

Abbey Grange C of E Academy

Parent Council (PC) Meeting – 21st September 2015

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

Apologies: None -All members present

1. Chair's opening remarks

Mike welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that not everyone had received the e-mail with attached minutes and agenda, despite it being sent out to all members.

Action – Marion to check members' e-mail addresses, reset group e-mail and send a test e-mail to everyone.

2. Minutes of last meeting

Approved.

3. Matter arising

- Mike suggested putting actions in bold to make them stand out on the minutes.
- The 'masterclass' system for behaviour tracking is now in use (set up by Mr. Needham)
- IMYC – Paul fed back that school is currently looking at different models and options for presenting curriculum levels in the future (government driven, 'Life after 'Levels') and explained briefly what these models are. Further consultation is needed and both parent council and student council will be involved in this at a later stage of the process. This will then also affect how marking of IMYC journals is represented on student reports in the future.

Action – Paul to invite Jenny Thornton (Assistant Principal – Curriculum) to a future meeting.

4. Communication

All members came with ideas, issues and comments that they themselves had experienced, as well as verbal feedback they'd had from other parents of students at Abbey Grange. These are listed below.

Action – Paul to feed these back to the school to see which can be actioned by them.

- School website. General feedback was that the website is much better and 'looks good' though parents are still struggling to find some things easily. PC requested an easier system of finding specific information by simple clicking on headings and page links.
PC asked if students could get involved in the website and Paul explained that 'digital leaders' are receiving training and will have more involvement in content of the website in the future but will not be uploading information directly.
- Website school calendar. This was not complete at the beginning of term and Paul confirmed it should have been. Parents request a full calendar at the beginning of school term, to include all parent evenings/ meetings and holiday

dates, including 'return to school' dates for the following September. Website extracurricular activities. Again, up-to-date information on this was not available at the beginning of the term; feedback from students is that some clubs were already full by the time they found out about this as some information was passed out by individual teachers rather than by the school to all students.

Paul explained that teachers were given a deadline of Friday 25th Sept to set up new clubs (e.g. for teachers new to the school this term), therefore information on some clubs was released earlier than others.

PC suggested school to look at a system that ensures all students receive information at the same time to enable fairer booking onto clubs.

- P.E. school trip was not on the school calendar. Paul clarified that there had been staffing changes in the P.E. dept. and information is now available.
- Parents who only have students in older years are not all aware of/ do not understand the new Abbey Managers structure and role, or who to contact with pastoral issues. The role of form tutors is not clear to parents (this information is feedback PC members had received from other parents).

PC requested that this information is made clearer and that Abbey Managers and Form tutors would make themselves available for appointments at parents' evenings. Paul stated that they already are available for appointments, so this needs to be publicised more.

Action – Paul to ask school to ensure that communication to parents about parents' evenings includes information on how parents can book appointments with Abbey Managers or form tutors.

It is also suggested that the website would have a list of 'Go to...' people for different issues, making it easier for parents to know who to contact.

- Contacting school via e-mail. Members had different experiences about how soon a query was dealt with via e-mail or telephone, and expectations on this varied. Parents have requested that school replies promptly with information on how long they would have to wait for someone to get back to them to deal with their issue (i.e. standard turnaround times for different issues, depending on their urgency).
- Contacting teachers. Again, parent experience varies. Some direct all teacher queries via the general Abbey Grange e-mail address. Others e-mail teachers direct. One parent has experience of a teacher who set up a group e-mail to communicate with parents directly – which seemed to work well.

Such a system should be uniform across the school and Paul states that the usual method would be to contact the school via the general e-mail address and e-mails will then be re-directed to the relevant person. This filtering system seems to work well at present.

- Achievement Directors – there does not appear to be any information on the school website as to who the achievement directors are. Paul clarified that presentations given at 'moving on' evenings will also be accessible on the website.
- How can parents contact Parent Council – PC members suggested the possibility of having a dedicated Parent Council e-mail address via the school to which

parents could write with suggestions or issues they would like Parent Council to consider. All PC members should have 'read' access to this. A protocol is needed to respond to these e-mails. It was decided that we would have a standard reply, for example: "Thank you for your suggestion. We will consider it at our next meeting." Parent Council would then have a regular agenda item to share these e-mails and discuss.

Action – Paul to find out about possibility of PC having such an e-mail address.

Action – Mike to inform parents at the 'moving on' evenings that they can contact Parent Council at present by sending an e-mail to the general Abbey Grange e-mail address, and this would be forwarded. As we are currently looking at communication issues we would particularly welcome any feedback/suggestions on this area.

5. **Moving on evenings**

Parent Council are able to have a 5 minute slot at these meetings this year, to inform parents what we are about. Mike volunteered and was nominated by members to do this.

Action – Mike to prepare brief slide presentation for the year 7 'Moving on' Evening on 1st October. Information to include names of current members, who we represent (parent voice; aim is to represent all Key stages within our membership); what we have achieved so far and are planning to review and contribute to in the future; how to contact us (refer to PC constitution for these points also). Also to suggest to year 7 parents that if they have an interest in joining Parent Council to contact Paul Cooper direct.

Members agreed they were happy for Mike to go ahead with the presentation without seeing a draft copy.

One member noted that membership of Parent Council does not currently fully represent the ethnic diversity of the school and we do not have representation from a Year 7 parent.

Action – Paul will contact possible new members direct to alter this (current constitution states that 'parent council members will be selected for the period up to the Annual Meeting after which they may put themselves forward for re-selection if they wish').

6. **School and staffing updates**

Paul updated on recent GCSE results. Attainment data remains high due to type of students who join the school. Progress data in English and Maths are above national average for 3LP (3 levels of progress) and are up from last year in 4LP.

7. **Any other business**

- This years' Open Evening will have a new format with more student involvement, following feedback from parents/ students who attended previous years.
- Feedback on the new behaviour policy – Paul fed back teacher views i.e. session managers noted that as yet they have not needed to support as much as class teachers have felt able to deal with behaviour issues on their own.

Parents have had comments from their children that they are excited about obtaining vivo's for good behaviour, and that they feel lessons are running more smoothly. Parents themselves feel that students are being treated/ dealt with more equally.

8. **Date of next meeting**

19th October 6.15pm at Chapter House.

All dates for this coming academic year have been added to the school calendar but are suggestions only and can be altered if needed. Please note that the 2nd November has been cancelled but there will be a meeting on the 16th November.

Action- Paul to ask school to have the 2nd November date removed from the school calendar on the website.