

**Aboyne Academy Parent Council**  
**Minutes – Monday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2022**  
**online**

**Attendees:**

Office Bearers	Parent Council Members	Parent Forum
Aileen Longino (Chair)	Charles Dunbar	Heather Davidson
Susan Nicoll (Vice Chair)	Lynsey Harris	Wendy Stewart
Natasha Pawlukiewicz (Secretary)	Jo Ellson	Claire Smart
Rob Brooker (Treasurer)	Jenna Storey	Emma Murphy
	Lorraine Chesney	Nicola Ewing
Michael Foy (Head Teacher)		Anita Visocchi
Ashley Easton (DHT)		Claire Drewitt
Sara Bell	CLlr Blackett	Lynn Timmins
Nicola Topping		Jane Douglas
		Mette Cormack

**1. Welcome and Apologies**

Apology from CLlr Gibb.

**2. Minutes of last meeting**

Approved.

**3. Chairpersons Report**

Attended parents' focus group as part of Excelerate learning programme (Wood Foundation and Ford).

**Funding:** successful in getting money from AVA Communities Health and Wellbeing Fund for seating and tables – 13 x 8 seater tables and chairs. Visible gesture from PC to pupils.

**School Buses Parking:** Residents are not happy with the buses. In contact with the Council to try and find a solution. Consensus is that they're an eyesore. Also difficult to drive past them without being able to see oncoming traffic. CLlr Gibb and Blackett to update us at a later date.

Two buses have moved nearer the Huntly Arms.

Are there any bus bays? Not a good solution as can't offer to all contractors. Also need access to bus bay during the day. Worry re vandalism as school would be liable if anything were to happen.

**Events:** we need to start to do things for the whole school (pupils, parents and staff). Junior parents won't have met a teacher face to face so need to look at this asap. Have to start planning so ideas welcome.

- Events post Easter – leavers event, senior ball, activities week, Mr Foy keen to try and make things happen. Intends to make them happen in some way for everyone.
- Activities – team of staff leading proposals for activities days 17-19th May S1-S3 which will be held locally. Making connections is the heading.
- Ideas to integrate S1/2 parents so they get to know school better.

*Food and drink events to allow younger parents to find out more.*

*Deeside Activity Park? For younger pupils.*

*Something drama related? Very good stuff done before.*

Theatre has new equipment and there is a new agreement between LLA, school and theatre so lots to look forward to.

Those pupils involved in catering could do food etc for a parents event (in connection with the Fife Arms and Glentanar Estate too).

Please email school or PC if you have any ideas.

#### **4. Treasurers Report**

Moving online and updating the account is proving difficult. Banks have stopped taking on treasurer accounts. We can make payments but need to fill in a lot of forms – very slow progress. Balance £645? There will be 3 signatories on the account to cover people leaving the PC.

#### **5. Headteachers Report**

##### Term 1

Welcome and huge thanks to AAPC for the recent successful funding bid for seating.

It's been an interesting and challenging period since our last Parent Council with Covid and weather activity on top of the daily business of teaching, learning and assessment.

It has been good to deliver the recent prelims with only some minimal disruption due to the weather. The return to exams after the two-year break was something that pupils and parents were anxious about so everyone is pleased to have completed this.

I am very keen to begin to broaden the opportunities we can offer young people and parents as the year progresses and we move towards the next stage of the pandemic. I am very conscious that S1/2 parents have had no opportunity to engage physically with the school so will be looking to create opportunities for this as soon as we can.

##### Staffing Update

A warm welcome to Kirsty Bond (Biology/Chemistry) and Barry McCormack (Biology) who have joined the Science Faculty.

We say goodbye to Louise Batchelor (Maths) and Sharon Hassan (Music instructor) this week. We wish them both well for the future. I am working with the Music Service to look at ongoing provision for Sharon's current pupils.

To increase our capacity to monitor any impacts the pandemic may have had on learning and progress I have created an additional Depute Head Teacher post from now until the Easter break. Ashley Easton will take up this position from 17<sup>th</sup> February. Miss Easton will also become Head of Lochnagar House during this time. This will keep consistency for Lochnagar pupils and means there is a Depute for each House rather than one Depute having two. Dougie Kinnear will backfill Miss Easton's Guidance role while she is in the Depute role. This arrangement will be effective from Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> February until Easter.

Staffing planning for next session - Home Economics remains an area where recruitment is challenging. We have a strong group of probationer teachers this year.

##### Covid

Reported cases have remained low with no direct disruption to school opening. Changes to mitigations announced last week:

- removing the requirement to wear face coverings in secondary school classrooms, while maintaining existing provisions in communal areas or when in close contact with others
- removing the remaining restrictions on assemblies

- transition visits can now resume fully if appropriately risk assessed

Winter ventilation – CO2 monitoring this week and next. Maths windows being replaced.

#### Post pandemic monitoring

We continue to monitor pupils closely following the events of the last 2 years.

**Literacy** - English have identified some need in S1 around lack of punctuation and paragraphing. English staff are facilitating weekly practice in S1 (10 mins each lesson then one lesson per week) in this area.

Seniors – some concerns around technical accuracy in essay writing. Technical accuracy means spelling, sentencing (punctuation use) and paragraphing. Parents can support young people by encouraging them to proofread their work before they submit it. The best method is to write an essay, leave it for an hour / couple of hours / day and then go back and take time to read over it sentence by sentence. In addition, using Grammarly (<https://www.grammarly.com/>) on pieces written at home can help flag any troublesome areas. Focusing on technical accuracy in this way should then lead to improvements in essays written under exam conditions where time for proofreading / the use of Grammarly is not an option.

**Numeracy** – some focussed support and team teaching in S1 around level 2 numeracy (eg. Dividing.) This will remain a focus for us this session.

**DHT 4 Remit (Ashley Easton)** - This will mainly be concentrated around covid recovery and skills based learning with particular focus on DYW skills, developing our business partnerships, family learning and Excelerate. As part of this there will be focus groups conducted with pupils and a parent survey to gain feedback on the school covid/storm response and covid/storm challenges.

#### Parent's Evenings

Parent's Evening – S1 tomorrow (at last!) followed by S3 on 1<sup>st</sup> March.

Following that we will review feedback from parents and make a plan for next year. I will discuss this with you at next AAPC meeting.

#### SQA Update

SQA have moved to "Scenario 2" and will issue revision support for all learners, week beginning 7<sup>th</sup> March. This will include advance notice of the content being assessed in most subjects. Grading will factor in the impact of the pandemic. Initial information on exceptional circumstances and appeals has been published. Information sent out to parents today.

We will hold an online curriculum evening on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> February for all current S3-5 parents/carers and pupils to support the forthcoming subject choice process.

#### Update on Finance projects

Upcoming projects - CCTV Upgrade, Conversion of old shower block into 2 offices, improvement in HE teaching space, SmartTouch installs, Outdoor bins.

S2 pupils successful in funding to develop indoor seating and the pond area.

13 picnic table style seats ordered thanks to support of AAPC.

All staff being issued with corporate laptop and classroom docking stations upgraded for August.

## Exclerate Programme Discussion

Exclerate is a partnership between The Wood Foundation and Aberdeenshire Council. Supporting local schools to engage with this programme. 4 schools in Phase 1 – Kemnay/Banff/Alford and Portlethen. We are part of Phase 2.

Is about being ambitious, it's about doing things differently. Access to a world-wide network of educational ideas, mentors and support. With a team based here in our area to support us.

Exclerate is a network of core delivery partners which support schools to achieve 4 Exclerate goals which are on the slide. Exclerate aims to better realise the potential of Curriculum for Excellence and harness the power of partnerships.

Really exciting initiative. Currently we are in the exploratory phase bringing together ideas, looking at our school improvement priorities and formulating actions as to how we move forward.

There are some initiatives already taking place:

1. Oracy Cambridge - Oracy is the ability to articulate ideas, develop understanding and engage with others through spoken language. In school, oracy is a powerful tool for learning; by teaching students to become more effective speakers and listeners we empower them to better understand themselves, each other and the world around them. 3 staff are working hard on this and are very enthusiastic. They have already delivered staff training sessions.
2. Staff being given opportunities to visit schools in Doncaster and Nashville this term to look at innovative practice.

### **6. Resilience Planning**

Recent storms have shown that the school needs some sort of resilience planning in place to be able to communicate effectively with parents.

Could resilience groups have a school rep?

Scenario workshops? Work through it with your systems to check how resilient they are. School could involve parents in their scenario workshops that they usually do.

Emma Murphy offering to be rep in Lumphanan.

Digital switch on – petition to delay it currently circulating.

Buses – Stagecoach can't get buses to the school quickly; however it has been agreed that the school can go to another provider if necessary.

### **7. AOCB**

Therapet – Mr Foy been talking to another school – will keep PC informed.

### **8. Date of Next Meeting**

After Easter, Monday 25<sup>th</sup> April, 7pm.