

Knox Academy

Parent Council

<http://knoxparents.org.uk>



AGREED MINUTES OF KNOX ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL

DATE: 9 NOVEMBER 2017 in the School

Present: John Wrinn, Chair
Andy McBain, Vice Chair
Kim White, Vice Chair
Louise Elder, Parent PC Member
Janette Fairgrieve, Parent PC Member
Kay Boylan, Parent PC Member
Colin Henderson, Parent PC Member

In Attendance: Lauren Rodger, Head Teacher (Interim)
Cole Dean, Depute Head Pupil
Kara Singh, Depute Head Pupil
Calum Blair, Teacher Representative
Allison Cosgrove, Clerk
Steve Wands, Active Schools

Parents in Attendance:
Lisa Anning, Claire Young, Polly Cooke, Liz Syme, Chris Carruthers, Elaine Towler, Phil Ross

Attending: Cllr Tom Trotter, Elected Member

Attached documents circulated in advance of the meeting:

- Agenda
- Minutes of Meeting of 4 October 2017
- Head Teacher's Report
- Chairperson's Report
- Staff Member Report
- Leadership Team Report
- Sports Department Report
- Staffing Report
- School Improvement Plan
- Parental Engagement Strategy Leaflet

1. Welcome and Apologies

John Wrinn (Chair) welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were noted from Anne Hunter, Caroline Taylor, Caroline McKinnel, Jacqui McKinnon, Scott Sutherland and Katrina Booth.

2. Minutes of Meeting of 4 October 2017:

These were approved. Proposed by Andy McBain and seconded by Janette Fairgrieve.

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

Grace's Signs – The Chair displayed an example of the signage. It was agreed that the School would print these and use them for all toilets.

Thanks were expressed to Katrina Booth for the input she had made in progressing these.

Positive Destinations – Mrs Rodger explained that she had been out of School for four days and had not been able to progress this: however she would email information about this later. **Action LR**

Positive Press Statement – Mrs Rodger and the Chair would work on this and approach the East Lothian Courier. **Action LR/ JW**

Vandalism to Boys' Toilets – this had been under review since the last meeting in which time there had been very few problems. Mrs Rodger advised that it was not felt appropriate at this time to instal CCTV, and instead the School would monitor and manage behaviour in the area.

Members agreed to this course of action.

4. Head Teacher's Report

Staffing - Mrs Rodger gave an update on staff changes, reporting that it had not been possible to recruit a permanent post in Biology. This was a problem across the county, with posts in four other schools not being filled. However a supply teacher had been found and would start once PVG checks were in place. The NQ classes would be prioritised, but efforts would continue to obtain a permanent teacher.

East Lothian Council Progress Visit - Mrs Rodger gave an update of the recent Progress Visit where three staff had been in the School for two days. More confidence had been expressed on the way the School was moving forward, with progress in many areas.

Cllr Trotter questioned the need for the Progress Visit and Mrs Rodger explained the background and the remit.

She went on to highlight the Key Priorities of Delivering High Quality Learning and Teaching: Supporting the Needs of all Learners: Fostering an ethos of ambition for all: and Providing Leadership Opportunities for all, stating that the existing Action Plan still contains too many objectives. She would bring a revised Action Plan to the next Parent Council meeting, with time given for discussion, including how parents could assess these priorities

Action LR

Mrs Rodger's summary of the Inspection report is contained in Appendix A.

Mrs Rodger spoke about some concerns she had received from parents, and that had come via the PC, regarding homework. A key message was that children, especially in S3, were not always getting enough pace and challenge in the classroom and via homework or 'Home Learning'.

The school is working on a clear policy for Home Learning, including what can be expected and how parents can provide support. The School was considering an app named Show My Homework that parents can log into showing homework set for the year group. There were issues with the amount, the consistency and the quality of work set, and Mrs Rodger asked for feedback from parents on the types of homework set and the amount. A draft policy was expected by mid-January. She advised that there was not always enough pace and challenge in S3, partly because national changes to the

Senior School curriculum and qualifications meant teachers had been more focused on this area over recent years. The Pupil Learning Team were assisting with this.

Family Learning Programme – 17 parents from S1 were attending this programme, and funds were being sought to run this during the day in the Nungate Centre, Haddington.

Meadowpark - A Key Priorities document had been produced which complemented that of Knox. A support visit would be made by Education Scotland later in the month.

Scottish National Standardised Assessments – Mrs Rodger advised on the assessment process, which would apply to S3 during this academic year. Guidance was required from the Local Authority as to when these would happen, with a possible information evening.

Targeted Interventions – Mrs Rodger explained the process and acknowledged that some pupils had been anxious about the procedure. She asked parents if letters advising should go to parents as well as pupils, which was agreed by all. Parents had several queries, including poor experience of the tracking process and the difficulties caused by poor communication, as well as the need for consistency. It was agreed that there was room for improvement.

Curriculum Development – the Working Group had been meeting to discuss the senior phase curriculum, and Mrs Rodger advised that communication in terms of course choices needed to be better. Parents had been included in the past and this was being considered again, as well as review of the current choice programme to introduce more options for S5. More non-standard courses were being offered and work was ongoing into pupils in S4, S5 and S6 being able to do any choice of subject at any level. Work is also ongoing at authority level to explore the possibility of a common timetable for some subjects, particularly at Advanced Higher level. Pupils could be given the opportunity to choose a subject which may be delivered at any one of the 6 High Schools. Heather MacLeod, Depute Head Teacher, would be happy to come to the January meeting and discuss further.

Action HM

Common School Day

This ELC initiative will be subject to consultation and is now not expected to be introduced until 2019-20

Other matters raised by parents:-

Behaviour concerns on a recent S6 trip – Mrs Rodger explained that there had been an issue with former pupils, but this was handled well by the trip leaders at the time, with no need for further concern. Mrs Rodger confirmed that this incident will not adversely affect future S6 trips and noted that the S6 pupils had all behaved very well and the incident was outside their control.

Publicity – a parent pointed out that there was a lot of publicity about sporting events, but not always about non-sporting activities. Mrs Rodger noted this.

5. Staff Members' Report

The Report gave updates on the Family Learning Programme; an Aubigny visit; musical success where 25 pupils were taking part in the East Lothian Schools Orchestra; Mr Plain, the School Librarian, being shortlisted for an award for Accelerated Reader; a history trip; a forensic science event; and Young Enterprise events.

Ms White asked if, in addition to Mr Blair, there would be interest from any other staff member to attend the Parent Council, and share the load. Mr Blair will enquire.

Action – CB&LR

6. Chair's Report

The Chair spoke to his Report, noting that the ELC Parental Engagement strategy had not yet been cascaded to parents. It was felt appropriate for the Communications group to the forum for wider parental involvement, which might include a separate evening session. Mrs Rodger agreed to this.

Action JW & LR

Haddington and Lammermuir Area Partnership were looking for a parent volunteer on the Partnership, and Louise Elder advised of the importance of the role. Mrs Rodger had met with Stuart Gibb, Area Manager, and Craig McLachlan, Chair of the Partnership. A funding bid may be made from the Cluster for the next Partnership meeting.

The Chair encouraged parents to attend meetings of The Association of East Lothian Parent Councils, noting that the Head of Education attended every meeting as did the Chair of the Education Committee. He would send out information on dates for future meetings. *Action – JW*

PTA Report – Louise Elder advised that there would be a meeting on 15 November at 6.30 pm. More parents were sought for the group, especially S1 parents.

The PTA are setting up a 100 club, as a simple and effective way to raise funds. This has potential to be a great fundraising source which, once set up, almost runs itself.

Post meeting Note: the Chair attended the PTA on 15th Nov. The plan is to launch the 100 club by January, with the first draw to take place at the Burns night. Please encourage all parents, friends and other school supporters to sign up. Info to follow via the usual channels.

Chris Carruthers had been engaging with the sports department to explore the logistics of HAFC supporting girls' football at Knox. Despite much effort, this has not reached a positive conclusion as hoped for, due to a combination of other commitments from the girls, and unavailability of coaches and volunteers, at times to suit all parties. It was agreed to keep this under review.

The chair recently met SW and SL from SOH and continues to explore funding routes.

7. Leadership Team Report

Cole and Kara advised that the Library was now in use by pupils over the whole of lunchtime and provided social space. They had attended a session on managing challenging behaviour and this had proved helpful.

6th year students had acted as volunteers at all the Parents Evenings, the Fireworks Evening and they would be at the Armistice Day parade on Sunday.

They were keen to organise a Mental Health and Wellbeing event, and also to create more of a culture around House Competitions – three were planned for next year.

Mrs Rodger described the Leadership Team as being a massive asset to the School.

8. Sports Department Report

There was discussion around the involvement of girls in sport. Numbers continued to be low in football, but a group was interested in playing volleyball and a girls' ruby team was playing Leith Academy that evening. Other activities included walking with pedometers, boxing and yoga. Corrie Scott, Commonwealth Games swimmer, was coming to the School to talk to pupils about how sport can help mental health.

Steve Wands was considering a bursary scheme to allow participation in sport, noting that the Area Partnership in Dunbar had allocated funding for this purpose.

9. Other Items

The idea of a school-based, pupil-led media team to promote the school was made, and Cole Dean suggested this could be linked with the school magazine. He would report back on this at the December meeting.

Action – CD

Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme – two pupils were volunteering with the netball team, and one parent was planning to run a D of E Bronze Award. Parents felt that a school led or supported DoE programme would be very worthwhile. Post meeting note, JW felt this should go back on the agenda.

Action – JW

East Lothian Association of Parent Councils Meeting – the next meeting was on 22 November.

The school have received an invitation to take part in the Scottish Schools Pipe Band Championship in March 2018.

It was noted that Knox pupils had taken part in a recent Macmillan event, and had been a credit to the School.

10. Dates of Future Meetings

6 December 2017, 17 January, 7 March, 25 April and 30 May 2018.

Action Points for Future Meetings:

Curriculum Development progress report	HMCL	17 January 2018
Update Action Plan	LR	6 December
Positive Destination details	LR	To be emailed
Positive press coverage	JW/ LR	ongoing
Update on Curriculum	LR	January 2018
Encourage more Staff members to PC meeting	CB & LR	ongoing
Parental Engagement strategy	JW&LR	Subject to booklets from ELC
Association of East Lothian Parent Councils – future meeting dates	JW	Ongoing and will be noted on PC website
Update on pupil led media team	CD	6 December
Homework parent consultation	All	?
100 Club for Knox	PTA	December 2017
Knox DoE club	LR/ JW	Discuss in Jan 2018