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MINUTES OF THE ALFORD ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday 14th May 2024 (7.00 – 9.00 pm)

Attendees

Office Bearers: Dawn Brown (Chair), Joe Purkis (Depute-chair), Coralie Robertson (Secretary), Ingrid Huldal (Treasurer).

Parent Council Members: Monica Iloya, Tanya Viliene, Linda Purkis, Amy Wilson, Frank Sewell.

Parent Forum: Ian Forbes, Louisa Forbes, Mark Lynch.

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 Ron McKail.

1. Welcome & apologies

Apologies:

Parent Council members: Sharon Witherspoon.

Additionally: Cllr Sarah Brown, Cllr Goodhall.

2. Review of previous meeting minutes and matters arising

- Minutes of 13th March approved by Amy Wilson, seconded by Ingrid Huldal.
- Basketball Club request for donation – CR will email for more information.
- Gift has been given Penny Fuller for auditing the accounts.
- As payments are already being received for school trips and activities, options for electronic payments will be looked at for next year.
- Staff are again this year willing to run residential trip for S1-S3s. Parents thanked staff for giving their own time over the Easter weekend as part of the Iceland trip.
- FAQ page on website – MS said this is being looked at by staff as part of the literacy working group.

Action

Basketball Club asked for more details to consider donation	CR
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3. Treasurer's report

Balance as of 8th May 2024		£5893.04
Changes since last meeting:		
Income	Donation (F Woodhead)	£30.00
Outgoings	Library	£200.00
	Gift for auditing Accounts (P Fuller)	£9.00
Pending	U15 Girls football kit	£292.31
*Actual projected balance		£1,573.41

*Reminder: £4,027.32 Ringfenced from Co-op for Outdoor Space project.

Easyfundraising £124.52 due in to bank account.

4. Sub-committee updates

FUNDRAISING

- Social fundraiser will be looked at for autumn term. Consider electronic tickets and QR codes.

HORIZONS

- School had 5 parents respond to request to support Horizons program. Thank you to MI for initiating the email. Horizons will be part of the Excelerate sub-group.

FAMILY LEARNING

- Looking for additional volunteers for this sub-group.
- MS to look at the staff Continuous Professional Learning Programme to see if some sessions can be run with parents.

EXCELERATE

- S2 sector day currently Business and Finance and will have experienced all sectors throughout their year in Clan. Pupils will choose 8-week project-based learning in the sector that interests them and will include relevant businesses/employers coming into school.
- Academies of Alford looks at sectors for senior pupils in Horizons. Pupils will choose a sector of interest to them with relevant businesses/employers coming into school.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Meeting after the summer to review PC webpages, good news stories and support fundraising events electronically.

Action

PC requested school calendar dates to avoid school events when organizing fundraiser night	AW
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5. Head update

- Tree planting by Academy and Primary pupils planting 2,000 trees at the back of the school to replace trees damaged by Storm Arwen.
- Community Cafe run by pupils to raise money for Additional Support for Learning.

- Royal Regiment of Scotland gave assemblies for S1-3 as part of Freedom of Aberdeenshire.
- S6 had a great last day with their Top Gun theme.
- S2 sector day enjoyed tasks set by one of the marketing companies.
- Advanced Higher Biology visit to University of Aberdeen School of Geosciences.
- Cairngorm Partnership – involved in tree planting and several pupils are part of the Cairngorm Junior Rangers.
- Polycrub and Community Garden – pupils working with horticultural skills.
- U15 Girls football team had a win against Banff.
- Iceland Trip – enjoyed by 40 pupils.
- P7 link day – 107 P7s experienced, music, PE, computing and met guidance teachers. Around 60 P7 parents had a tour of the school in the evening.
- Excelerate Program – AW and SC visited Nashville as a learning opportunity.
- Activities days next week.
- Timetable change with years moving to S1-3 on 27th May.
- Induction days for S5-6 on 30th and 31st May and new timetable starting on 4th June.
- Staff revisiting mobile phone and pupils out of class policy with timetable change.
- School Improvement Plan update will be on the school blog and questionnaire will be sent out to pupils, parents, staff and stakeholders. School's Improvement Plan is aligned with Aberdeenshire and the Government's priorities.
- AW presented Performance Review to the Quality & Improvement Officer and school staff and spoken to DW about abridge version for parents.
- Professional review and development with staff as part of continuous learning.
- Currently looking at school calendar for next year's session.
- Staffing,
 - Number of jobs advertised:
 - o 0.4 Full time RME teacher.
 - o Full time temporary Art teacher.
 - o Acting Principal Teacher of Guidance for 2 days.
 - o Full time temporary Guidance teacher.
 - o Modern Languages teacher for 1 day
 - o Technical teacher.
 - o Vacancy in English department

Appointments

- o Principal teacher of Maths filled for one year with acting candidate. This was an internal appointment and will need to backfill the Maths post.

AW commended MS and GS for their work in her absence, while she was away on a study trip to Nashville as part of the school's Excelerate work, for the support they gave pupils, parents and staff after the sudden death of a pupil. Parents also thanked school for their invaluable support. Cllr McKail gave his condolences to the family and school community.

Depute Head Teacher (Learning and Teaching) update

- SQA exams going well with large number of rooms being used across school and invigilator team larger than last year.
- Learning and teaching framework looking at classroom observation toolkit, after which will look at professional development.
- Principal Teacher Pedagogy looking at a program of learning and teaching and meeting pupils needs to be delivered to staff throughout the year.
- Digital literacy added as a working group to improve consistency of Google Classroom and tie in with homework.
- S3 tracking report has been issued.

- S1 will get final full report at the end of the week.
- Looking at consistent approach to language in reports and how language is explained to parents through working as quad school with Banchory, Westhill and Aboyne. Aberdeenshire Council also looking at consistent language in reports.
- Issues of parent's email being delete from Google Classroom highlighted by IF. MS advised school can re-instate guardian's email, but not resolve why this is happening as system managed by Google.
- Inconsistencies in Google Classroom with different teachers providing different amounts of detail was highlight by IF and MS said this will be looked at by working group with digital literacy.
- FS suggested parents could provide feedback on experience with Google Classroom through a questionnaire.
- Family Learning sub-group could feed into issues with Google Classroom. Sub-group to be joined by IF, LF and ML.
- **Depute Head Teacher (Curriculum) update**
- Working on timetable for course choices. This year offering National Progression Award (NPA) in Criminology and National 5 German as third language along with French and Spanish in junior years.
- Foundation Apprenticeship numbers lower than last year but expected to increase.
- S1-3 timetable out on 27 May.
- S5-6 Induction on 30 and 31 May with program planned and timetable issued on 31 May.
- System in place to request changes to course choices using paper format through Guidance teacher and information will be shared when timetable issued.
- Horizons program set out a year ahead after pupil consultation, includes basic DIY, car maintenance, road safety. Program will go out to parents.

Depute Head Teacher (Pupil Support) update

- Focus on recent transition for P7s, early transitions started in Feb and have 13 feeder schools and 3 out of zone primaries.
- Organised into classes, houses and sets.
- First time have had informal drop-in for P7 parents.
- Link week commencing 17 Jun.

6. Teacher shortages in Aberdeenshire

- DB as Chair of Alford PC, along with Chairs for Fraserburgh and Peterhead, met with Cabinet Secretary Jenny Gilruth and discussed teacher shortages across most Aberdeenshire schools.
- Aberdeenshire fairs poorly with probation teacher numbers and not all allocated teachers arrive in post.
- Probationers can select an option to go anywhere in Scotland, but after allocation can change their mind and select a different area. Cabinet Secretary to look at whether this system could be more robust.
- Any changes to allocations would need to be discussed with COSLA.
- Discussion touched on issues of teachers relocating, housing and cost of living.
- Cabinet Secretary acknowledged that recruitment into postgraduate and teaching courses isn't meeting what is needed and will explore situation at University of Aberdeen with the Minister for Higher and Further Education.
- Cabinet Secretary took on board the PC Chair's concerns about Heads and SLT additional teaching time reducing their opportunities for working on School Improvement Plans.

- Cabinet Secretary will give the problems consideration and will come back with an update for the PC Chairs.
- ML highlighted that the General Teaching Council for Scotland has taken 6 months to process English teaching qualifications.

7. Outdoor space project

- Business Cluster Manager has another supplier to consider.
- Will look at consulting with pupils this term and after the summer with the new S1s.
- Funding would need to be in place before committing to the project.
- Site visits will need to be arranged.

Action

Obtain information about social seating from new supplier	CR
Consultation with pupils	AW/CR

8. AOB

8.1 Duke of Edinburgh

- AW advised that school no longer has the staff capacity to run the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme and their license will lapse on 31st May. Pupils and parents have been contacted with information about completing DofE through other organizations. Many local schools no longer offer DofE and nor do Alford Scouts.

9. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 19th June 2024 (P7 parents welcome evening)

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
Family Learning	Ingrid Huldal, Dawn Brown, Ian Forbes, Louisa Forbes, Mark Lynch
Excelerate/Horizons	Monica Iloya
Communication	Charlotte Millburn, Dawn Brown