



APPROVED MINUTES

DATE: WEDNESDAY 25 MARCH 2015

PRESENT:	Louise Elder	Chair	PSP member
	Caroline McKinnel	Vice Chair	PSP member
	Linda Bowen	Parent	PSP member
	Jon Hunton	Parent	PSP member
	Janette Middlemass	Parent	PSP member
	Derek Simpson	Parent	PSP member
	Liz Syme	Parent	Co-opted PSP member
	Kim White	Parent	PSP member
	Calum Blair	Teacher	PSP member
	Colin Dempster	Teacher	SPSP member
	Steve Wands	Sports Co-ordinator	PSP member

IN ATTENDANCE:	Sarah Ingham	Head Teacher
	Fiona Dewar	Parent
	Gillian Greenshields	Parent
	Andy McBain	Parent
	Dave Neillans	Parent
	Liz Syme	Parent
	John Wrinn	Parent
	Annabel Jackson	Head Girl
	Sheena Allan Paterson	Knox School Counsellor
	Maggie Mitchell	Knox School Counsellor
	John McMillan	Local Councillor
	Angela Leitch	Chief Executive, East Lothian Council
	Mary Benson	Clerk

1. Welcome and Apologies

Louise Elder (Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Vicky Cole, Amanda Herriot, Calum Paul and Provost Broun-Lindsay.

2. Sheena Allan Paterson, Knox School Counsellor

Sheena Allan Paterson and Maggie Mitchell gave a presentation to the PSP about the Counselling service they provide at Knox. Both counsellors are BACP accredited (British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy). Sheena is a trained Family Therapist and Maggie will also shortly be a qualified Family Therapist.

The Counsellors provide a non-judgemental place where youngsters come to sit and talk and be listened to with no agenda. Where family therapy is given, the two Counsellors work together to give a co-therapy session. Every member of the family is allowed space to give their views without interruption, then the two therapists turn their chairs away and have a non-judgemental conversation together about what they have heard, allowing the family to hear what is said. This allows the family space to see things differently, think about things differently and ultimately to do things differently to help shift the problem, giving an opportunity for change. The Counsellors wherever possible try to view things positively, but do not ignore the negative aspects of what is said.

Knox offers a counselling service to vulnerable pupils both individually and also with their families. Counselling is offered individually on a Tuesday and Wednesday morning and to families on one Thursday a month. Over the past two years, the team have counselled 59 youngsters and 9 families. Counselling has also been given to staff on occasion. Mrs Ingham stressed the importance of the service, noting that it has saved lives. Counselling is offered on a weekly/fortnightly/monthly/three monthly basis as required and is a 52 week a year service, with sessions offered to those in need over the holidays, either within the school building (when open) or in another suitable location. On average, around 16 sessions (1 hour each) are required to help someone feel stable again. Other agencies in East Lothian provide counselling, but a referral can take several weeks to action. By having a Counsellor in school, if there is an immediate problem, it can be dealt with straight away. If further action is required by other agencies, the Counsellors can speak at peer level to other specialists to get the required action moving as soon as possible. Although the counselling team liaise with other agencies in East Lothian, they are first and foremost employed by the school and take referrals from the school only.

Mr Simpson noted that there was a large waiting list of pupils (20-30 at present) for counselling. Some are self-referred, whilst others are referred by guidance staff. Although there is a waiting list, if there is an urgent referral, cases can be juggled to allow immediate action. The counselling service was originally 50/50 funded by Knox and the Police; however following the formation of Police Scotland last year, funding has changed. The school recognises the importance of the service and has therefore continued funding the service alone. Counselling has helped to reduce truancy and associated problems. Every S1 group has a half hour session with Sheena to introduce the counselling service to them.

Louise thanked Sheena and Maggie for their tremendous work in the school and for coming to speak to the PSP at this meeting. Mrs Ingham noted how lucky the school were to have such a talented counselling team.

Sheena Allan Paterson and Maggie Mitchell left the meeting.

3. Minutes of Meeting of 4 February 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 – Mr Wands (the new Knox PSP staff rep) noted that it was getting towards the end of the season for many sports events. Next session, he intends to introduce

the use of the Teamer app, which parents and pupils can access via mobile/tablet/computer. This would also send a text message and email to those who have signed up to the system, which could be used to inform them about fixtures, training dates and times. However, it is a bit late to do this for this season. He also noted the importance of making youngsters take some responsibility for getting this information themselves from the noticeboard, where team lists and changes to fixtures/training are displayed. However, it was agreed that particularly for S1 pupils, a little more support may be required. More information about the new system will be sent out in August. **Action SW**

5. Chairperson's Report

DHT Recruitment – Louise and Dave Neillans (who was co-opted back onto the Parent Council due to his ELC Recruitment & Selection Training and availability for the three interview dates) were both involved in the recent recruitment of a new Depute Head Teacher. A preferred candidate has been selected but their name has not yet been announced.

Louise encouraged all parent reps to do the Recruitment & Selection training course, as parent reps can only be involved in the interview process for senior staff if they have undertaken the training. Jon Hunton confirmed that he attended the training course last night. The next is on 12 May 6.30 – 9.30pm at Musselburgh Grammar. Any parents reps interested in taking part should email parentcouncil@eastlothian.gov.uk in advance to confirm.

S2 Information Evening – The feedback from parents had been very positive, with comments that it was really useful and informative. Parents had also been very impressed with the level of detail in the S2 reports, which had made parent's night much easier.

Transition Day – The P7 Transition Sports event last week had also been very successful, with P7 pupils really enjoying the activities and looking forward to their move to Knox.

6. Pupil's Matters – Annabel Jackson

School Council – The "Knox Ask Box" (rechristened the "Knox Probs Box" by pupils) is now up and running, with the answers to the anonymous queries being displayed on a noticeboard in the school library. There has been a good response from pupils, with several questions posted in the box. The last School Council meeting is to be held tomorrow and this is one of the items for discussion. It is hoped that the box will be continued by next year's S6 once the current Head Boy and Head Girl have left school.

Charities week – This week is Charities Week, organised by the S6 House Captains, who each hold a charity event, including this year a bingo session in the hall, and a table tennis tournament.

7. Head Teacher's Report

Staffing – a preferred candidate has been selected for the post of Depute Head Teacher, with the name to be announced in due course once all relevant paperwork has been completed. Mrs Ingham thanked Louise and Dave for their involvement in the interview process.

News / updates:

Sports – Knox has been successful in several recent sporting events, particularly the Senior Boy's Rugby 7s, who won the East Lothian Rugby 7s Tournament at Meadowmill last week. Mrs Ingham referred parents to the school website for more information.

New York Trip – Mrs Ingham thanked staff for taking 78 Knox pupils for New York in the February half term. It was a great experience for all, despite the freezing weather.

Communications Provision – The work to create the new Knox Communications Provision, based in the main building of the old Haddington Infant School is continuing, and is expected to open in October this year. Pupils will be referred to the Provision from across East Lothian, with 5 youngsters already identified. Mrs Ingham has already met with their parents and preparations and planning are beginning for their transitions to Knox, which will be individualised in order to support their needs. Mr Halliday is the main link for the pupils. Knox is currently looking at staffing for the Communications Provision; Mrs Ingham noted how important it was to get this right.

WE R Knox signage – The school have some new colourful signage to reinforce their Wisdom, Engagement, Respect (WE R Knox) ethos. This will be distributed around the building and will serve as a visual reminder for pupils.

Absence letters – Mrs Ingham reminded parents that a follow up letter or email is required if parents phone in to notify the school about an absence. The school are looking at the wording of letters sent home in the event of no absence notification.

Survey on extra-curricular activities – A recent survey of pupils has shown that 91% of pupils take part in at least one of the extra-curricular activities on offer at the school, with the average being 3 activities a week. Mrs Ingham thanked Mr Wands particularly for his organisation of the sports extra-curricular activities and noted that it was great to see pupils getting out there and doing things out of school, helping to promote a healthy work/life balance, which was important for mental health.

Easter Revision Classes – Easter revision classes will be running on the Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of each week of the Easter holidays. Mrs Ingham thanked staff for giving up their holiday time to run the classes, which were very useful in helping pupils to prepare for the upcoming exams.

Strategic Items:

Attainment meetings – Knox is working together with Musselburgh Grammar School to assess attainment and identify strategies to help pupils to achieve all that they can. Mrs Ingham intends to share the outcomes of this assessment at the next PSP meeting, along with Ms Falconer. **Action SI**

Pipe Band Championships – Councillor McMillan congratulated Knox Academy Pipe Band on their efforts at the recent Scottish Schools' Pipe Band Championships. He said that Knox pupils had played beautifully, behaved really well and been a great tribute to their school. Mrs Ingham agreed that they were stunningly good and said she couldn't have been any prouder of them.

Councillor McMillan left the meeting.

Dates:

Tues 31 March	Spring Concert
Wed 1 April	End of term - pupils
Thurs 2 April	In-service day - staff
Mon 20 April	All resume
Thurs 7 May	Junior Drama Performance
Mon 18 May	In-service day

8. Curriculum – Coursing for next session is well on track, with the new timetable being prepared at present.

9. Staff Member's Report –

P7 Maths Transition Event – The Knox Maths Dept are running a full day Maths Transition Event tomorrow for all P7s planning to transfer to Knox next session. P7 pupils will be put in groups of 5, each with an S3 supervisor. Mr Blair handed out a copy of the programme for the day. He has also been to speak to the three P7 classes at King's Meadow about careers in maths and science. Louise noted that the feedback from P7 pupils had been great.

Maths camp – Mr Blair had also been involved in the Maths Camp last weekend for pupils preparing for exams this year. The event had been great fun and had featured both outdoor activities and revision work.

New York trip – Mr Dempster had been involved in the half-term trip to New York, which had been a brilliant experience for all involved.

Easter Revision – Most subjects have coursework to submit at present and teachers are focussing on keeping the momentum going, despite it being the last week of term next week. Easter Revision classes will be running during the holidays.

Sport – Mr Wands spoke about the use of sport to increase self-worth and purpose for youngsters, particularly those lacking in confidence. Sport has been used very effectively at Knox to encourage youngsters to take on leadership roles, particularly in running and assisting at sporting events for younger pupils, both at Knox and at the cluster primaries. Mr Wands gave the recent P7 Sport Transition Event as an example, where 40 Knox pupils delivered the event on the day. The experience that pupils gain by doing this can help build employability skills for later years when the youngsters leave school. Mr Wands would like to grow this type of experience for pupils over the coming years.

Parental support - Louise noted that there may be many parents would be willing to help with sporting activities, particularly parents of the younger children, who may need more support. Louise offered the PSP's help to communicate with the parent forum if required. It was agreed that the earlier that information can be sent out to new S1 parents about how they can help support their child in sport, the better.

Better Movers & Thinkers - Knox PE staff have been working with their counterparts in the cluster primaries on the Better Movers and Thinkers programme, which is "an innovative, exciting and challenging movement and learning programme for physical education that focuses directly on

enhancing the links between movement and thinking” (Education Scotland). This is the first year that the scheme has been run and Knox is the first cluster in East Lothian to take this on.

10. Parent’s Matters – none.

11. Any Other Business

Annual PSP Award – The nominations for the Annual PSP Award, which celebrates a pupil who has triumphed over adversity, will be discussed at the next meeting. Mrs Ingham will email out details of the nominees to PSP members before the next meeting, and asked Mary Benson to remind her.

Action SI/MB

PSP budget – Bids for funding from the PSP, (using accumulated PSP budget funds) for small school projects will also be discussed at the next meeting. Possible uses of the funding as discussed at this meeting include:

- Transport costs for Knox pupils with additional needs travelling to meet counterparts at Ross High to promote independent travel on the bus.
- Funding for additional counselling sessions for vulnerable youngsters with Sheena and Maggie (see Item 2).
- Medical supplies for the school.
- To help with raising attainment of the lowest attaining 20% (and the 20% above that level who receive no additional funding).

12. Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 20 May 2015.

Action Points	Who	When
Send out information to parents about the new Teamer app	SW	August 2015
Email out details of nominations for the PSP award to parents reps.	SI/MB	Before next meeting