

Abbey Grange C of E Academy

Parent Council (PC) Meeting – 19th October 2015

Present: Paul Cooper, Emma Hawker, Janet Bove, Marion Kemp, Mike Kemp, Lucy Song, Catherine Kershaw-Guy, Stephanie Cassidy

Apologies:

1. **Chair's opening remarks**

2. **Minutes from last meeting**

Amendment noted – Mike needed to be added as having been present at last meeting.

Action – Marion to amend and ask Alistair to add amended minutes to website.

Marion noted that minutes had already been added to website before they had been approved. Members agreed that minutes of a meeting always needed to be approved at following meeting, prior to being added to school website.

Actions from last meeting

Jenny Thornton (Assistant Principal) has been invited to our next meeting to talk about curriculum and IMYC and confirmed she is happy to attend.

Paul has fed back to leadership team all communication issues discussed at our last meeting. Lynda Walker has taken on the point about parent appointments with form tutors at parent evenings. It will be discussed at the pastoral meeting to decide on best system to put in place.

Communication

PC members welcomed the changes that have been made to the school website to date. They also requested a few more improvements as follows:

- Some old information on the website requires removing, for example, in P.E. and extra-curricular section.
- When doing a search on the website, it superimposes the new pictures and images on the current page, therefore difficult to read the information.
- A request to have the colour coded calendar (originally sent to parents via e-mail) on the website. E.g. under 'letters sent home'. Members found this calendar detailed and easy to read.
- Portrait information on achievement directors still to be added to website

Action – Paul to ask Alistair Marshall to make above changes on the website.

Paul discussed the possibility of a parent council e-mail address with the senior leadership team. It was felt that the school already has a clear communication policy and as such the procedure for parent council should be the same. All e-mails should go via the school's general e-mail address and be forwarded to Mike Kemp as parent Council Chair, with all other parent council members to be copied in. Any e-mails received are to be shared at the next meeting.

Action – Mike to share this procedure at moving on evenings.

PC meeting on 2nd November had been cancelled by members. **Action – Paul** to check if this date has now been removed from the school calendar.

3. **Matter arising**

Making parent council more representative – it had previously been discussed how PC could be more representative of the school and the various key stages. No new parents had come forward following the moving on evenings, but Paul had approached a year 7 parent and Rachel Cole had approached a 6th form parent. Replies awaited from both parents. Stephanie and Catherine both know of another parent who may be interested.

Action – Stephanie and Catherine to encourage these parents to contact Paul.

Behaviour policy - Stephanie shared feedback she had received from parents regarding the new behaviour policy. They expressed concerns that children are upset about frequent 'uniform comments'. Mike suggested that this will encourage students' compliance and there needs to be consistency across school, which the behaviour policy encourages. PC members agree that implementing the policy should not be confrontational.

Other parents had expressed that level of strictness may vary amongst teachers and that some girls in lower school years are not being punished for wearing makeup. **Action – Paul** to take on this point on 'wearing of make-up' and will arrange for school to send a reminder out to parents regarding school policy on this.

Marion noted that students fed back that their planners and comments pages are being checked (and evidence for this may be that they have been given vivos) but teachers are not signing these on a regular basis, therefore parents have no evidence that planners have been checked. **Action – Paul** to send general reminder to form tutors.

Paul reassured PC that consistency of marking planners and consistency across teachers is being monitored and that teachers feel behaviour in classrooms is improving as a result of the policy. The school is concentrating on improving basic standards.

The above points led to further discussion on the behaviour tracker policy and how this could be improved upon further for next year. PC made the following suggestions:

- Location of comment page within the student's planner – it is currently next to the weekly planner sheet which is used frequently by students and there is concern that the comments page may therefore become loose or get torn.
- Lines on the comment page could do with being larger, giving teachers more space to write
- Parents would like a 'tick' box next to comments so could sign to indicate they have seen the comment

Paul advised that school will be reviewing the behaviour policy later in the year and look at possible improvements for next year.

Target setting – At PC request Paul explained again how target setting works in school, i.e. students set and write targets in their planner following assessment weeks. Their tutor then checks these targets to see if appropriate.

Members asked if there is an existing homework timetable for each year group (have previously been included in the school planner for year 7). **Action – Paul** to find out.

4. **Moving on evenings**

Mike fed back from the two moving on evenings he attended. He provided a slide presentation to give parents information about parent council and encouraged questions. At the year 7 moving on evening several parents did ask questions; at both evenings parents approached Mike afterwards to chat. Paul extended a 'thank you' to Mike on behalf of the senior leadership team as it was felt that the presentation went really well. PC thanked Mike for representing them.

Mike offered for other members to do a presentation at a future evening and agreed to continue doing the presentations this year if no one else comes forward.

One slide in Mike's presentation states that we are accountable to the governors. Some members thought that this was not the case and Paul confirmed that Parent Council is not accountable to the governors.

Action – Mike to edit slide in presentation.

Action – Mike asked **Marion** as minutes secretary to amend the constitution and that this should already have been done? (*Update – although amendments had been agreed earlier in the year as documented on minutes, no revised version of the constitution had been circulated. Action – Marion to liaise with Paul and feed back at next meeting*).

5. **School and staffing updates**

- A new appointment has been made for subject leader of P.E.

Interviews have taken place for a new achievement director for student development but no one appointed as yet.

School is currently recruiting for staff in art and language.

- Some students had been entered for remarking following the summer exams and all obtained an improvement in the remarking. Paul explained that as a result the 'levels of progress made' for Abbey Grange Academy is higher than originally calculated.

6. **Any other business**

Use of i pads in school - Lucy brought forward a question regarding the use of i pads in school. Some parents of students in years other than current year 7 and 8 had previously bought i pads for their children as they had been led to believe that these would be used more frequently at school. However, experience of these parents is that their children no longer take I pads to school as they are not encouraged to use them in class. As not all parents bought these i pads from school, PC suggests that school to a survey to see how many children do in fact own i pads and could bring these to school for use in lessons. This may encourage teachers to incorporate them more. Paul stated that the school have a large amount of i pads which teachers can block book for lessons, but this does not seem to happen often. Due to time constraints this topic will be added to agenda of a future meeting.

Action – Paul to invite Dan Whielden to a future meeting.

IMYC survey – This was recently circulated amongst year 7 and 8 parents. PC commented that the survey did not leave enough space for comments. PC parents state that their children have variable experiences as to how IMYC is incorporated into year 8 lessons and not all parents have experience of children discussing IMYC topics and subjects at home.

Action – all PC members to bring any such issues and constructive questions to the next meeting with Jenny Thornton.

7. **Date of next meeting**

16th November, 6.15pm at Chapter House.