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MINUTES OF THE ALFORD ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL MEETING

Monday 20th November 2023 (7.00 – 9.00 pm)
Virtual - via Teams link

Attendees

- Office Bearers: Joe Purkis (Depute-chair), Coralie Robertson (Secretary), Ingrid Huldal (Treasurer).
- Parent Council Members: Monica Iloya, Sharon Witherspoon, Tanya Viliene, Linda Purkis, Amy Wilson, Charlotte Millburn.
- Parent Forum: Elizabeth Lyon.
- School Staff: Mrs Angela Wotherspoon - Head Teacher.
Dr Matt Skellern - Depute Head Teacher (Learning and Teaching).
Mr Graham Scott - Depute Head Teacher (Pupil Support).
Mr Stuart Cookson - Depute Head Teacher (Curriculum).
- Councillors: Cllr Anouk Kloppert, Cllr Ron McKail.

1. Welcome & apologies

Apologies:

Parent Council members: Dawn Brown (Chair), Sarah Lewis.
Additionally: Cllr Sarah Brown, Cllr Iris Walker, Cllr Gwyneth Petrie, Cllr Jeff Goodhall.

2. Review of previous meeting minutes and matters arising

- Minutes of 19th September approved by Ingrid Huldal, seconded by Sharon Witherspoon.
- Matters arising are covered in the agenda items.

3. Teacher shortages in Aberdeenshire – letter from Secondary school Parent Councils to Cabinet Secretary

- Letter written by Chair, Fraserburgh Parent Council regrading teacher shortages in Aberdeenshire approved by Mr Findlay, Director of Education to be sent to the Cabinet Secretary.
- All secondary school Parent Council Chairs have been asked to sign the letter and the PC approved the signature from Alford PC.
- Situation of teacher shortages discussed with Cllrs and Mrs Wotherspoon said Alford Academy teacher shortages, particularly in Maths and Business Studies, are highlighted in her staffing update.

4. Treasurer's report

Balance as of 20th November = £5,536.51

Last meeting changes:

Income: £57.03 paid in by Easy Fundraising
Outgoings: £3,000 paid for school award ceremony (2 years)
Pending: £417.00 for U15 Girls football kit

Reminder a total of £4027.32 is ringfenced from Co-op Outdoor Space project

Actual projected balance is £1,092.19

- School library asked for a donation to purchase books pupils have requested and a donation of £200 was approved.
- The Basketball Club had asked for a donation. PC would like to increase funds in the account and have asked for more details to consider the request at the next meeting.
- A reminder to be sent out about easyfundraising in the hope to increase support from parents in the run up to Christmas.
- Accounts for 2022/2023, as presented at the AGM, were audited by Penny Fuller. PC agreed a small thank you gift of under £15 for Penny.

Action

Donation for school library	Ingrid
Basketball Club asked for more details to consider donation	Ingrid
Easyfundraising reminder	Coralie
Arrange thank you gift for auditing accounts	Coralie

5. Sub-committee updates

COMMUNICATION

- The PC survey had 62 response and has been helpfully in informing different areas of the PC.
- Will keep webpages of News section updated.
- Next project will look at current communications with PC, school and parent forum and how this can be done differently to engage parents and carers.

Action

Project to assess and improve communications	Charlotte & Dawn
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FAMILY LINK

- PC Parent's survey responses showed half would attend parent workshops, preferably in the early evening with interest in social and emotional behaviour, study support, social media and ASN.
- Jo Munro will be running an evening session in March for parents which will include how to talk with teenagers by representative of Scottish Action for Mental Health (SAHM) who has been working with some of the pupils.
- Dr Skellern will look at running an online session for parents on study support.
- Family link sub-group will explore options with school for providing workshops using staff specialisations and possible external providers.

- Christine McLennan (Education Support Officer – Parental Engagement and Learner Participation) Aberdeenshire Council looking to offer sessions on internet safety and social media through Parent Councils

Action

Online session for parents on study support	Dr Skellern
Options for school to providing workshops using staff specialisations and possible external providers, including Aberdeenshire Council	Family Learning sub-group

FUNDRAISING

- Met with Cluster Business Manager and Head Teacher discussed practicalities of installation and maintenance of outdoor equipment as the Academy and Campus are shared facilities and leased by Aberdeenshire Council. Aberdeenshire Council approved contractors will be approached for quotations and this will form the basis for being able to progress further grant applications.
- The insurance for PC fundraising activities requires the activity date, time, location, type of activity including involvement of outside providers to be approved at a PC meeting.
- The sub-group will have a meeting to look at the fundraising suggestions from the PC Parent survey but highlighted large events such as BBQ/Spring Fair would need the help of more volunteers.

Actions

Fundraising/Social Event	Fundraising sub-group
Quotations from Aberdeenshire Council approved contractors for Outdoor Space project	Coralie

PARENT COUNCIL & PUPIL PARTNERSHIP

- Took part in the meeting with Cluster Business Manager and Head Teacher on Outdoor Space project.
- Will meet with Student Council for an update on the areas they are discussing and to pass on progress with Outdoor Space project.

Action

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

- Horizons program will be running first aid training by the British Heart Foundation, including cardiac arrest and defibrillator, and School Nurse will be talking about how to sign up with a GP when leaving home.
- Outwith Horizons, Monica joined staff training sessions for the See Me See Change project to reduce stigma around mental health. She will be joining staff and pupils for a joint session on 7th Dec after which the strategy will be rolled out across the whole school and shared with parents.

6. Head update

- Motocross - Congratulations to Jaden who recently was at the final round of the Scottish Motocross Championship and is the SACU BW85cc Scottish Motocross Champion 2023.
- S1 Parents Open evening – S1 pupils showed their parents around school with 63% of S1 parents attending.

- Senior Project Based Learning group – coordinated, organized and baked for an afternoon tea event.
- S3 Project Based Learning – working with a lecturer at Aberdeen University they showcased their work on racism, sharing it with parents in school.
- S4 Youth and Philanthropy Initiative (YPI) - final well attended by parents with the winning charity awarded £3,000.
- Remembrance – daily poems were read by members of the Senior Exec culminating with a pupil in school playing the bagpipes for the lament. Senior Exec attended the war memorial with a piper for the lament.
- S5 Mock interviews –interviews held by business partners.
- Children in Need raised £508.
- **Issues with Staffing at Alford Academy reflecting the shortages of teachers in particular subjects across Aberdeenshire:**
 - o Maths - Vacancy for Principal Teacher Maths – current Acting PT was seconded from another school and has been recalled. Interviews held to fill post, but not been able to appoint. All certificate classes are covered by a maths teacher. Looked at attainment of S4 maths and re-organised classes with National 4, National 5 Apps and National 5 Maths (one class is larger and being taught with two teachers). Advertising a Numeracy post and a Maths teacher post for Maths.
 - o H.E. - 0.4 full time post advertised.
 - o P.E. - Principal Teacher for P.E. has been called back early from secondment as P.E. has a 0.4 full time vacancy.
 - o Business Studies – vacancy is being covered by online learning through e-Sgoil.
 - o Computing – new teacher appointed replacing Mr Cahill to start on 4/12/23.
- In-service days held at Alford Golf Club – the Golf Club is a partner of the school, during the day we were looking at learning and teaching, behaviour and horizons.
- Jo Munro is looking at S1-S3 activities week and payment plans.
- Christmas Celebration and Review of 2023 to be held on 7th December.
- Planning the Christmas Dances – 18th December (S1-S3), 19th December (S4-S6)
- School is delighted with the new Awards boards made by local craftsmen.
- A year ago, today was the school inspection and Mrs Wotherspoon reflected on how far the school has come.

Depute Head Teacher (Learning and Teaching) update

- S3 assemblies held to let pupils know about National Standardised Assessments (NSA) – no preparation required, and information will be looked at by Working Groups for literacy and numeracy and how to use data to support pupils in class on reading, writing and maths. Information on NSA sent out to S3 parents.
- Chairs of Colligate Improvement teams gave updates - Pedagogy team working on consistency and unified approach to teaching identified by inspection report. Consultation with take place with staff, then pupils and parents.
- Looking at learning evaluation toolkits for staff to evaluate themselves and others.
- In-service day session on promoting positive relationships.
- Getting ready for prelims and timetable.
- Quad Working - School staff will meet with Aboyne, Banchory and Westhill Academies staff to look at moderation activities.

Depute Head Teacher (Pupil Support) update

- P7 transition – adjustments to timings when ask for information from primary schools for a better transition.
- Parents evenings started and expanded with extra stands e.g. RGU, MCR Pathways.

- Education psychologist delivered Nurture training during in-service days, will lead to nurture training for specific staff and developing a nurture room available in the new year (name of room to be decided).
- SHINE surveys looking at pupils' mental health in class during PSE – data shared with Glasgow University, who share information with school.

Depute Head Teacher (Curriculum) update

- Pathways – working with Ford Next Generation Learning looking at training staff have been on.
- Clan program S1-S4.
- S1 team building.
- S2 focusing on growth industries sectors, looking at digital and creative technologies with partners and 16th January land-based industries and food and drink. End of S2 will have experienced all sectors and will choose one they are most interested in for project-based learning.
- Careers Fair 15th February.
- Business breakfast and networking session for careers fair.
- Foundation Apprenticeships undertaking development days. School offers a Foundation Apprenticeship in civil engineering.
- The King has invited pupils to Balmoral 5/12/23 as part of the Foundation Apprenticeship work for Hospitality.

7. High level summary of EGM on Inspection – Anti-bullying policy

- Colligate Improvement team is taking the anti-bullying policy forward and looking at content for a survey of pupils, then share with PC and parents.

8. School Improvement Plan

- There have been a number of staff absences recently impacting class cover and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) have been covering for this which is affecting how quickly certain areas of the School Improvement Plan can be moved forward.
- As a result of this Mrs Wotherspoon asked volunteers from the PC to help develop the survey on school uniform which will go out to parents, pupils, staff and stakeholders. Thank you to Linda Purkis and Sharon Witherspoon for volunteering.
- It was noted that parents had raised school uniform through the PC survey.

9. AOB

9.1 Home learning/homework

- Home learning/homework policy is one of the improvement areas which will be carried out later as SLT focus on subjects such as Maths affected by teacher shortages.
- Resources and feedback were requested by parents supporting their children taking Business Studies classes online through e-Sgoil.
- Dr Skellern will look at offering parents an online session about study support for prelims.

9.2 P.E. - senior phase

- Most sessions of P.E. in S4 have been a choice of football or walking. Mrs Wotherspoon advised that the Principal Teacher for P.E. has been recalled fulltime from 4th December.

Date of next meeting

Tuesday 23rd January 2024

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 (Treasurer)	(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