



APPROVED MINUTES

DATE: WEDNESDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2015

PRESENT:	Louise Elder	Chair	PSP member
	Dave Neillans	Vice Chair	PSP member
	Amanda Herriott	Parent	PSP member
	Jon Hunton	Parent	PSP member
	Caroline McKinnel	Parent	PSP member
	Derek Simpson	Parent	PSP member
	Ian Smith	Parent	PSP member
	Kim White	Parent	PSP member
	Calum Blair	Teacher	PSP member
	Colin Dempster	Teacher	PSP member

IN ATTENDANCE:	Sarah Ingham	Head Teacher
	Linda Bowen	Parent
	Kay Boylan	Parent
	Liz Syme	Parent
	Calum Paul	Head Boy
	Annabel Jackson	Head Girl
	Mary Benson	Clerk

1. Welcome and Apologies

Louise Elder (Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Greg Cookson, Gillian Greenshields, Andy McBain, Janette Middlemass, Julie Clare Paterson, Caroline Taylor, Lucy & John Wrinn, Councillor Trotter and Provost Broun-Lindsay. East Lothian Council Chief Executive Angela Leitch sent her apologies and will attend the March meeting of the PSP instead.

2. Sheena Alan-Patterson, Knox School Counsellor

Sheena was unable to attend the PSP meeting this evening and sent her apologies. It is hoped that she will be able to come to a future meeting instead.

3. Minutes of Meeting of 7 January 2015

The minutes of the last meeting were approved without change.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes & Action Points

Keeping up to date with sports fixtures – At present, changes to sports fixtures are emailed to Kay Boylan, who posts them on the Knox Hockey Facebook page. An email is also sent out to the coaches

and to the parents whose email addresses Mr Wands has. However, Mr Wands does not have everyone's email address and not everyone can easily access Facebook during the day, should a fixture be cancelled at short notice. Mr Wands is considering using an online based system such as "Teamer", which sends out texts and emails to all subscribers. In the meantime, parents are encouraged to send their email details in to the school so that they can be put onto the email list. The Active Schools Twitter feed is also a good source of information. Parents asked if a recorded message could also be left on the Active Schools answerphone so that they could phone in to check if fixtures were on or not. Mrs Ingham agreed to pass on this message to Mr Wands. **Action SI/SW**

Parents also questioned whether youngsters were made aware at school if events were cancelled during the day and whether or not all youngsters would be able to contact their parents to make alternative arrangements if required. Mrs Ingham assured parents that pupils could always go to the school office if there was a problem with parents picking them up and the school would find a way to get them home safely.

Parent's Evening – The planned trial of the "Parent's Night" online booking system for the S3 parent's night had not gone ahead due to technical problems. However, it is hoped to use it for the S2 parent's night on 24 March.

5. Chairperson's Report

Knox Academy Support Group (KASG) Burns' Supper (29 January) – Louise said the Burns' Supper had been an amazing night and thanked all who had been involved, particularly Callum and Annabel (Head Boy and Head Girl).

King's Meadow Parent Council – Louise had attended King's Meadow Parent Council meeting last night, where proposed cuts to the Education budget had been discussed. The list of possible cuts issued by East Lothian Council had not been costed, so it was difficult for parents to indicate where they felt cuts could be made. A costed list is to be circulated in due course. Louise noted that the possible cut of free musical instrument tuition had been discussed, with Knox's great music department and their performances highlighted as an example of the importance of free music tuition. All agreed that free musical instrument tuition was worth fighting to keep.

Transition Event – Knox will be running a Transition Event on 26 February for parents. This will be open to all P7 and S1 parents (see also Item 11 – Any Other Business).

Employability skills – Further to the discussion at the last meeting, Anne Wexelstein from Career Academies has given a presentation to staff.

6. Pupil's Matters – Annabel Jackson & Calum Paul.

College open day – pupils had attended Edinburgh College's recent open day at their Milton Road campus which had been busy, helpful and informative. The College application system is now open.

New York trip – the S5/S6 trip to New York leaves next Saturday and pupils are very much looking forward to the trip.

Internet Safety – The S6 Senior Leadership Team had given a presentation to S1-S4 assemblies about internet safety, which had gone well.

There was a discussion about the events that Knox put on for parents. Both recent events (Tree of Knowledge and the P5-P7 Information Evening on the new National exams) had been well attended. It was noted that Knox was welcoming to parents and parents felt that there was a good balance between informative and social events. The Burns Supper had been very successful and parents said how great it was to see full tables of pupils there too, rather than it being just a parent's event.

7. Head Teacher's Report

Staffing – Mrs Ingham has started the process of looking at staffing for next session.

News / updates –

Burns' Supper - the Burns Supper had been a great event

P5-P7 National Curriculum information event – had been really well attended with a real sense of community and of people being interested.

Grand piano – a pristine second-hand piano has been purchased, but the funds will have to be recouped, and fund raising will still be required to do so.

Raising attainment – The Scottish Government has asked schools to consider how parents, guardians and schools can work together to raise attainment, particularly with those pupils whose attainment is lowest. Mrs Ingham noted that the lowest attaining 20% received help and funding, but she was particularly concerned about the 20% of pupils above that level who did not. Mrs Ingham had attended a talk by Professor Sue Ellis (Strathclyde University) on “Closing the Attainment Gap” and highlighted her comments below:

- Attend to the target group.
- Focus on outcomes, not provision.
- Quality of implementation: persistence, sustained effort.

3 types of intervention:

- School links to family and community.
- School system changes.
- Curriculum and pedagogical change.

Mrs Ingham asked parents to mull over how they think this could best be achieved, ready for a discussion at the May meeting. Mary Benson will add this to the May agenda. **Action MB**

Girls' Under 16 Rugby Team – will be playing their next away match next week in Thurso.

Academies presentation – for pupils in S4 and S5 on 11 February.

Car park issues – the school is experiencing massive congestion problems in the mornings at the moment, with some parents driving into the school car park to drop youngsters off, turning in front of the school and in some cases driving without due care and attention. Some alterations to the car park will be carried out during the February holiday; but if things do not improve, the school will have to seriously consider shutting the school gates at 8.25am and only allow buses and taxis in until 8.50am. Due to the problems, Prentice Coaches have been dropping children off on Pencaitland Road, which is not the safest solution. Another option may be to reopen the Rosehall Drive access to create a one-way system for vehicles through the school car park, but residents are likely to object to this.

Parents suggested the possibility of creating a layby/drop off zone on the Pencaitland Road so that parents can safely drop their youngsters off without going into the car park. Another suggestion was for the issue to be discussed at assemblies, since youngsters' "pester-power" may help to deter some offenders.

Old Haddington Infants building – the work to convert the old Haddington Infants building into a Communications Facility for Knox for youngsters with additional needs is ongoing. Louise noted the road safety concern raised by a parent at the recent King's Meadow Parent Council meeting about vans manoeuvring into and out of the tight entrance to the old Infants car park during school run times. Mr Simpson said that contractors had been told at the start of work about the access requirements; however asbestos had been found during the renovations and a new contractor had been brought on board to remove it. It was likely that the message had not been passed on to the new contractor.

Parental Involvement Survey – East Lothian Council's Parental Involvement Survey was highlighted. Responses are sought to the draft survey, which has been emailed out to all Parent Reps. The question of how Parent Councils engage with the wider Parent Forum was discussed. The idea of a Knox app is still being investigated.

Strategic items –

New Tracking and Monitoring System - The school is trialling a new tracking and monitoring system between now and the summer. It is hoped that this will go live throughout the school from August. (see also Item 9, Staff Member's Report)

Dates –

Friday 13 February – Dress Down Day for Ruhanga School in Rwanda.
S3 Course deadline day.
All break for half term holiday

Monday 23 February – Staff and pupils resume.

Tuesday 3 March - S4/5 Information Evening

Thursday 19 March - S3 Immunisations

Tuesday 24 March - S2 Parent's Evening

8. Curriculum –

S3/S4 have started their Course Choices.

9. Staff Member's Report –

Tracking & Monitoring – Mr Dempster

The school are piloting a new system for Tracking and Monitoring pupil's progress, both academically and in terms of acquiring new skills, with the long term aim of raising attainment. Each pupil will be given a "Learning Conversations" booklet in a plastic wallet during assemblies next week. The booklet must be kept safe for the remainder of the session.

The trial will run until the summer in certain subjects only, with two faculties taking on a year group between them. This will allow any problems with the scheme to be ironed out before it goes live for

S1-S3 in all subjects from August. For the trial pupils will have a Learning Conversation with their teacher in certain subject areas only. When the scheme is fully implemented after the summer, pupils will have two Learning Conversations per year in every subject, one pre-Christmas, with a review later in the year. During the Learning Conversation, the pupil and teacher will discuss and agree long term targets and pupils will be asked to record the targets in their booklets and think about the strategies they will need to use to reach them. The teacher will also record the agreed targets within the school management system.

Where teachers become concerned that a pupil may not reach the targets set, the pupil may be referred to the Guidance staff, who will then arrange for appropriate staff to intervene to provide support to the youngster. The main responsibility will be placed on the learner to consider their own learning and next steps.

Mrs Ingham noted how much work the Tracking & Monitoring Team have put into this scheme and thanked them for their efforts. Although this scheme will take time to implement and run, it will be an investment and well worth it. Parents were very supportive of the new scheme.

10. Parent's Matters

Paired reading – the value of the Knox Paired Reading system was noted, not just for reading skills but also for building a positive relationship between youngsters and their Paired Reader which helps build confidence and resilience. New Paired Readers are always welcome, as demand for the scheme is usually greater than the number of volunteers available.

11. Any Other Business

Health & Wellbeing survey – A Health & Wellbeing survey carried out recently at Knox highlighted that 13% of youngsters were coming to school each morning without eating any breakfast. This could affect concentration and performance/behaviour in school, and so Mrs Ingham is looking into how to help solve this problem.

Anti-Bullying Presentations – P7/S1 transition event, 26 February – The planned transition event for parents on 26 February is open to both P7 and S1 parents and will focus on anti-bullying. Representatives from ABEL (Anti Bullying East Lothian), the Police, Community Wardens, Guidance staff and the School Counsellor will also be present. It is intended that the event will help parents define what bullying is, what the various agencies are able/not able to do and how to build resilience in youngsters and parents to deal with bullying. Mr Simpson will email the details to Louise Elder so that Kay Boylan can advertise the event on the PSP website and Facebook page. **Action DS, LE & KB**

East Lothian Association of Parent Council Members (ELAPCM) – Ian Smith has been Knox PSP's rep on ELAPCM for a number of years, but he will cease to be a Knox parent in the summer. A new volunteer is needed to take on this role. There is space for up to two reps from each Parent Council. Unfortunately, the two remaining ELAPCM meeting dates this session are 25 March and 20 May, which are also the two remaining meeting dates for Knox PSP. Anyone interested in taking on this role should let Louise know. Ian was thanked for his commitment to both ELAPCM and Knox PSP over the years.

12. Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 25 March 2015.

Action Points	Who	When
Ask Mr Wands to consider a recorded message to be left on the Active Schools telephone number so parents can check on the day if sports activities/fixtures have been cancelled.	SI	As soon as possible
Add "Raising Attainment" to the agenda for the 20 May 2015 meeting	MB	For May meeting
Email details of Transition Event on 26 Feb to Louise so Kay can advertise on the PSP website and Facebook page.	DS/LE/KB	As soon as possible