



APPROVED MINUTES

DATE: WEDNESDAY 2 OCTOBER 2013

PRESENT:	Vicky Cole	(Chair)	Parent	PSP member
	Dave Neillans		Parent	PSP member
	Derek Simpson		Parent	PSP member
	Ian Smith		Parent	PSP member
	Kim White		Parent	PSP member
	Kath Anderson		Teacher	PSP member
	Calum Blair		Teacher	PSP member

IN ATTENDANCE:	Sarah Ingham	Head Teacher
	Ally MacKinnon	PE Teacher
	Linda Bowen	Parent
	Louise Elder	Parent
	Amanda Herriot	Parent
	Alison Hunton	Parent
	Janette Middlemass	Parent
	Elizabeth Vischer	Parent
	Lucy Wrinn	Parent
	Tom Trotter	Local Councillor
	John McMillan	Local Councillor
	Mary Benson	Clerk

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Greg Cookson, Colin Dempster, Donald Smith, Mark Wyllie, Julie-Clare Paterson and Councillor Broun-Lindsay.

2. Mr MacKinnon – First Aid Course

Mr MacKinnon showed a short video by the British Heart Foundation about first aid training.

The school will be introducing first aid training to ensure that all youngsters have some knowledge of basic first aid before they leave. All S3 pupils will be given five weeks of first aid training in January as part of their core PE provision, continuing annually from now on. The school also intends to give this training to Senior pupils (S4/5/6), as they will not have received it in S3, but the details of this are still to be confirmed.

The school would also like to facilitate a two hour “Heart Start” practical first aid training course for parents and the wider community in March. This would not be a fully certified First Aid course, but

would train people in the basic principles. S3 parents and parents of youngsters undertaking the Community Spots Leadership Award (CSLA) would be targeted initially, but the training would not be solely limited to them. All parents would be welcome and the training would also be advertised in the library and doctor's surgery so that anyone in the wider community could attend too. A member of Knox staff trained in First Aid would lead the course and would be assisted on the night by the 18 CSLA pupils. The course would be free to attend, but donations of 50p or £1 per family attending would be welcomed to help maintain the first aid training equipment.

Dave Neillans came into the meeting.

After discussion, it was agreed that the course would be advertised to parents when S3 start their training after Christmas. A written invite would be sent home to parents with S3 pupil reports and parents would be able to sign up to attend at the S3 Parents Night on 26 February. If successful, the "Heart Start" training course could become an annual event.

All parents at the meeting agreed the First Aid training was a great idea. Vicky Cole thanked Mr MacKinnon for his work on this and for talking to the PSP about it.

3. Minutes of 4 September 2013

The minutes of the last meeting were approved without change.

4. Matters arising from the minutes – see item 5

5. Chairperson's report and action points from the last meeting

Pupil Council - Mrs Ingham has forwarded the dates to Vicky Cole.

Email alert sign-up - Ian Smith will set up the link on the PSP website for parents to subscribe for email alerts when the website is updated. Ian will then let Mrs Ingham know so that it can be advertised to parents.

Action IS

PSP meeting dates – have been advertised on the PSP website.

Modern Languages funding – Mark Wyllie was not at the meeting to give an update, so this Action Point will be carried forward to the next meeting.

Action MW, MB

Voting rights on Education Committee – see item 11

More prominent link on website- Mr Blair said there was now a more prominent link to subscribe for alerts when the school website is updated. The link is beneath the image at the top of the page.

Finance Update – Mrs Ingham confirmed Bev Skirrow (Knox's Business Manager) will attend the next PSP meeting (30 October) to give an update the PSP on finance, although it is likely the annual budget may not be confirmed by then.

EPortfolios – Mr Greenaway will attend a future PSP meeting to give an update on ePortfolios, but the date has not yet been confirmed.

Action SI

6. Pupil's Matters

The Pupil Council is looking forward to Vicky Cole attending their meeting.

Mrs Ingham has invited the Head Boy and/or Head Girl to attend a future PSP meeting – a suitable date is yet to be confirmed.

7. Head Teacher's report

Staffing - Mrs Ingham gave an update on staffing. Interviews for a full-time permanent Computing teacher will be taking place at the start of next month. Any parent interested in helping to observe lessons as part of the interview process should email Mrs Ingham (singham@knox.elcschool.org.uk). Those taking part do not have to have undertaken the Council's Recruitment & Selection training to do so. There was a discussion about how useful lesson observation is in the recruitment process.

News/Updates – Mrs Ingham gave a brief summary of news and referred parents to the school website and the Head Teacher's Update on the website for more information.

The school are no longer sending out lists of dates and events at the school, since they are attempting to get people to use the website more and the school calendar is available there.

Progress / Curriculum – Mrs Ingham has completed the results meetings with the Principal Teachers to discuss exam results. Not all post-appeal results are in yet, but the school have a clear set of action points to work towards for the session. These will form part of the Annual Report that Mrs Ingham will table before the next meeting.

Strategic Items – The school have set up a Tracking and Monitoring group to look at how they effectively track and target-set in S1-3.

Quality Improvement Evaluation Visit 1 will be on 31 October.

8. Staff member's report

Staff / S6 weekend – The Staff / S6 weekend away to Dalguise had gone very well and had been blessed with good weather.

Young enterprise groups – Mr Blair spoke about the Young Enterprise Groups who have been raising money through fund-raising events such as the recent quiz night.

9. Parent's matters

S4 parents – Alison Hunton asked if there would be an opportunity for S4 parents to meet with teachers before Christmas. Mrs Ingham said a date for this was coming up and would be advertised shortly.

Missed classes – Louise Elder had raised this topic on behalf of another parent who wanted to know how pupils kept up with work when they missed a class to go to School of Rugby or an instrumental music lesson. Mrs Ingham said it was the pupil's responsibility to make up the missed work by copying up from a friend's jotter. Staff may be prepared to make photocopies of missed work if it involved several pages, but it was up to the pupil to take this up with staff if they needed extra support.

Contact point – Mrs Ingham was asked who to contact with general everyday queries. Mrs Ingham advised parents to email the school knoxacademy@knox.elcschool.org.uk (this address is also available on the school website). This goes to the school office, who will then forward it on to the appropriate person. Vicky noted that parents can also email the PSP for information or queries if they so wish (parentcouncil@knox.elcschool.org.uk). Mrs Ingham will mention this in her Head Teacher's Update this week.

Action SI

S1 Settling-In Evening – Kim White thanked the staff for the S1 Settling-In Evening last night, which she had found very helpful and informative.

Activities Week – As mentioned at the last PSP meeting, the school have decided to continue Activities Week for S1/2/3 next May, despite this year's changes to exams and exam leave.

A letter went home to S2 and S3 parents recently outlining the opportunities available for various overseas residential trips during that week. Many parents have voiced concerns about the high cost of these trips, particularly for families on low incomes and families with more than one child in S1/2/3 and asked if there could be a lower-cost UK trip offered which would be more affordable. Parents also asked for reassurance that there will be a full fun package of activities for those children not able to go on a residential trip.

The matter was discussed at length at the meeting.

Mrs Ingham understood the concern of parents at the cost of trips. The school make no profit from the trips – the costs are given by the companies who run the trips. It is a difficult balance to strike between remaining inclusive, so children do not feel left out; but also allowing children the opportunity to go on a residential trip where possible, which for many can be life-changing experience. Mr Simpson noted that the cost for a 5 day residential school trip in the UK is also considerable.

The school do whatever they can to help fund the most disadvantaged pupils to attend these trips, either with school funds or by applying to funding bodies for help. This is done discretely so that others will not know that help has been given. However, it was noted that families in “the middle” also often struggle, as they are not eligible for financial help with high costs.

The opportunity for pupils to help fund trips themselves through enterprise and/or other fundraising initiatives was also discussed. It was felt that many pupils were not aware of the true financial cost of trips and that part-funding the trip themselves can be character-building and an important learning experience.

Activities Week gives pupils a different learning experience from the traditional school set-up, whether they go on a residential trip or not. Experiences gained on Activities Week can help youngsters gain important life skills. However, parents felt that activities run locally should, where possible, involve something that most pupils are not able to do on a normal weekend.

Pupils can come forward with ideas for organising their own activity during Activities Week if they do not fancy the packages on offer from the school. However, they must be able to show that their idea is educational and be able to list the benefits they will gain from it.

Website blogs and Twitter feeds from overseas trips to update parents whilst youngsters were away were discussed.

Mrs Ingham said she was not sure if Activities Week would run in future years due to the changes in Exams which will mean many S4 pupils will not be on exam leave, (during which Activities Week is traditionally run). This will mean there are many more youngsters in school and less staff time available to run Activity Week packages.

Louise Elder and Linda Bowen left and Councillor MacMillan came into the meeting.

The following was decided:

- More details about the activity packages to be run in school will be made available to pupils as soon as possible, so that pupils not going on residential trips will know what will be offered in school instead. **Action SI**
- Mr Simpson and Mr Blair will create a simple video for the school website featuring interviews with pupils who were involved in Activities Week last year and (where possible) pictures of

what they did during that week to inform and encourage less enthusiastic pupils. This will be done before the October holiday. **Action DS/CB**

- In future years, information on foreign trips and activities within school will be sent out to parents at the same time, so that pupils can see all that is on offer in Activities Week.
- In future years, the school will explore the possibility of running a programme involving one or two days away in the UK, to reduce costs for parents, but still give a residential experience for pupils.
- Activities Week will be raised at the S1 parents evening to inform parents about it and give them more time to save for trips.

Councillor Trotter left the meeting.

Mrs Ingham noted her thanks, particularly to Mr Taylor, who organises Activities Week, and to all staff who run the activities and residential trips.

Vicky Cole thanked the school staff on behalf of parents for their hard work on Activities Week, which is often above and beyond their job description and praised the Senior Management Team’s openness in discussing this issue.

10. Correspondence – has been emailed to all parent reps.

11. Any Other Business

Voting rights on Education Committee (carried forward from Action Points) - Councillor McMillan believed the question of changing the Council standing orders to allow voting rights for a potential parent rep on the Education Committee is being discussed at John Muir House.

The role of a parent rep on the Education Committee was discussed at length at last night’s ELAPCM (East Lothian Association of Parent Council Members) meeting and will be considered further by them.

Rotary Table Top Sale – Councillor McMillan advertised the Rotary Club’s Table Top Sale at the Corn Exchange on 20 October.

12. Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 30 October 2013.

Action points	Who	When
Inform Mrs Ingham when the website link to sign up for email alerts for updates is available on the PSP website so she can publicise this to parents.	IS / SI	As soon as possible
Forward information on modern languages funding to Mrs Ingham.	MW	As soon as possible
Invite Mr Greenaway to attend a future PSP meeting to update the PSP on ePortfolios.	SI	As soon as possible
Confirm email contact details for queries, in Head Teacher’s Update.	SI	As soon as possible
Forward to pupils more detailed information about Activity Packages to be run in school during Activities Week.	SI	As soon as possible
Produce Activities Week film for school website.	DS/CB	Before October break