

Abbey Grange Academy

Minutes of Parent Council Meeting 14th November 2016

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

1. Chair's opening remarks:

Mike forwarded a big 'thank you' to Jenny Thornton for attending our last meeting on Paul's behalf.

2. Apologies:

Martin Lamb, Jane Hollick, Timothy Jacobs, Richard Hamlin.

3. Minutes and Actions from last meeting:

P.E. dept. lockers – Feedback from P.E. department is that lockers within the changing rooms would currently not be the way forward, due to space constraints within the changing rooms, and a time element if students are locking up items. The changing rooms are locked by staff and students have the opportunity to place small valuables (excluding mobile phones) in a locked 'valuables box'.

A school policy on keeping valuables safe exists.

Lockers in general are, however, on the school agenda, and may be an option in the future as more space is available in the new building.

Action – Paul to keep PC updated on this.

Winter fair – the poster has now been added to the website and an e-mail has gone out to all parents. Prizes have been mentioned at school assemblies and the staff briefing, but no volunteers as yet.

Milk planner – Teachers have been advised that they need to mark homework as 'received' for it to disappear of the students' planners. This now seems evident in student milk planners and is therefore improving.

Action – Marion to add to next agenda for review.

Facebook page – **Action – Marion** to ask Alastair to add information to Facebook page regarding Parent Council presence at future Parent Consultation evenings.

October minutes were approved.

4. Matters arising:

MAT logo – Jenny had advised PC at the last meeting about the new logo that is now available for the Abbey Grange MAT, and suggested this is used as template/ letter head for all correspondence. PC discussed this today and felt that as a group we only represent Abbey Grange Academy parents, rather than all parents of the Multi-Academy Trust. We will therefore continue using the Abbey Grange logo.

T-shirts to be worn by Parent Council or PTA members at parents' evenings, will have the MAT branding logo.

Action – Paul to order a selection of medium/large/extra large T-shirts.

New Parents coffee morning – PTA have confirmed that they would like to join in planning a coffee morning for new parents, as part of their children’s transition process from primary school. This can take place in July and again September (first day of school). Hibret Hall has access to a kitchen and may be suitable for this.

Action – Marion to continue liaising with PTA in planning this.

Parent Council Questionnaire – questions have now gone to Alastair and Alan (Digital Services) for the survey to be added to the school website.

Action – All review at next meeting if available.

Parent query – parent whose query was discussed and forwarded at the next meeting, has not received a reply. Paul acknowledged that there may have been a mis-communication in who was going to reply.

Action – Paul to respond to parent.

5. **Guide to Abbey Grange**

Emma has done some background research, looked at the current year 7 parent information pack and has made a list of the information contained in it. She has compared it with other ‘employee handbooks’ as well as looking at information contained in the Abbey Grange website. It was discussed that these contain lots of useful information but do not capture some of the questions parents may sometimes have, such as ‘how does my child get a locker’. A suggestion about making a ‘101 useless questions’ guide may be useful. Emma is happy to collate questions. It was agreed that such a booklet would have to be accessible electronically.

Action – all PC members to collate questions from themselves and parents they may know, and forward these to Emma via e-mail.

Action – Emma to collate questions and liaise with reception staff as well as Linda Walker (pastoral lead) re information that could be included.

Action – Marion to e-mail any action points to members shortly after a meeting, so they have time to action these before minutes are sent round.

Parent buddy – Marion suggested the possibility of a ‘parent buddy’ system, similar to the buddy system for year 7 students, whereby a parent of a child new to Abbey Grange could be given a contact of another parent for information and advice. We would need to involve the pastoral team in something like this, and consider what level of support parents may be able to give (and which parents/ how we would approach them). It may also be a way of engaging parents who would like to support the school, are unable to attend PC or PTA meetings but can provide support over the phone.

Action – Marion to add as agenda item for next meeting.

6. **School website**

Parent Council constitution – a copy can be found on school website under ‘About us - policies and procedures – Parent Council constitution’. Marion mentioned that when you click on this it comes up with minutes of a meeting. This had been altered but may still come up on some computers if website is accessed via browser history?

Action – Marion to check this with Alastair.

Front page Google search – when using this facility to search, any results appear behind the main website page, making it difficult to read the results.

Action – Paul to pass this on to digital team.

P.E. – this page has been updated.

Twitter feed – the general Twitter page on the front page of the website, is not always up to date. P.E. department and 6th form have separate Twitter accounts and some of their information would be of interest generally (for example reporting a win for the sports team in a competition) and would therefore be good if these could be forwarded to Alastair to be added to the main Twitter feed.

7. **School and staffing updates:**

School uniform and coats – parents re expressing concern that students are getting comments for wearing coats on school premises, even when this is outdoors. Would like clarification from school as to reason coats cannot be worn indoors.

Action – Paul to seek clarification on this.

Lunch queues – parents are feeding back that students are reporting they do not always get a lunch in the canteen as the queues are too long. They end up having to leave the queue, or may not get the choice of a warm meal by the time they get served. This is affecting students' behaviour and concentration in lessons, as well as reports of students coming home with a severe headache as they have not eaten. Paul clarified that a working group has already been set up to look at this and possibly options of resolving this issue. Parent Council have requested that concerns expressed at today's meeting are also passed forward.

Action – Paul to feed these concerns back to the leadership team.

Higher ability students – This accounts for about 60% of Abbey Grange Academy students and the school is aiming to improve teaching and opportunities for these students. Teachers have been given strategies to use during lessons to challenge and develop these students. Assessments in the form of 'learning walks' are being held in December, whereby senior teachers will look into lessons to assess if these strategies are being used.

8. **Any other business:**

Positive feedback – James attended the year 9 'Moving On' evening and found the evening 'brilliant'! Teachers presenting information for English, Science and Maths were really enthusiastic and the evening was very informative. Other PC members who had attended the evening shared this view. A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL THE TEACHERS INVOLVED!

Unfortunately the e-mail/ text reminder was only send out on the actual day, which may have led to lower parent attendance.

Action – Paul to share this positive feedback with the leadership team and pass on to those who were involved in the evening.

Action – Paul also to feed back request to have reminders sent out a few days before an event.

PC presence at Parents Evening on 24th November: Janet, Steph and Marion have volunteered to be present, and offer support to PTA refreshments at the same time if needed.

9. **Date and time of next meeting:**

Monday 12th December 6.30pm, at The Stables Pub, Weetwood Hall.