



<https://alfordacademy.edublogs.org/parent-council>  
<http://alfordaca.pc@outlook.com>

## **MINUTES OF THE ALFORD ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL MEETING**

Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2023 (7.00 – 9.00 pm)  
Virtual - via Teams link

### **Attendees**

- Office Bearers: Dawn Brown (Chair), Joe Purkis (Depute-chair), Coralie Robertson (Secretary), Ingrid Huldal (Treasurer).
- Parent Council Members: Monica Iloya, Karen Leven, Sharon Witherspoon, Tanya Viliene, Frank Sewell, Linda Purkis, Amy Wilson.
- Parent Forum: Ali Lyon, Susie Young, Ian Forbes.
- School Staff: Mrs Angela Wotherspoon - Head Teacher  
Dr Matt Skellern - Depute Head Teacher (Learning and Teaching)  
Mr Stuart Cookson - Depute Head Teacher (Curriculum)
- Councillors: Cllr Jeff Goodhall, Cllr Anouk Kloppert, Cllr Gwyneth Petire, Cllr Iris Walker

### **1. Welcome & apologies**

Apologies:

Parent Council members: Charlotte Millburn, Sarah Lewis  
Additionally: Mr Graham Scott - Depute Head Teacher (Pupil Support), Cllr Sarah Brown, Cllr Blackett, Cllr Ron McKail.

Welcome to the first meeting of the Parent Council.

### **2. Review of previous meeting minutes and matters arising**

- Minutes of 14<sup>th</sup> June approved by Ingrid Huldal, seconded by Linda Purkis.
- Actions from EGM 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023:
  - School Improvement Plan is on the agenda to discuss progress.
  - School to look at better communication with parents about the benefits to pupils of taking a Foundation Apprenticeships.
  - School is developing a draft anti-bullying policy around Aberdeenshire Council's newly released policy and share with parents (to be covered in AOB).
  - A small number of volunteers provided input as parents to SEEMIS templates with Dr Skellern.
  - Review of Community Link: ASN sub-group (to be covered in sub-group updates).
  - Parent workshops/family information sessions (to be covered in sub-group updates).
  - Fundraising sub-group and Parent Council and Pupil Partnership sub-group will share Outdoor Space project with business partners to support with achieving target fundraising (to be covered in sub-group updates).

- Actions from meeting 14<sup>th</sup> June 2023:
  - Parent Forum was asked for comments on change of PC to SCIO status. No comments were received.
  - Discussion with parents about home learning/homework (carried forward to next meeting).

### 3. Sub-committee updates

#### FUNDRASING

- Meeting to be arranged with Business Manager to discuss practicalities of installation and maintenance of any outdoor equipment as the Academy and Campus are shared facilities and not wholly owned by Aberdeenshire Council. This discuss will form the basis for being able to progress further grant applications.
- Fundraising sub-group looking for volunteers, including anyone with experience of event planning.
- Will look at results of PC parent survey for type of fundraising/social events with view to holding one next term.
- Sub-group volunteers: Dawn Brown, Coralie Robertson, Sharon Witherspoon, Amy Wilson.

#### Actions

Submit application to Mar Area Funding	Fundraising sub-group
Submit a Tesco application for the Outdoor Space project	Fundraising sub-group
Fundraising/Social Event for next term	Fundraising sub-group
Discuss installation and maintenance of outdoor equipment with Business Manager	Coralie/Dawn

#### PARENT COUNCIL & PUPIL PARTNERSHIP

- Information from the meeting with the Business Manager will be passed on to inform the Outdoor Space project consultations with the Student Council, along with feedback from 2 staff members who recently visited Banchory Academy to look at outdoor learning.
- Sub-group volunteers: Frank Sewell, Coralie Robertson.

#### Action

Arrange meeting with Student Council	Parent Council & Pupil Partnership sub-group
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#### HORIZONS

- Horizons has started again.
- 103 pupils going out for Foundation Apprenticeships, pupils not doing Foundation Apprenticeships developing skills such as CV building.
- Will have Universities and Colleges visiting, the Army doing team building skills, 15 employers doing mock interviews for all S5 and S6, including filling out mock job applications and HR rep visiting to discuss recruitment.
- Horizons programme also based on skills pupils identified: First aid, car maintenance and finance, cooking on a budget, budgets and student accommodation.

- School is looking for help from parents to help organise the program, useful if available on Tuesdays, but if not could provide support behind the scenes or contacts within the local area for networking.
- Interviews are based on the School Leaver Profile.
- Foundation Apprenticeships are helping pupils get into universities, demonstrating extra skills.
- Pupils not doing Foundation Apprenticeships are volunteering in classroom e.g. reading program.
- Pupils are taking leadership awards during Horizons.
- PC parent survey may provide areas parents can support the Horizons programme.
- Sub-group volunteer: Monica Iloya.

#### COMMUNITY GROUP LINK: ASN

- It was agreed to change the sub-group name to Family Learning to reflect the broader support for families including additional support needs, life after school, preparing for transfer to university, supporting children with maths and literacy.
- Will use feedback from PC survey to see which areas parents would like support from workshops and what support school can provide or external providers.
- Family Learning sub-group are looking for more parents to volunteer.
- Sub-group volunteers: Ingrid Huldal, Dawn Brown.

#### Action

Use feedback from PC survey to inform areas for workshops	Family Learning sub-group
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#### COMMUNICATION

- Charlotte refreshed the PC webpages, adding photos and news stories.
- Please let us know if there is anything you would like shared through the News section.
- Sub-group volunteers: Charlotte Milburn, Dawn Brown.

#### 4. Head update

- Awards ceremony took place in June over 2 evenings. Fantastic event with the pupils as the focus supported by the pipe band, pianist, guitarist and singers.
- Summer wellbeing event with tradition athletic events, Scottish games, bike pump track, zorbing, archery and sponge the teacher.
- Senior Executive, senior prefects and house captains appointed.
- Kildrummy house won the Caberfeidh Cup – overall winners of the house events.
- Horizons: former pupils visited at the start of term as part of the Alumni group.
- Silver DoE was held in Tomintoul area braving horrendous weather. Bronze DoE being held over the next 2 weekends in Bennachie area.
- YPI Launch with visit from charities with S4s. Pupils choose a charity to investigate and give a presentation as part of a competition in school, with the best presentation winning £3,000 for their chosen charity.
- Theatres in School visited, working with S1, S2 and S3.
- Freshers Fair was organized by the Student Council.
- Army visited delivering team building skills to S5 and S6.
- Assemblies first day back and working alongside Chaplaincy looking at delivery of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child issues. Chaplaincy drop in every other Friday in the library for pupils.
- Attainment reviews – staff account for where we are with pupils and how to improve
- Planning activities weeks for S1-3 earlier so costs can be spread over a longer period.
- Looked at planning and reporting with a group of parents.

- **Behaviour system** has changed – if a pupil has issues in a particular subject, parents will be contacted by the subject Faculty Head or Principal Teacher rather than through the Guidance teacher. Should parents have any concerns, the Guidance teacher remains their point of contact.
- **Equity, Excellence & Wellbeing** Mrs Munro (see presentation E.E+WB Term 1 Update) is supporting over 70 pupils:
  - o Raising awareness with S1 pupils and parents to see how can help with barriers to learning. Raising engagement and attainment: Senior Phase Mentoring Programme, S1/2 Reading Programme in Collaboration with our English Faculty, Cycling Initiative (Current focus on S2/3).
  - o Wellbeing: See Me See Change programme whole school approach to support us and our young people to understand ways our school can tackle mental health stigma and discrimination (see PowerPoint P-C Presentation See Me See Change). Asked for a representative from Parent Council. Wellbeing Peer Educators (10 young people from S4 and S5).
  - o Financial support: uniform resource, community food resource, winter clothing vouchers. Would welcome companies that would like to be involved in supporting pupils.
- **SQA results** (see pdf PC 19-9-23) :
  - o In summary, we have had some outstanding results and many of our pupils have exceeded expectations. I will meet with Faculty Heads over the next few weeks to look at our SQA results, to discuss lessons learned and how we can bring about further improvements.
  - o Senior Leadership Team were in school on 8/8/2023 and we contacted many of the following pupils to congratulate them on their achievements.
  - o Thank you to all our staff, for your hard work and commitment in supporting the pupils and their families to achieve such excellent results. I am very proud of our school and community.
- **School Improvement Plan** (see Improvement Priorities outline in pdf PC 19-9-23). Staff grouped into Collegiate Improvement teams encompassing learning & teaching, curriculum & pathways, leadership, health & wellbeing.
- **Staffing:** A number of staff have left or are on maternity leave, with Mr Cahill retiring. School are advertising for a computing post, Business Studies posts and HE (class covered by supply teacher) and a Literacy & Numeracy post. National 5 Business is being supported by e-Sgoil. HE post looking to be backfilled as teacher has moved to Guidance.

### **Depute Head Teacher (Learning and Teaching) update**

- Dr Skellern has set up Colligate Improvement teams to tie into school priorities: 3 teams, 5 sub-groups and 15 working groups and all staff asked to join. E.g., Horizon group, See Me See Change group. Each group chaired by member of school staff and holding the first meeting of chairs of groups. Staff committing 8 hours across the year.
- Pedagogy group: looking at learning and teaching and classroom practices, what Alford Academy lesson looks like and classroom observations with pupils involved. Learning statement form this will be shared with parents at the end of the year. Working with Banchory, Aboyne and Westhill Academies for best practices.
- Tracking and Monitoring S2 reports this week.
- Met with group pf parents to look at what other schools doing with reports with feedback on a more streamlined approach and reports more closely aligned with primary schools using similar terminology.
- S4-S6 reports before October holidays introducing Cause for Concern' allowing statements to be made on progress in tracking reports with more information for parents.
- SQA re-introduced elements removed because of Covid, so back to full course with assignments and this will be communicated with parents before the October holidays with key dates for each course. Staff will be given time during in-service days to familiarise themselves with SQA Understanding Standards Exemplars etc so that they can support pupils with assignments.
- SQA website Understanding Standards can be publicly accessed for information.

- Appeals have been sent off and waiting to hear; school identified pupils that should consider an appeal.
- Thank you to Faculty staff.

#### **Depute Head Teacher (Curriculum) update**

- Mr Cookson has been focusing on pathways.
- In Clan programme S2 looking at growth industry sectors to make informed choices for subjects in S3 and beyond. Looking at creative sectors, energy, food & drink, tourism.
- S3 looking at employability awards.
- Careers Fair 15<sup>th</sup> Feb 24 timed just before course choices and parents evenings. Open to all years and the community.
- Working with Ford Next Generation with a meeting on School Leaver Profile and to look at students tracking skills.

### **5. High level summary of EGM on Inspection**

Carried forward to next meeting due to time available.

Action

Item High level summary of EGM on Inspection carried forward	Coralie
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### **6. School Improvement Plan**

Item covered in Head update

### **7. AOB**

#### 7.1 Bullying/Anti-bullying policy

Bullying, including on social media, was identified as an area for a family workshop.

Action

Dr Skellern to put Family Learning sub-group in touch with Collegiate Improvement group	Family Learning sub-group/Ingrid
School to share draft anti-bullying policy with parents	Mrs Wotherspoon

### **Date of next meeting**

Wednesday 22nd November 2023

### **Parent Council meeting dates (2023/2024)**

Tuesday 19th September 2023 – AGM & first PC meeting  
 Wednesday 22nd November 2023  
 Tuesday 23rd January 2024  
 Wednesday 13th March 2024

Tuesday 14th May 2024

Wednesday 19th June 2024 (P7 parents welcome evening)

**Parent Council Members 2023/2024 (Quorum 6):**

Nicola	(S1)
Tanya Viliene	(S2)
Ingrid Huldal (Treasuer)	(S2)
Dawn Brown (Chair)	(S3)
Charlotte Milburn	(S3)
Sarah Lewis	(S5,S3)
Sharon Witherspoon	(S4)
Coralie Robertson (Secretary)	(S4)
Donna Gray	(S4,S3)
Linda Purkis	(S5,S3)
Monica Iloya	(S5)
Amy Wilson	(S5, S1)
Joe Purkis (Depute Chair)	(S5,S3)
Frank Sewell	(S6,S5,S3)

**Parent Council Sub-committee Members 2023-2024:**

Fundraising	Amy Wilson, Sharon Witherspoon, Coralie Robertson, Dawn Brown
Parent Council-Pupil Partnership	Frank Sewell, Coralie Robertson
Family Learning	Ingrid Huldal, Dawn Brown
Horizons	Monica Iloya
Communication	Charlotte Millburn, Dawn Brown