

**Aboyne Academy Parent Council**  
**Minutes of Meeting – Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021**  
**online**  
**Attendees:**

<b>Office Bearers</b>	<b>Parent Council Members</b>	<b>Parent Forum</b>
Rob Brooker (Chair)	Susan Nicoll	Heather Davidson
Sarah Leahy (Vice Chair)	Shauna Wright	Julie Christie
Natasha Pawlukiewicz (Secretary)	Claire Drewitt	Jane Douglas
Julie Mitchell-Mehta (Treasurer)	Mette Cormack	Lisa Zvegintsov
	Charles Dunbar	Jenna Storey
Lorraine Scott (Head Teacher)	Mo Cormack	Hazel Hancock
Michael Foy (Head Teacher)	Catherine Thomson	Claire Smart
Barry Drennan (Depute Head Teacher)	Aileen Longino	Lynsey Harris
Ashley Easton (Guidance)	Lorraine Chesney	K Puffin
		Lilias Lovie
Cllr Gibb		Jo
		Andrea Geddes
		Emma Murphy
		Anita Visocchi

**1. Apologies**

No apologies were received.

**2. Minutes and Actions from last meeting**

Action from last meeting was to arrange a meeting for PC Members in new year: aim to do planning and discuss plans beyond lockdown, in end focused on home learning/exams. The minutes of 14<sup>th</sup> December were approved.

**3. Chairperson's Report**

Remember this is not normal and all struggling to maintain everything on an even keel where possible. Today changes from SG so situation is fluid.

**4. Treasurer's Report**

Nothing to mention, except cheque signed ready to handover

**5. Head Teacher's Report - Covid Update and overview**

Mrs Scott - Today we learnt that there will be a phased return back to school from 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb subject to review in 2 weeks' time. S4-S6s doing practical elements of their courses: no further news on what that means, i.e. will it be distanced and other risk aversions etc? will have an impact if so. There are about 20 pupils in school (children of key workers/vulnerable with teachers rotating to look after them plus always one SLT member of staff.

There has been positive feedback from pupil focus groups: parents have got in touch via email with concerns, suggestions which the school is trying to action. Been very helpful.

Most points raised early on were covered in the head teacher briefing. A lot of info goes on the school website with important information for pupils. Between 70 and 80 pupils attended

each assembly, and the school followed up with those who were missing. The school has been tracking pupil engagement and will be tracking pupil progress from this week.

GC/Teams: why using both? Pros and cons for both and not sure which way to go, still getting feedback from pupils. It wouldn't be right to make a big change now. Pupils pretty up to speed as to how to use these platforms.

Survey of faculties to see who is using live lessons: all of them are. One class per week in senior phase, perhaps less in BGE.

Many teachers are juggling teaching with young children at home. Six online lessons a day is not feasible due to this as well as some teachers being in school as well. Staff are shattered. Teachers working late especially those with young children.

Method: why not setting same online lesson each week? The online lesson is used for feedback through the 'flipped' classroom method (pupils learning, then feeding back as part of Q and A session – has been proven to have really good outcomes for pupil retention). Teachers know when they're needed most so the online lesson may move if a new topic is being introduced etc.

Sometimes scheduled online work is not clear but that should be better now so that it is at the top of the work set on SMH.

IT skills have improved hugely, some staff been very good at training others. Need to know if things are not working out so please email and be honest. If we work together as parents and teachers we can get through this.

Mr Foy – in the Xmas term we reflected on how lockdown had gone before: in terms of a learning and teaching approach, pupils managed to get started on tasks OK so, if teacher input had to be limited, it would be best to use this at a key stage in the learning rather than just to introduce tasks. This is the idea of "Flipped Learning" mentioned by Mrs Scott. Teachers were also frustrated last time by receiving work on the same day that new work needed to be set. As a result of this we have moved to a 4 day for setting work this time. This allows staff to incorporate how the learning is going into the next work: teachers happier with this approach. Another reason for not having 6 online lessons per day is that teachers are producing some really good resources on SMH to support learning: they wouldn't be able to provide this if they were teaching all the time. The school researched different methods of learning and feel this is the right approach for this current situation.

The school is trying to support those with IT issues, and has put out 100 chrome books, and dongles also being sent out at end of week. Trying to react as quickly as we can when problems are identified.

Mr Drennan – guidance team and PSW doing a great job, checking in on about a seventh of the school which is a huge number but a good system is in place. The website has lots of information to support wellbeing and learning at home and we are signposting parents to it. There is also information re additional support needs. Guidance teacher details on website, do get in touch if necessary.

New school counsellor is part of the Council's listening service, contact details are available on the school's website.

Pupil engagement is in phase two, with a great system for supporting those needing help. Early intervention is key.

Rob – discussion between PC chairs: different models being used and all have their challenges.

Points raised during Q&A session, including update re SQA, are picked up in a separate appendix to these minutes.

**6. AOB**

Thanks from those attending to the school for their work.

**7. Date and location of next meeting.**

TBC.

## Question and Answer Session

Q- We used to get reports where we can gauge where they are at. Didn't get that last year, so as S2 parent, where do I base her at?

A - Pupil tracking will help us to flag up where pupils are not making progress. School reports will stay spaced out throughout the year, so we have written reports for most year groups, and many other schools haven't managed this.

S2 is a key year as pupils are making choices: S2 reports have been written and are being printed on Friday. S2 reports will be issued week beginning Mon 8<sup>th</sup> Feb (weather permitting!) Guidance team going to call pupils before S2 subject choice to support them with the process.

Q- recognise teachers have tough role in adapting to changing environment. There is an expectation on pupils to self organise large chunks of work, please could they be put into smaller bite size choices. Corbettmaths.com is good for maths, are there other resources available? Youtube clips: they are doing the teaching, parents assisting.

A - Please share any good websites you find. We have recommended Scholar for senior school, and e-sgoil, but youtube links sometimes make the difference so we can let faculties know.

Q- thank you to staff for speed of response when emailing school. S4 son thinks he is guaranteed a pass as he has done some assessments before this lockdown. Motivation to do extra work is proving tricky as he doesn't feel need to do further work. Son listens more to school than to parents.

E-sgoil is a fantastic resource but difficult to register for it, especially the evening lessons, as the timetable is not correlating.

Aware of when live lessons and drop ins taking place but the info is often at the bottom of the work so needs to be read thoroughly. GC does have reminders so could teachers set appointments and invite pupils?

A- Really helpful points: extension work is not an option, it is to keep them at the level they should be at, and prepare them for next year to gain as much as they can out of this time as they can.

E-sgoil: will take a look and also check whether GC can set reminders.

No S4 pupils will have gathered enough evidence yet and Mr Foy will emphasise this at S4 Assembly this week.

Q- at what point is live teaching? Why not before pupil does the exercise?

A – Teachers do live lessons when they think it is best for the pupils: flipped learning (work, feedback, discussion) is the main method being used. However some live lessons may be done at the start if a difficult topic is being introduced.

## SQA update

Need to reassure pupils as there are lots of concerns. The school doesn't have answers to all questions but the online assemblies will be helping. Clear messages important for senior school.

Focus should be on learning and not assessment (as underlined by the Scottish Government and SQA). Once there is a return to school evidence can be gathered. Assemblies this week will explain this.

There are small steps for practical groups as they will be first back in school. Some work can be done online but other work must be done in school.

Mr Foy is a member of the SQA coordinators group looking at contingency planning. There is not much information coming from SQA at the moment. At school and authority level there is lots of planning taking place re evidence gathering, moderating it and verifying it. Key

pieces of work will be done in class. No one has completed all key pieces of work for NAT5 yet.

There will be formal assessments once back in school but broken down into small pieces and not in the style of long exams that will cover whole courses. Waiting for national info re dates for back into school.

Some practicals involve lots of work. We would hope there can be a period of time in school to prepare pupils for assessments rather than having to come straight into school and do them.

SQA identified key pieces of work for each course, so quality not quantity is the key.

SQA issuing assessments is not new as they have always posted information for schools to use.

Q- N5 topics covered so far, can we have a list?

A - Teachers will be very clear about this with pupils.

Q- will SQA clarify changes for parents?

A - Mr Foy has information but the format is not good for parents and the SQA website is not easy to navigate, so he will ask if they can provide clear information.

Q- senior phase and course options.

A - The school will send out course choice options electronically so pupils can look at this with parents and guidance teachers. There is going to be more flexibility with curriculum looking to offer more choice. Should be out next week.

Q- signposting re online lessons on SMH:

A - teachers have been asked to make it clearer. Please email if this continues to be an issue and flag up.

Q- How do you measure consistency across departments?

A - Left to faculty heads to ensure consistency of approach. Please let us know if you have concerns.

Q- Is there scope for more face to face time to introduce more complex topics (i.e. Higher maths).

A - Where they can teachers will, and if they can't teach live they will do voice overs.

Q- can we write to teachers?

A - pupils can seek help via the message function on GC/Teams; email via Aboyne.support; appointlet for direct contact with guidance teachers. Should get a quick response.

Q- some subjects may be changing. Will topics be cut across all schools, and will this be a problem for those going on to later exams?

Stuck on a subject, not getting support for a week on it.

A - SQA have changed all courses so topics have been removed from some. There is a level playing field across Scotland although what will happen next session? Pushing SQA hard on this, as need to know this now.

Pupils seeking help – will be covered in assembly tomorrow. Make school aware of it.

