still not up to date on the web site – action for the school to promote the pdf version on a weekly basis

#### **10. Future Meetings**

- The next meeting is at 6.15pm on Wednesday 4 October
- Future meetings: Thursday 9 November – please note this is a change from previously advertised schedules
- Wednesday 6 December.
- All meetings are at 6.15pm in the school library
- 2018 dates will be confirmed at the October meeting

#### **11. Any Other Business**

- John McMillan noted Fiona Robertson had addressed ELC on the Scottish Govt Education Review into the centralisation of resources
- ELC were prioritising superfast broadband into rural areas which would help support home learning for all pupils across the county
- A parent raised a concern on the numbers of pupils dropping out of University and whether anything could be done to better prepare school pupils for the expectations and challenges ahead
- A parent raised a concern that dyslexia, particularly Visual Stress, was picked up late with her child and that more can be done to identify earlier in children. There is a simple overlay sheet that can be used in reading which is a simple tool to help many pupils. Charli Prime noted that the expertise in Meadow Park is on offer to support best practice and support tests
- A parent asked what the selection criteria and process was for pupils to be selected for school trips during Activities Week.
- The parent noted there were large discrepancies with the communication support from teachers during Activity Week. The mixed messages included one teacher saying it was ok to 'not come in that week'
- A request from Mr Wands for the PLT to work closely with the Sports Council to support better alignment, collaboration of best practice and communication
- Charli Prime asked that all pupils and parents continue to support volunteer opportunities in Meadow Park. She noted that there is a win win for pupils and volunteers in supporting Meadow Park

**Date of Next Meeting:** The date of the next meeting is 4 October.

All meetings are held in the School Library at 6.15pm. **All parents and carers are welcome to attend.**

**Actions:**

<b>Action Points from 30 August 2017</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>When / Notes</b>
School Improvement Plan	LR	Update on 4 October
Purchase of Grace's signs or similar printed/laminated versions.	KB	Update on 4 October
Impact of Respectful Relationships & Learning process	LR	LR/CB and parents to discuss on 4 October
Add structure of staffing to school website	LR	School web site to be updated
Communication strategy	SS	Agenda point for 4 October
Exam results: report into Knox Academy performance following SQA analysis	LR	Agenda point for 4 October
Home Learning: Mrs Falconer to be invited to 4 October meeting	JW/LR	Agenda point for 4 October
Clarity on the process for selection on school trips for Activities Week	LR	4 October
Text Message to widen reach of school bulletins	CB/LR	By 8 September
Update Curriculum Book	LR	[As soon as possible?]