

KNOX ACADEMY PARENT SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

Minutes of Meeting of 9 September 2009

Present: Tim Holden (Chair)
Ian Smith (Parent Member)
KimWhite (Parent Member)
Fiona Mackenzie (Parent Member)
Andrew Greathead (Parent Member)
Mark Wyllie (Parent Member)
Nicola Davidson (Staff)
Sarah Ingham (Teaching Staff)
Linda McInnes (Teaching Staff)
Kath Anderson (Teaching Staff)

Attending: Janis Craig (Head Teacher)
Allison Cosgrove (Clerk)

1. Minutes of last meeting:

Amendments: The following amendments were proposed and accepted by the meeting:

1. Item 1, paragraph 1: Add the following words: "The parent representatives questioned Miss Duff on possible cross over between MAAP and the Duke of Edinburgh. Miss Duff offered to discuss the Duke of Edinburgh scheme with parent members."

Paragraph 2: After the word "presentation" add the words "her offer to discuss the Duke of Edinburgh scheme at some time in the future".

2. Item 5, final paragraph, line 3: after the word "course", insert the words "was offered but was not taken up by sufficient pupils". Delete the words "could not be offered in the following year", and add new sentence "The parents noted that any sixth year student considering a science or medical degree will require this subject".

3. Item 6: Delete "PSP" and replace with "school".

2. Matters arising:

Item 5, Head Teacher's Report: Only 4 NQTs had been appointed, and those envisaged for English and Computing had not materialised.

Parents noted satisfaction at the availability of Advanced Higher Chemistry on the syllabus.

3. Chairperson's Report:

(a) Advanced Highers: Tim Holden raised questions on Advanced Highers and the availability of certain subjects. Janis Craig advised of school procedures on subject allocation and information provided to parents and pupils, stating that normally 90% of pupils were able to study the subjects they wanted. Pupils were asked for information on clashes with other subjects. The allocation system and options for courses with small numbers was also explained.

Mark Wyllie asked that the process be made clearer to parents. Janis Craig re-iterated that information was given to all pupils involved, as well as re-coursing available after August. Parents had not been aware that this process took place. There was a general discussion on the menu of Advanced Higher subjects.

Tim Holden thanked Ms Craig for her input, noting that communication was a key factor on this issue, especially for parents. He suggested the formation of a sub-group to look at communication, and the importance of information on coursing being available on the website was also stressed. The website did not have accessible links for parents.

A Parent Blog and the possibility of a meeting with Faculty Heads were also put to the Head Teacher. Ms Craig noted the current work being carried on at the School in terms of the Curriculum for Excellence and the Latin Study Group being trialled with parents, and advised that it was not always easy to meet with teachers within the school day. She asked if parent members would be willing to have a presence at Parents Evenings, especially the P7 Parents Night. She cited other school events which were open to parents.

It was agreed that Fiona Mackenzie and Kim White would determine the date for a meeting of a communication sub-group and advise Ms Craig. Action – Fiona Mackenzie/Kim White

(b) Lockers: 300 more lockers were on order. Existing lockers were not all able to be used because of lack of keys. Lockers for vulnerable/special needs children were given priority.

(c) Extra curricular activities: a bulletin was on the notice board and was updated regularly. A list would be in Knox News and would also be on the website.

(d) Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme: Fiona Mackenzie narrated e-mail correspondence she had had with Miss Duff on this subject. Ms Craig advised that the Scheme was not operating at Knox at the moment, as there was no-one able to take on this role. A Lottery application for funding for MAAP was ongoing, which would be running with several teachers as well as Outdoor Education work with 1st and 2nd years. There was some discussion on this and on the John Muir Award Scheme. Ms Craig would take this further at the Head Teachers meeting in early October, as she was in discussion with Outdoor Education staff. She would provide an update at the October meeting.

(e) Election of Vice Chair: Fiona Mackenzie was proposed by Tim Holden, seconded by Kim White. Andrew Greathead's position as a full member of the Parent School Partnership was also confirmed.

On the appointment of student members, Ms Craig was asked to obtain a copy of the Pupil Council minutes of their first meeting for consideration.

4. Head Teacher's Report:

(a) Staffing: two posts were being advertised, otherwise the School was fully staffed.

(b) Results: Ms Craig gave a presentation of exam results, pre-appeal, noting that Standard Grade results had been an improvement on the Prelims. She noted that the results of students doing less than 5 Standard Grades were not included, however some pupils in this group had done well. A more detailed breakdown by subject would be available at a later stage.

Parents agreed that the results were an impressive set of figures.

(c) School Development Plan: This was still at draft stage with 8 priorities identified by parents, staff and pupils. Priority 2.2 of the Plan was the involvement of parents, carers and families. Each Faculty would be responsible for each priority to be taken through the 3-year period of the Plan. Sarah Ingham was willing to act as a conduit between parents and working groups for those who wanted to be involved. The Curriculum Development Plan was already ongoing.

(d) Lockdown: this was now happening during the school day. Recent Fire Alarm procedures had worked well.

(e) Traffic: Concern was expressed about pupils' safety because of the number of vehicles entering the campus. Sarah Ingham would raise this issue with the Community Police Officer.

Events:

- S1 Induction
- Zambian Assemblies

- Higher Education Convention
- UCAS Evening
- County Sports
- 2Moro's Drivers
- Live 'n Learn Seminar

Future Events:

- Tuesday 15 September – S1 Settling In Evening (6 pm)
- Monday 21 September – Holiday
- W/c 21 September – S5/6 Study Skills Week
- Friday 2 October – Knox News deadline

5. Teacher Members' Report:

Sarah Ingham advised of 101 days unexplained absence in the first 8 days of term. There was a discussion concerning e-mail notification of absence, which would be acceptable if e-mail was secure. Parents would be asked to sign up to Parentmail – a development priority.

The Maths Club was re-starting, with 3 pupils entering the Maths Masterclass.

S1 and S2 had been given a Literacy Toolkit, and parents were encouraged to use this.

6. Support Staff Member's Report:

A Scholastic Bookfair event was being organised.

7. Events

Linda McInnes expressed thanks as a parent for the UCAS evening which was informative and extremely well run. There followed discussion on the University Open days. Most Universities advertise Open days which pupils may attend. Whilst the majority of Open days were held on weekdays, one or two offer these at weekends.

Buy 4 Schools

Some parents had registered for this and the numbers were expected to rise. Other fundraising activities included the Ragbag collection and an open Bookfair event on the evening of 30 September.

8. AOB

Fiona Mackenzie noted she had offered to come in to the school to talk about some of her work. She was thanked for this offer and it would be examined to see how it could be slotted in. Tim Holden also offered to come into the school and this offer was noted. There followed wider discussion on the role of parents as contributors to the school and there was a general agreement that this was a valuable resource that could be tapped more widely.

Fiona Mackenzie noted and sought the school's view on the trial in selected Glasgow schools whereby in an effort to combat obesity, junior pupils were "locked in" at lunchtime. This was noted and after discussion on the possible implications for the school it was agreed no further action was appropriate.

Fiona Mackenzie also noted the education budget forecast for the year ahead was extremely gloomy. Ms Craig agreed and advised that while figures were yet to be released, considerable effort was going into alternative funding sources.

Date of next meeting – 7 October at 6.15 pm.