

Knox Academy

Parent Council

<http://knoxparents.org.uk>



FINAL AGREED MINUTES

MINUTES OF KNOX ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL

DATE: 4 OCTOBER 2017 in the School Library

Present: John Wrinn, Chair
Andy McBain, Vice Chair
Kim White, Vice Chair
Louise Elder, Parent PC Member
Janette Fairgrieve, Parent PC Member
Nicola Cunningham, Parent PC Member
Kay Boylan, Parent PC Member
Caroline Taylor, Parent PC Member
Katrina Booth, Parent PC Member
Caroline McKinnel, Parent PC Member

In Attendance: Lauren Rodger, Head Teacher (Interim)
Bev Skirrow, Business Manager
Claire Slowther, Depute Head Teacher (Interim)
Caroline Falconer, Depute Head Teacher
Fergus Dickson, Head Pupil
Cara Morrison, Depute Head Pupil
Calum Blair, Teacher Representative
Allison Cosgrove, Clerk

Parents in Attendance:

Polly Codie, Mhari Brotherston, Fiona Dee, Elaine Towler, Margot Newman, Chris Carruthers, Liz Syme, Jane Rodgers, Rona Segurado, Aileen Doctor, Dervilla Bray, Phil Ross, Fiona Dewar, Nicola Sales, Philip Robinson, Jacqui MacKinnon. Kathleen Gunn, Claire Young, Nicola Elliot.

Attending: Cllr Brian Small and Cllr Shamin Akhtar, ELC.

Attached documents circulated in advance of the meeting:

- Agenda
- Minutes of Meeting of 30 August 2017
- Head Teacher's Report
- Chairperson's Report
- Staff Member Report
- Leadership Team Report
- Sports Department Report
- Staffing Report

1. Welcome and Apologies

John Wrinn (Chair) welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were noted from Anne Hunter, Colin Henderson and Cllr John McMillan.

2. Minutes of Meeting of 30 August 2017:

These were approved subject to a small amendment at Para 11, bullet point 4, to read “A parent raised a concern that dyslexia, *particularly visual stress*, was picked up late with her child.” Subject to this amendment, the minutes were agreed a true record of the meeting.

3. Matters arising and Action Points from the Minutes not covered in the Agenda:

Grace’s Signs – Grace had been unwell, however we’ve now been sent the artwork, and we believe we’re at liberty to make the signs in the most cost effective way. At a previous meeting, it had been suggested that these could be made within ELC. To be progressed. Action . LR

Selection Process for School Trips – Mrs Rodger explained the process, which was normally done “out of a hat” but that changes could be made depending if it suited a pupil’s needs and also could depend on the amount of demerits a pupil had received. A question was raised about allocation of trips in S2 and S3, and Mrs Rodger would look at this further, but the principle should be that if a child is unsuccessful in S2, then they would be prioritised for the S3 trip. Noted that although two overseas trips had been announced, local trips were to be announced in due course.

Text Messaging – Mrs Rodger asked that all parents sign up to receive text messages if possible. This will also alert them to updates on the website

Update Curriculum Book – this would be discussed at the next meeting. Action LR

4. Head Teacher’s Report

Mrs Rodger gave a brief update on staff changes in addition to those noted in her written report.

She gave an example of Nurture Groups as a use of the Pupil Equity Fund.

On the SQA Post Results Service, Mrs Rodger explained the process of review of exam results, and noted that Knox had achieved a success rate of 27% of reviews, as against a national figure of 18%. The school website now contains clear guidance on the SQA Post Results Service.

Mrs Rodger went on to discuss the School Improvement Plan, noting the four Key Priorities as High Quality Learning and Teaching; Supporting the Needs of all Learners; Building an Ethos of Ambition and Leadership Opportunities for All. A meeting had been held with the 6th year students on supporting learning, where behaviour issues had been raised, and there would be a consultation on “What are important issues for Knox Academy?” as this was essential for the Head Teacher in the future. Respect was a key aspect of this, and the Management Team would discuss this on Friday. Comments from parents were requested before Friday’s meeting, and the Chair asked that these be made direct to the School, given the short timescale.

On Self Evaluation and Quality Assurance, Mrs Rodger explained the process of evaluation, noting that external verifiers would be included, and that this was a process where reviews had not been self-evaluated before. An Action Plan will be created and may be shared with parents. Homework was another area that would be considered. Questions from parents present about the relevance and amount of homework were discussed. It was noted that Homework consultation questionnaire is currently on the school website and all parents were invited to contribute. It was noted that the site only allowed one submission per family and that one size doesn’t fit all for all families. CF would attempt to reset this to enable more than one submission from each family.

Action: All

Mrs Rodger advised that ELC would be carrying out a follow up visit at the end of October, and although this was a challenge, it was being carried out in a supportive manner. The Chair asked how long it would take to receive feedback from the East Lothian review team visit, and Mrs Rodger advised this should be available for the November meeting.

Mr Blair noted that good practice was being shared in twilight sessions for staff.

On Advanced Higher Courses, Mrs Rodger explained that at this level of learning, pupils were expected to carry out some self-study in preparation for university or further education, and this accounted for not all classes being teacher led, although a teacher was always available even for independent study periods. The online "Scholar" programme was also noted. Views were mixed from attendees, some feeling this is detrimental to the pupils, others giving the university viewpoint that self-directed learning is a vital skill. The approach at Knox is common among other schools in Scotland.

The Common School day could have advantages in sharing subjects across Dunbar Grammar, North Berwick High and Knox, with consultation with parents to follow a review of each school's curriculum structure.

Lastly, Mrs Rodger expressed her disappointment at recent poor press coverage. Knox had provided a statement to the Courier, which had not been published. A suggestion was made that the Parent Council could send out a press release on the positive aspects of the School. This was agreed.

Action JW

Ms Falconer then gave a presentation on the SQA exam results, focussing on strengths, areas for development and actions for improvement. It was noted that National 5 and Higher results in Design and Manufacture were significantly above the national average for the last three years; there were positive trends in English at both National 5 and Higher; and significant results in some areas of Science, Social subjects and Expressive Arts. Improvement actions were in place where appropriate, and Ms Falconer drew attention to these areas, pointing out that plans were in place across a number of areas.

For the first time, boys had achieved better results than girls at National 5, which was against the national trend, and this was commended.

On post school destinations, she advised that 99.13% of leavers went on to positive destinations. A breakdown of those destinations was requested.

Action CF

5. Staff Member Report

Mr Blair's report noted the updating of the website, the School engagement with the Community, activities in the Modern Languages Department on the European Day of Languages, an increase in numbers seeking Music Tuition, the Green Angels outdoor Nurture Group, the Green Team and Eco-Committee, and success for one pupil in an article submitted to the Tom Hunter Foundation. He was thanked for his report.

6. Chairperson's Report

John Wrinn summarised his report, noting the objectives of the Parent Council at the outset. On current issues, Louise Elder advised that Knox had been successful in obtaining £7,500 from Haddington & Lammermuir Area Partnership for the promotion of Girls Rugby sessions. Congratulations were offered to Louise for this achievement.

On Communications, he was keen to get a team together to work with Knox to consider what parents want to know and how they would find out the information. Elaine Towler, Janette

Fairgrieve, Mhairi Brotherstone to work alongside Scott Sutherland and Mrs Rodger agreed to be part of this group, with Scott asking the question – What do parents want to find out?

An update on Fundraising from the PTA was given. Sally, Louise, Liz and Kay were all on the PTA. The question of voluntary donations was raised for those who are unable to provide practical help, but do wish to support the school, and there was mention of a 100 Club, which operates in at least two other schools in the county. This to be discussed by the PTA. Action PTA

Other issues raised by parents directly with the Parent council since the previous meeting were noted. These were all discussed during the course of the meeting.

7. Parental Engagement Strategy

Mrs Rodger spoke briefly to this item, advising that a leaflet would go to all homes. To be discussed further at the November meeting.

8. Senior Pupil Leadership Team Report

Cara Morrison and Fergus Dickson both spoke to their report, noting that they were hoping to have additional social space supervised by prefects over the lunchtime period. They also noted that they are seeking support from the staff in dealing with challenging behaviour from other pupils. Teachers would be available if necessary to assist.

9. Sports Department Report

An Active Schools update had been circulated in advance of the meeting, giving information on the School of Hockey, Active Girls Day, the recent Volunteer Fayre, Coach Education and the Sports Fayre. In particular it was noted that support to meet transport costs was needed.

10. AOCB

A complaint was made concerning damage in the toilets, and ways of dealing with this were discussed. FES requested permission to install CCTV in the boys' toilet in an attempt to catch the culprits, or deter them from vandalism. It was agreed to allow the school time to deal with the likely offenders. To be discussed further in November Action LR

11. Dates of Future Meetings

Dates of 9 November, 6 December, 17 January, 7 March, 25 April and 30 May were put forward. No objections were received.

Action Points for Future Meetings:

Update on ELC Inspection	LR	9 November
Progress on Grace's Signs	LR	9 November
Parental Engagement Strategy	LR	9 November
Homework parent consultation	All	?
Communications Group Update	SS	9 November
Positive Destination details	CF	9 November
Update Curriculum Book	LR	9 November
Joint Press Statement PC/School	JW	End of October
100 Club for Knox	PTA	December 2017
Ongoing Vandalism to Boys Toilets	LR	9 November