

Aboyne Academy Parent Council
Minutes of Meeting – Tuesday 6th October 2020
online

Attendees:

Office Bearers	Parent Council Members
Rob Brooker (Chair)	Susan Nicoll
Sarah Leahy (Vice Chair)	Shauna Wright
Natasha Pawlukiewicz (Secretary)	Lorraine Chesney
Julie Mitchell-Mehta (Treasurer)	Claire Drewitt
	Mette Cormack
Lorraine Scott (Head Teacher)	Aileen Longino
Michael Foy	Charles Dunbar
Barry Drennan	
Ashleigh Easton	Patrick Gallagher
Cllr Gibb	

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Blackett.

2. Minutes and Actions from last meeting

The minutes of 25th May were approved. There was one action to arrange an open forum on behalf of the school which we did.

3. Chairperson's Report

AGM was held last month: there was a long process to sort out PC membership but now we have 11 PC members. One vacancy remains if there are any volunteers – Aileen Longino put her name forward.

Parent Council Chairs meeting took place on 16th Sept: online so better attendance. Key points arising:

- Schools are not back to normal – challenging situation for schools.
- Increased funding for IT kit and school cleaning. Capital plan will be revisited: anything cosmetic will be dropped, essential work only.
- Substantial investment in mental health as concern over increase in 17-40 age group suicide rate.
- Proposal for letter to SQA (see below).

Exam diet 2021: National Parent Forum requested feedback from Parent Council, which had to be done at the last minute.

4. Treasurer's Report

No change in income as no notification yet from Aberdeenshire Council re annual grant. Aboyne branch of bank is closing down so need to change accounts again as soon as is possible. Tarland Post Office can be used for floats.

5. Head Teacher's Report

- Generally good compliance with Covid-rules in school. Issue on school buses. Essential that parents support us to ensure the safety of all and our ability to keep the school open. Difficulties with PE, accommodation during lunchtime and interval although staggered lunches have helped.

Temp of building in winter and need for pupils to be outside for PE means wearing warm clothes and having a change of clothing.

- Additional Staff funding from Scottish Government = 1.5 subject teachers and 1.5 ASL teachers to aid school recovery. Increased hours for some part-time staff and a supply teacher employed for year full time to help cover classes when teachers are off.
- Other teaching staffing changes – J Law secondment to Westhill for 1 year (maternity cover). Ellen Leslie to remain in Guidance post. New modern languages teacher employed 0.6 as Leanne Miller returning 0.6 Faculty head. Violeta Stefan remaining 0.4 Faculty Head and 0.6 teacher. Lorraine Barr to return 0.6 to support Business Studies Faculty.
- School Counsellor appointed to each school (Authority appointment). Will be in Aboyne Academy 1 day per week from next term.
- NHS School Nurse has been appointed. Will work across the cluster 4 days per week.
- Bring your own device background work nearing completion. Hope to switch on Wi-Fi for start of new term. Dependent on parent responses – require 90% response. **Action: Rob to put reminder on Facebook.**
- Parents' Evening – trialling the online version. Feedback will be helpful going forward as the S5/6 scheduled for after hols. All dates will move slightly as required.
- Health leaders work vital this session. Lots of great activities planned.
- GIRFEC – Parent Survey good response from across the cluster to help prioritise actions.
- Virtual S1 Open Day to be held next term in lieu of parent visits to school

6. Litter

Commentary on social media re litter around the school. Someone noticed litter by the church with negative social media. Pupils using app to pick up meals and then eating outside so some litter blowing around. Some on the Green. Patrols being done by school. Health Leaders did litter pick last Thursday. Michael Foy in touch with local shops so doing all we can to get across the right message. Majority of pupils are on board with this. More litter bins will be placed around the school. Thanks to AVA for supporting this litter pick.

The pupils from the additional support department have been out quite often too.

School has close contact with the co-op: link does exist re pupil management etc.

7. Roads consultation

Aberdeenshire Council's consultation on road policy is focussing on speed limits (dropping from 30 to 20 in "urban" areas), pedestrian crossings, street trading. Cllr Gibb flagged up pedestrian as it is important to get AAPC to provide feedback to the process of assessing whether crossings are needed. This was discussed with Julie, Sarah and Natasha and the response was passed on to Mid Deeside Community Council, as a statutory respoondee. Recommended that for crossings: head teachers should be consulted; and all school pupils should be counted, not just 12 and under.

Paper goes to committee in November, Cllr Gibb will talk to the paper.

Existing crossing by St Thomas's: lights will be upgraded to LED next month.

8. Letter to SQA from PC Chairs

Possible letter to SQA was discussed during parent council Chair's meeting (see above); decided to hold fire until Govt reviews are announced. More will be known tomorrow re exams. Lot of thought at faculty level re contingencies. Need to know before the end of the week as pupils need to know what they are aiming for.

Will assessments continue? (been lots in S4 so far): strategy is little and often with assessments. Sometimes will be lots at once. The announcement by John Swinney will help us to know what needs to be assessed and what doesn't.

Quick turnaround request from NPF re questions concerning exam diet. Four questions asked, thanks to PC who responded fast. Completely unanimous answers. Provided commentary that important to have the views of pupils and teachers.

9. Wi-fi and use of own tech in school

Bring Your Own Device: Parent Council responded with views, thanks from school. 400 responses so far, needs to go up to 550/600 so if PC can promote would be great.

IT estate – equity of access. Extra funding has allowed a further 70 chrome books, and Unite has given money for more (request for 50). Additional 140 chrome books which is positive.

Safe storage and borrowing for the day in school: increase number of lockers in school, as only 300 so far. Asked pupils if that's a priority and will get feedback on Thursday. Also 2 pick up points in school to sign out a chrome book. Report from house councils on Thurs.

Could get wifi network turned on at start of next term to start experimenting with teaching and learning. This is one of many tools used in teaching and learning. Should free some of the static IT rooms.

10. PC online communications

Changes to Facebook settings were made in August so that they are similar to other PC facebook pages. Some negative feedback: disappointment that route for parents to communicate with one another been taken away. No more complaints since and there are alternative routes to keep updated; no further concerns raised during the meeting.

Connect – running online meetings. We should discuss what we use for these meetings as platform may be a barrier. Is everyone happy for us to continue using Teams? Majority yes.

11. Space for S6 pupils

Emails to PC raising concerns about space for S6 pupils, for break time and study time. Back of canteen not available. Staggered lunches makes this not possible and canteen may be used if we get indoor PE. Hayley has made library area downstairs for S6 pupils to use as quiet space for working, as library not open to public. One room for each period in the week identified as a free classroom.

Staggered lunches to continue. Pick up lunches downstairs and hot upstairs, works well. Better for pupils.

Snacks very popular (cakes etc) and so looking at splitting at intervals: trying to split this so people can pick up in different places.

12. Cost of school day

School participated in quite a few sessions as part of Equity week (run by the Northern Alliance), picked up tips etc. re support available i.e. free school meals, educational maintenance allowance. Good uptake from parents. Leaflet with all avenues of financial support available will be produced by mid-November. Open offer from PC to help with that.

Action: Natasha to send round COSD and post on Facebook.

Useful to keep item on the agenda and continue from where we left it in February.

13. AOB

Compliance on buses re mask use and how it can be encouraged. School has had a few emails about this and trying to get the message across. School doesn't have capacity to have staff that can stay on bus to Braemar and come back again to enforce mask wearing.

Important in confined space to have masks on. Bus drivers have no authority to enforce. It was suggested to PTU that inspectors go onto buses to encourage wearing of masks and seatbelts, but informed by them that this is not possible. .

If it continues to be a problem, then we could help in communicating concerns to PTU.

Previous bus drivers knew pupils better which might have helped.

School to emphasise CCTV is on bus.

Maybe put something on Facebook to PF.

Parents could help by reinforcing the importance with their child
Pupil Council involvement? Health Leaders? Trying to actively promote covid rules.

Action: Rob to get in touch in Term 2 to see if problem continues and if we can do anything as PC.

How will school deal with colder weather and open windows?

Being discussed at higher levels (govt recovery body, where schools feed back what is going and not going well). Issues re outdoor PE and heating/open windows etc remained unresolved.

Keeping jackets on: some teachers ok with it, some not. Bottom line is that pupils can keep jackets on. Only exception will be in practical subjects where there might be a safety risk. Will be reinforced with staff.

Flexi schooling consultation: one member of PC is taking part (Sarah). Resources have been made available via e-Sgoil and SCHOLAR.

14. Date and location of next meeting.

To be arranged.