



APPROVED MINUTES

DATE: WEDNESDAY 8 JANUARY 2014

PRESENT:	Vicky Cole	(Chair)	Parent	PSP member
	Greg Cookson	(Vice Chair)	Parent	PSP member
	Dave Neillans		Parent	PSP member
	Derek Simpson		Parent	PSP member
	Kim White		Parent	PSP member
	Mark Wyllie		Parent	PSP member
	Calum Blair		Teacher	PSP member

IN ATTENDANCE:	Sarah Ingham	Head Teacher
	Linda Bowen	Parent
	Louise Elder	Parent
	Jon Hunton	Parent
	Caroline McKinnel	Parent
	Janette Middlemass	Parent
	Elizabeth Vischer	Parent
	Tom Trotter	Local Councillor
	Mary Benson	Clerk

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Kath Anderson, Colin Dempster, Andy Greathead, Amanda Herriott, Julie-Clare Paterson, Ian Smith, Lucy Wrinn and Councillor John MacMillan.

2. Mr Illingworth – Curriculum

Mr Illingworth (Depute Head Teacher) was unable to attend this evening, but will attend the February meeting. Instead, he sent a letter to parents at the meeting, giving details of an online parental survey that PSP members were asked to complete in order to gather their views about the number of qualifications pupils should study towards in S4. The letter gave details of three potential options, with a brief outline of the advantages and disadvantages of each. It is intended that the survey will be made available to all parents in due course.

There was a long discussion about this. Several high schools in East Lothian are suggesting that they will eventually run with six subjects in S4. However, many at the meeting felt that this would be too narrow a choice, particularly as S3/S4 youngsters often do not yet have a clear idea of what they would

like to do when they leave school. A broader curriculum would allow a greater choice and more flexibility when choosing subjects for Highers.

The current S4 are studying eight subjects, and are facing a greater number of assessments throughout the year under the new curriculum than ever before. Concern was expressed about the level of stress that this is causing youngsters. Many at the meeting felt that 7 subjects would be the most appropriate; however this will be explored further through the online survey.

It was agreed that Curriculum Issues will become a standing agenda item for future PSP meetings and Vicky Cole thanked Mr Illingworth for consulting the PSP on this matter. **Action MB**

The entrance requirements for universities were discussed at length, including the apparent disparity between the UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service) points value given to different subjects. The usefulness of Advanced Highers was also discussed. Mr Simpson agreed to provide a summary of the latest UCAS document for PSP members and it was noted that this UCAS document is also available to school guidance staff. **Action DS**

3. Minutes of 27 November 2013

The minutes of the last meeting were approved without change.

4. Matters arising from the minutes

Website update sign-ups – Mrs Ingham has advertised the link on the PSP website to sign up for website updates. She offered to do this again to encourage parents to sign up.

Modern languages funding – Mark Wyllie will forward the information on modern languages funding to Mrs Ingham.

Activities week film – Vicky Cole has not had chance to advertise the Activities Week film on the PSP website, but will do so in due course. Mrs Ingham noted that more information on the other packages on offer for students during Activities Week had been put onto the school website today. **Action VC**

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

See above.

6. Pupil's Matters

Senior pupils are currently busy preparing for prelims. The S5/6 Academic Buddying has been very successful. The Pupil Council have been involved in the planning of the school library refurbishments and the next Pupil Council meeting will be held next week.

7. Head Teacher's report

Staffing – Mrs Ingham gave an update on staffing.

News / updates –

Christmas – The Christmas concert was a great success. Mrs Ingham had judged the Youth Philanthropy Initiative final at the end of last term, with the winning presentation earning funds for the charity "Children's Holiday Venture". Mrs Ingham and Darrin Nightingale (Head of Education) were judges for this year's Christmas Box Competition.

Prelims – S4 start on 13 January and S5/6 on 20 January.

Burn's Supper – 23 January, 7pm (see item 8).

Visitors – A group of South Korean teachers will be visiting the school on 23 January as part of an English immersion course run through Edinburgh University. They have also been invited to attend the school Burn's Supper that evening.

S1 Parent's Evening – 4 February.

Progress / curriculum –

Curriculum - Mr Illingworth has prepared a paper and a survey about S4 courses (see item 2).

16+ Leavers' Destinations - The school have received their 16+ Leavers' Destination results for the youngsters who left last year. 91% have entered a "positive destination" (70% to higher/further education, around 22% into employment/training and activity agreements (a short-term post-school opportunity which provides support and a stepping stone to those who have not found employment or gone into further training on leaving school), and 8% unemployed or not known). Mrs Ingham thanked and congratulated Mr Flood, Ms Jones and the Guidance Staff for their work with the youngsters.

Post appeal results – are now in. Five out of the seven measures have improved, and each of those 5 areas now exceed last year's results.

Strategic items

Self-evaluation – Pupils have been asked their opinions on their classes and this information will be collated and shared with staff over the next few weeks. The results of the S4 parent's survey is on the school website and the school will continue to survey parents at parent's evenings.

Councillor Trotter left the meeting.

8. Staff member's report

Mr Blair advertised the Burn's Supper, which will be held on Thursday 23 January at 7pm. Tickets are available from the school, £10 per adult and £5 per youngster, with funds going to KASG (Knox Academy Support Group).

9. Parent's matters

AGM – The Annual General Meeting will be held immediately after the next PSP meeting on 5 February. Vicky Cole reminded all existing PSP members and new parents attending meetings that this was the opportunity for people to resign or to put their names forward for election to the PSP. Anyone interested in doing either should contact Vicky before the next meeting. Vicky said that she was happy to stay on as Chair until the summer, but would stand down at that point due to other commitments.

Paired reading – The paired reading scheme was discussed. Training will be held for twelve volunteers at 4.15pm tomorrow. Louise Elder and Caroline McKinnel will forward details to Mr Simpson of two other parents interested in being involved and Louise will try to attend the training also. There was a discussion regarding paired reading at Knox and in the cluster primary schools. Vicky Cole thanked the school on behalf of the PSP for providing the training to help improve reading levels.

Modern languages – Mark Wyllie asked if there was a possibility to offer tuition in other modern languages at the school. Mrs Ingham explained that the range of languages on offer was teacher-

dependent. French is taught, as is Latin; however although Italian has been offered, there has not been sufficient uptake to date for a class to run. An Italian taster is offered to S2 and S3 pupils.

10. Correspondence – has been emailed out to all.

11. Any Other Business –

Bullying – The school will be running an information evening on bullying. The event will be open to all and will be advertised at the cluster primary schools also. The evening will feature both talks and workshops and will have input from the police and ABEL (Anti Bullying East Lothian). The aim is to give a better understanding of what bullying is and what the school can and can't do in relation to bullying. It will clarify the responsibilities and jurisdiction of the school, parents and the police. The date and time for this event will be advertised in due course.

Statistics and demographics – Mrs Ingham and Mr Simpson gave a presentation about the demographics of Knox students, and there followed a discussion about how the school can best support the range of needs throughout the whole student forum.

12. Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 5 February 2014 at 6.15pm in the school. The PSP's Annual General Meeting (AGM) will commence immediately after the regular PSP meeting, at around 7.30pm.

Action points	Who	When
Add Curriculum Issues as a standing agenda item for PSP meetings.	MB	For next meeting
Give a summary of the latest UCAS documents to PSP members.	DS	When time allows
Advertise the Activities Week film on the PSP website.	VC	As soon as possible