

Knox Academy

Parent Council

<http://knoxparents.org.uk>



MINUTES OF KNOX ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL MEETING

DATE: 1 SEPTEMBER 2020 via TELECONFERENCE

Present: Lesley Pirie, Chair
Anne Hunter, Parent PC Member
Katrina Booth, Parent PC Member
Colin Henderson, Parent PC Member
Janet Imrie, Parent PC Member
Andy McBain, Parent PC Member
Elaine Towler, Parent PC Member
Phillip Ross, Parent PC Member
Louise Elder, Parent PC Member
Hannah McBride, Staff
Angela McDonald, Staff
Lana Borwick, Staff
Rachel Broadley, Head Pupil
Julia Dale, Head Pupil

In Attendance: Sue Cook, Head Teacher
Alice Clubb, DHT
David Russell, DHT
Steven Illingworth, DHT
Charli Prime, DHT
Thomas Salkeld, Active Schools
Peter Luke, Business Manager
Allison Cosgrove, Clerk

Parents Attending: Fiona Dee, Sue Langlands, Alice Hall, Edward Maycock, Katie Harrison, Isobel Vogel, Louise Marongiu and Avril Davidson.

Apologies: Mhari Brotherston, Caroline McKinnel and Cllr John McMillan.

1. **Welcome and Minutes of Meeting of 26 May**

The Chair welcomed all those attending to the first meeting of the new session.
The Minutes of the last meeting of 26 May were agreed.

2. **Head Teacher's Report**

Ms Cook made a presentation to update parents on the following items:

- A staffing report was made
- Progress in the previous session had included a focus on school values with a new vision on kindness
- A positive Education Scotland report had been received, emphasising confidence in the Senior Leadership and school staff to continue the positive journey it is on and lead further change and

improvement. The good relationships and behaviour seen in the school were highlighted as significant improvements from previous inspection reports.

- A new inclusion policy had been developed
- Pupil Support Bases had been redesigned to support the most vulnerable pupils
- ICT skills had developed across all staff, especially using Google Classroom
- The School Improvement Plan had been streamlined, noting that the health and safety of staff and pupils was a priority.

Ms Cook went through the next steps of the Improvement Plan for 2021, including resilience through Covid 19, an emphasis on high quality teaching and learning combined with ambition and excellence. There would be a new approach to tracking and monitoring and raising attainment in BGE. There had been increased stay-on rates, due to the broadening of the curriculum.

She outlined the steps that were being taken to combat Covid 19, where the message was “Don’t come to school if you’re not well”. Noted that Karen Fraser, the Welfare Assistant was doing a great job dealing with young people’s anxieties and liaising with home, and alternatives for wet weather were— using the Hall, Games Hall and Library – were being made use of. In addition, there had been a whole school and individual subject risk assessments carried out.

The Chair enquired about wearing masks in School, and Ms Cook replied that all were being encouraged to wear face coverings – a small number were exempt on medical/health grounds.

Alice Clubb went on to explain the assessment process for the exam results, advising that there had been quality assurance at three stages: within the department; through the Senior Leadership Team and analysis; and across the Council with Quality Improvement Officers and a data analyst. These were then presented to the SQA. Figures showing the results since 2015 were shown and improvement across all areas of N5/H and AH. Noted that there had been good results from Meadowpark pupils.

On Parents’ Evenings, it was not yet clear how these would happen, but guidance was expected from the Scottish Government. The first evening was scheduled for early November, and the current plan was for two reports and one Parents’ Evening for all pupils.

David Russell added that Prelims were expected to take place the first two weeks in December, with assessments taking place throughout the year to create a variety of evidence.

Questions were invited from parents, as follows:-

Q – were assessments now happening more regularly as part of teaching? - Yes

Q – How were the new S1s settling in? - Steven Illingworth advised that they have settled very well into the new way of working. There were no year group assemblies, but there had been virtual assemblies, and the S1s had had virtual meetings before the start of school with Register teachers and buddies, and S6 had done a visual tour of the School. Those pupils attending the Hub during lockdown had already met some of the teachers. There had also been a pupil well-being survey with a good response from pupils and a large amount of data.

There had been a commitment from the Scottish Government to have a trained counsellor in every school – a contract had been awarded and staff were being appointed. There were limits on visitors, with no parents allowed into the School, no social workers or speech therapists.

New pupil enrolments were coming in all the time, with only one spare place in 3rd year and limited places in 1st year.

Charli Prime added her thanks to all who had supported Meadowpark, which was now at full capacity.

3. Staff Report

Hannah McBride emphasised it was great to be back in school; the pupils were settled and their behaviour was good. Google Classroom work was available for any pupil off sick, and the school website showed guardian summaries. She thanked parents for ensuring that young people had all the materials necessary.

The Chair enquired about laptops, and whether they were needed for all pupils, and Ms Cook explained that 36 Chromebooks were still to be returned to the School; in Edinburgh pupils had access to the same IT facilities but this was not the case in East Lothian. Scottish Government funds for Chromebooks was not yet available; however the Area Partnership were providing repaired Chromebooks. Noted that the bandwidth had been broadened so more pupils could access the internet. Rachel Broadley added that sometimes it was easier for pupils to use their own laptops.

The Chair asked about School capacity, and Ms Cook advised that the budget was very tight staffing wise, and any supply staff would not be subject specific.

4. Leadership Team Report

The Prefect rota was in place in the Food Court – there were 35 prefects. Preparation was ongoing for Black History Month events in October.

5. Chair's Report

The Chair reported that both Nicola Cunningham and Mhari Brotherston were stepping down from the PTA. She noted the low numbers in the 100 Club. The Careers Evening would not be happening this year but all contributors would be contacted and asked to return the following year.

On Faculty presentations to the Parent Council, she hoped that these could be re-started again. She also drew attention to Preston Lodge's HS Learning Foundation which had raised hundreds of thousands of pounds for the School.

6. Active Schools Report

Thomas Salkeld reported that extra curricular activities could be available from 14 September, with risk assessments being issued and booking taking place online. It was hoped to include Tennis, Surfing, Dance, Golf and Trampolining. Noted that the Active Schools post was subject to a recruitment interview in September.

7. AOCB

A question was asked about period products being available in toilets, and that some schools were providing underwear – Ms Cook would ask the Welfare Assistant to follow this up.

Ms Cook noted that Christmas dances would not be possible this year, but it was hoped to organise an event for the S1s and S2s after the Prelims, and that the Senior Prom would go ahead for S6.

Date of Next Meeting – Wednesday 28 October at 6.30 pm.