

Abbey Grange Academy

Minutes of Parent Council Meeting 12th December 2016

Present: Mike Kemp, Marion Kemp, Janet Bove, Stephanie Cassidy, Susan Field, Catherine Kershaw-Guy, James Fenton, Emma Hawker, Paul Cooper, Jane Hollick, Martin Lamb, Timothy Jacobs

1. Chair's opening remarks:

Mike welcomed everyone to our end of year Christmas meeting at the Stables Pub, Weetwood! The meeting was well represented with members enjoying an informal chat before the start of our meeting.

2. Apologies:

Richard Hamlin.

3. Minutes and Actions from last meeting:

PC letter to parents – Marion apologised for the letter not yet having been sent it out. It was agreed to wait for our survey to be added to the school website. The letter will then include information on Parent Council, request parents to complete the survey, and will also ask for parent engagement in developing the new 'parent guide'.

Actions:

Marion to finalise the letter and send out to all parents in January, via the school office.

T-shirts – Rawcliffe's uniform supplier have been approached to see if they would offer to provide some PC t-shirts free or at reduced rate, waiting to hear.

Action – Paul to update at next meeting

Coats – Paul had e-mailed the response to our previous query, and confirmed that coats **can** be worn on school premises, but only outdoors. PC members have requested this is passed back to the leadership team as they would still like a clearer answer as to why coats cannot be worn indoors, when students are walking between classrooms.

Action – Paul to feed back to leadership team.

November minutes were approved with no amendments to be made.

4. Matters arising:

School website – when opening up google search on the Abbey Grange website, any information is displayed 'behind' the webpage, therefore not easily accessible.

There is also still the issue that if you try and access the Parent Council constitution via 'About us – policies & procedures – parent council constitution', it comes up with the wrong document.

Action – Marion to contact Alastair regarding this to find out why this may be so and if there is any way around it.

5. Update to 'Guide to Abbey Grange'

Emma has liaised with Linda Walker (pastoral lead), Mrs Clarke and admin staff and collected useful information. Their help is required as the 'answers' to any queries in the guide will need to come from school. As next step it is planned to approach parents and get them engaged in/ involved in developing this guide. This will be done by way of letter to parents, and parents are requested to respond via e-mail to the general office (who will forward suggestions to Parent Council). Parents are to come up with queries (they can be as unusual or odd as they like – the aim is that questions are answered that are not covered by other information provided by the school). The letter needs to make it clear to parents that there will not be a response to any suggestions made for the 'guide', but Parent Council will respond to any other queries or suggestions made over time.

Action – Emma to formulate a paragraph about this to be included in the information letter Parent Council is sending out (see above).

6. Student support options from April 2017

Abbey Grange Academy (AGA) is currently in the northwest cluster for support, but has decided to opt out of this from April 2017. New options have been considered by the school, as to how best to re-invest this money into new student support systems that best meet the needs of students at AGA. The plan is that some money will be used to employ a parent/ family support worker (shared with St. Chad's primary school) – this role is also to include a therapeutic element. Part-time psychology and speech and language therapist services would also be of benefit. If these are commissioned from the local authority, management support for these staff would remain with that organisation. Mental health support is seen as very important and there is also the consideration that a school counsellor, employed on average one day per week, may be of benefit. AGA is also considering re-employing the 'safer schools' person.

Statutory support such as for dyslexia assessments will continue to be provided by the local authority.

Paul also mentioned at this point that Paula Quinn (previously SENCO for AGA) is now in a MAT role.

PC has a positive view of the above and like the idea of a broad spectrum of cover, with this type of student support including a therapeutic element.

Action – Paul to update PC as these changes become more concrete.

7. School buddy system:

Parent Council felt that this would best be taken on board by the school, and suggestion is that the new parent/ family support worker would be able to set something like this up.

Action – Paul to feed this back to relevant team.

8. School and staffing updates:

A family support worker will hopefully be in place by the end of January.

9. Any other business:

Languages – Parents have queried the restricted availability of languages at Abbey Grange. Paul explained that difficulty with time tabling leads to some of these restrictions. Several suggestions have been made, such as the school offering students the choice of studying

either French or Spanish (this may lead to increased interest in a particular language and hence improve student attainment in this subject); or offering alternative languages such as Mandarin; or using lunchtime sessions for language 'taster sessions'.

Action – Marion to add topic to next agenda for further discussion

Planners – PC members highlighted that parents are still requested to sign student planners weekly, although nothing written in them (unless student has received a comment; home work is now recorded on the milk planner), making it a bit of a meaningless task. This system therefore needs reviewing.

Action – Paul to feed this back to leadership team

Milk planners – Positive feedback received from the students. They like this new system, previous issues have been resolved and homework lists are generally shorter with teachers only occasionally forgetting to clear/ cancel homework once complete. There are still a few teachers who have cleared more recently completed homework, but have not deleted work originally set in September.

Action – Paul will send out a further reminder message to teachers

10. Date and time of next meeting:

Monday 16th January 2017, 6.30pm at Chapter House