

ALFORD ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL
Alford Academy
Greystone Road
ALFORD
AB33 8TY



www.alfordacademy.aberdeenshire.sch.uk

alfordaca.pc@outlook.com

MINUTES

Wednesday 18th November 2020

Virtual Meeting (Covid-19 Pandemic)

7pm – 9pm

1. Chair: Ingrid Huldal (Chair)
2. Minutes: Monica Iloya (Secretary)
3. Present:
Committee: Denise Smith; Joe Purkis; Fiona Henderson; Penny Fuller; Coralie Robertson; Charlotte Millburn
Other: A Lyon; Alison Mellows, Colin Crombie; Karen Noble; Linda Purkis; Susie Young; Susan Christie-Green; Amanda Reid; Amy Wilson; Louise Mitchell
4. Apologies:
Committee: Sharon O'Mant; Ishbel Mollison; Grainne Patton; Frank Sewell
Other: Gloria Malcolm
5. In Attendance: Senior School Team:
Moira Milne (Head Teacher); Lisa Lees (Depute Head Teacher); Stuart Cookson (Depute Head Teacher); Struan Gardner (Depute Head Teacher)

6. Welcome and Apologies

Ingrid welcomed everyone and Monica read out the apologies.

7. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

The minutes were reviewed and agreed. Proposed: Joe Purkis; Second: Denise Smith

1. **ACTION:**
 - Treasurer's Annual Report - To be presented at next Parent Council Meeting. (Denise)
 - *Denise presented the annual accounts – see main minutes*
2. **ACTION:**
 - Cycling on Campus - Councillor Latham will feedback on outcome of his communication at the council as regards this issue
 - *No update*
3. **ACTION:**
 - Fundraising – reminder to go out to Parent Forum re Easy Fundraising (Monica/Ingrid)
 - *A reminder has been sent out*
4. **ACTION:**
 - BYOD (Bring Your Own Device/360 Safe Scotland - Anyone interested in getting involved in this IT initiative at the school to contact Monica by email or Struan directly.
5. **ACTION:**
 - Sub-groups to reconnect and report back at each meeting. Anyone interested in helping with any of the sub-groups to email Monica who will pass on your email to members of the sub-group.
 - *Monica has passed on contact details to the sub-groups – sub-group members has been updated (see appendix)*

6. **ACTION:**

- Charlotte to liaise with Struan Gardner re FAQ for parents as part of her communication work.
- *Charlotte has done this – see subgroup report below*

8. Treasurer's Annual Report

- See attached Audited Report presented by Denise at the meeting

***ACTION:** Denise to contact Aberdeenshire Council re the Parent Council Funding for this year and last year.*

9. School Updates

Head Teacher Update – Mrs Milne:

Staffing Update:

- Leaver – Principal Teacher of Maths, Sylvia Munro, will leave in January 2021
- Vacancies – Technical & ASL
- New Staff:
 - Emily Niven Teacher of Geography/Modern Studies
 - Shona Bertin Teacher of Business Education
 - Karen Reid Admin Support
 - Paul Brown Cluster Schools Caretaker
- Promoted posts:
 - Gillian Matthewson Acting Principal Teacher of Maths
- Additional Staffing (Scottish Government and planned school finances):
 - 0.4 FTE Principal Teacher Achievement (Equity and Excellence) Jo Munro
 - 0.2 FTE Principal Teacher Achievement (Pedagogy) recruiting
 - 0.2 FTE Principal Teacher Achievement (Partnerships and Pathways) recruiting
 - 0.4 FTE Teacher of English (supporting literacy interventions) recruiting
 - 0.2 FTE Additional supply to cover illness, coaching

School Activities:

- Black History Month – daily bulletins by a pupil
- Mental Health Ambassadors – ongoing project
- Remembrance Week – senior executive pupils organized this event
- Children in Need – A feel-good day for all – 6th Years dressed up and interacted around the school; different departments dressed up in themes; about £500 was raised
- National Diabetes Awareness Month – an S2 pupil sang and played his own song on the guitar to highlight Diabetes
- S1 Author Event was held with a Q&A
- 'Me, my data and cyber-crime' event was held
- Service Design Academy – consultation event with random selection of 40 pupils from S1-S6 (facilitated by Service Design Company funded through Excelerate Programme)
- Mrs Milne reports that her Staff have done a great job during the pandemic but they are understandably tired
- The majority of pupils abide by Covid rules but a minority do not and the school are contacting parents when the rules are not being adhered to; she is happy to get names if anyone is aware of individuals who are breaking the rules; Mrs Milne and her team are seeking parents help with ensuring their youngsters adhere to the rules and are aware of the importance of the rules particularly as levels are rising in Aberdeenshire and moving from Level 2 would mean more

restrictions in school as well as in the community. The pupils are getting constant reminders about the Covid rules around social distancing, hand hygiene and face coverings.

- The school is aware there are small pockets of anti-social behaviour in our community; this is being dealt with by the Police.
- The school is also aware that mental health issues are increasing and prioritizing supporting young people

Powerful Partnerships Update – Stuart Cookson (Deputy Head)

- Increased uptake on Foundation Apprenticeships – 34 pupils doing various placements eg Business Skills (10); Children & Young People (5); Health & Social Care (7); Automotive (3); Construction (6); Hospitality (3)
- Alford Alumni – Senior Pupil Working Committee –they are recruiting S5s in addition to S6s to ensure continuity year to year; working with parents through parent council; aiming to strengthen links with real jobs and people in our community; planning for a “Harvest Homecoming” October 21
- Excelerate Programme: Project Based Learning – keen to get parents involved so if interested in getting involved to contact Stuart at the school or email Parent Council who will pass on details.

ACTION: Great opportunities for Partnership Working – if anyone is interested in getting involved with Partnership working, please get in touch with Stuart Cookson or email Monica via Parent Council email address.

HOWLS Update (Habits of Work and Learning) – Struan Gardner (Deputy Head)

- New tracking system was described. This is based on pupil reflection on progress and the teacher then discusses with the pupil and comment if they don't agree. New look tracking letters were sent out last week for some year groups. Struan has had questions/queries from parents; he has been answering these and is working on a FAQ on this new system. All feedback is very helpful.
- New terminology in the tracking system:
MPEG – Minimum Personal Expected Grade – what the pupil would want to get/need
MEG – Minimum Expected Grade – what they think the teacher thinks they will get
- On this system it also asks pupils to reflect on the habits of work and learning (HoWLs) using a 1-6 scale
- The aim is that pupils are fully engaged and reflecting on their learning
- Full reports also will be done - S4 will be coming out soon
- Timeframes of reports are planned but may need to change should current circumstances change :- S1- report in May; S2 - report in Jan; S3- report in Nov, S4-S6 report Nov/Dec.

Exams Update– Struan Gardner (Deputy Head)

- Nat 5 exams have been cancelled but Higher and Advance Highers are going ahead at present
- No prelim diet for Nat 5s but there will be prelims for Higher and Advance Highers on 18-29th Jan 21. These will follow the same format as external exams with results after 8th Feb

- Concern that some S4s are not taking their study seriously enough and are making the (wrong) assumption that they will automatically get their Nat 5s. They do need to work hard and produce evidence of progress in each subject.
- Exams in normal class time is planned for S4 (Nat 5 studies) in January 21 – 40-minute papers (50 mins for students who need extra time); results released when they are available
- Question from Parent – who asked whether ‘pre-lims/exams’ will count for Nat 5s– the answer is ‘Yes’ but will be a part of the evidence assessed by teachers.
- Question from Parent - about Maths Performance in school – the school is aware of gaps in knowledge for some pupils in Maths and the plan is to work on these gaps and use later assessments for assessing Maths for Nat 5s.

Wellbeing, Equity and Inclusion Update - Lisa Lees (Deputy Head)

- The Guidance Team are very busy; pupil anxiety-based non-attendance has increased; they now have a school counsellor who started 2 weeks ago – she is working a half day per week on Monday mornings (she can only see 2 people in person and a third person virtually per session due to Covid).
- Mental health ambassadors – the school produced a winning YPI (Young Philanthropist Initiative) project last year which raised money for SAMH (Scottish Association for Mental Health); SAMH wanted to give something back to the school and have supported the Mental Health Ambassador project at Alford Academy; there are 31 enthusiastic pupil Mental Health Ambassadors (and 2 Senior Mental Health Ambassadors) – they are undertaking a 3 three day bespoke training course with SAMH; their role will include: ‘talking-time’ eg lunch-time drop in sessions; signposting; ‘hints & tips’ for times of particular stress times eg assessment periods. The Mental Health Ambassadors will be supported by Lisa and her Team.
- CREW Drug Awareness Training – this is a full Drug Awareness training programme; Alford Academy is 1 of 6 schools in Aberdeenshire who are involved in piloting this programme. It is an 18 month programme (but it may be shorter as it has started late due to Covid) which started this week; it involves Principal Teacher of Guidance training and a full range of new PSE resources for all year groups; there is also going to be a Parent Workshop (Virtual) – an interactive evening session is planned – the school is hoping for a good turnout for this; there will also be a Peer Educator Training – they will possibly use the Mental Health Ambassadors for this.
- Coaching – the school has a ‘member of staff upskilled in coaching techniques and already working with pupils
- The Positive Relationships Policy has been updated – What’s New? – the Praise system has restarted via ‘positive post-cards’ when appropriate via Google Classroom; also stages of interventions more clearly set out although no actual changes:
 - Pre-stage 1 Class Teacher Interventions:
Eg Quiet word/check-in in class; remind/caution; move seat
 - Stage 1 Class Teacher Interventions:
Eg Pause for thought; 1:1 conversation; in class target sheet
 - Stage 2 Class Teacher Interventions:
Eg Partner Room
 - Stage 3 Principal Teacher Faculty Interventions:

Eg. 1:1 Conversation; daily/weekly check-in; Faculty Monitoring Timetable; temporary removal from class; observation of pupil in class; team teaching of class; facilitating restorative meetings

- Stage 4 Principal Teacher of Guidance Interventions:
Eg. Phone call home; daily/weekly check-in; Principal Teacher of Guidance Monitoring Timetable; lunch-time reflection time; parental meeting; referral to school Pupil Support Team
 - Stage 5 Depute Head Teacher House Link Interventions
Eg. Phone call home; daily check in; Depute Head Teacher Monitoring Timetable; lunchtime/after school reflection time; parental meeting; internal period of reflection; referral to school pupil support team and/or external agencies; referral to Head Teacher
 - Stage 6 Head Teacher Intervention
Eg. Pupil & Parent meeting; internal period of reflection; exclusion is always a last resort once all other avenues have been exhausted.
- Comment from Parent – there was a very positive comment from a parent as regard the quality and range of support that is available in the school for pupils
 - What needs to be further developed
 - Automatic system to alert parents for lower level interventions (Stage 1 & 2) eg Group call message – a brief message asking parent to speak to child; but the Guidance team do not have the capacity to reply to every low level messages so Lisa would like help with explaining the new system to parents and how best to get this message across to parents
 - Parent information leaflet to be updated – Lisa would like parental help with this

ACTION: Any parent council member interested in helping with this project to get in touch with Mrs Lees direct or via Monica on the Parent Council email.

10. Sub-Group Updates

a) Fundraising

- Easyfundraising is an easy way to make money for the school and all parents are encouraged to register:
https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/alfordacademy/?utm_campaign=raise-more&utm_content=gs-fl
- Schoolangel was also discussed – similar to Easyfundraising. It was felt better to concentrate on Easyfundraising at present. <https://www.schoolangel.org.uk/>.
- Scholastic Books – if parents are buying books through Scholastic Books, they can nominate Alford Academy and the school will get funds.

b) Parent-Council Pupil Partnership

- Coralie has kindly volunteered to join this group
- Update from Ishbel via email: The pupil-parent sub group have been emailing each other and they had hoped they might manage a small virtual meeting but Stuart Cookson indicated he would just feedback how things were with pupil council at this stage.
- Stuart will liaise with the group

c) Community Group Link: additional support needs

- Lisa fed back – the group will continue to work on information for parents around transition for all pupils with a section on this for pupils with additional supports need

d) Alumni Project

- This group will continue to liaise with Stuart on how best to support this project

e) Communication

Charlotte reports that she has made some notes on the current systems and in particular the PC webpages and use of school website which she has shared with Struan. He is working with Aberdeenshire Council to look at website upgrade and functionality and they are scheduling a meeting to discuss aspirations and direction. She has indicated that she is happy to manage the PC pages and she is now set up on the system with a login. After the web meeting they will be able to give an idea of next steps and hopefully bring the proposed pages to the PC for discussion at a future meeting.

11. AOB

- Monitoring of Academic Trend – the reports are not out yet and are due mid-December; this will be added to next meeting as appropriate
- Mask Wearing on Buses – Mrs Milne has sent out a reminder to all parents as to the need to wear masks on buses and parents will be informed if pupils are not wearing masks.
- Clothes Policy in School when weather is cold – the school are very flexible around clothing currently due to the Pandemic; the school heating is now on and the school has not been cold lately; pupils are encouraged to wear layers.
- Homework – a parent asked about homework as she had noted there is very little homework for her S2 child. Struan reported that for S1s they had deliberately held back on home-learning but homework will be starting soon but in a gradual manner; there is a similar policy for S2s but they will be getting more homework; this was a deliberate policy to avoid overwhelming kids following lockdown; a point was made by one parent that lack of home-work could potentially add to the problem of pupils falling behind with the curriculum.
- Guardian Summaries – parents should be getting these weekly but these are not up and running for S1s yet due to work capacity but this is a work in progress. These are sent out via Google Classroom as a summary of what each child has covered in classes and what tasks are outstanding. The link for getting this set up was sent out during lockdown; some parents are not getting the summaries; there will be another communication push from the school on these Guardian summaries once they have been set up for the S1s. A question was asked whether these could be prospective rather than retrospective; this is not possible on Google Classrooms; however, parents can set it up to have daily, weekly or monthly updates depending on the frequency they wish to get this information.

Meeting Close 9.08pm

ACTION POINTS:

ACTION: Denise to contact Aberdeenshire Council re the Parent Council Funding for this year and last year.

ACTION: Cycling on Campus - Councillor Latham will feedback on outcome of his communication at the council as regards this issue; Ingrid is going to chase up

ACTION: Any parent council member interested in helping with the Parent Information Leaflet (Positive Relationships Policy) to get in touch with Mrs Lees direct or via Monica on the Parent Council email.

ACTION: Partnership Working – if anyone interested in getting involved with Partnership working, please get in touch with Stuart Cookson or email Monica via Parent Council email address.

12. Dates of next meeting

Monday 18th January 2021

Wednesday 12th May 2021

Tuesday 16th March 2021

June 2021 – TBC (P7 Parent Welcome)

APPENDIX:

Parent Council Sub-groups 2020-2021: Members

Fundraising – Ingrid Huldal, Grainne Paton, Nicola Duncan & Petra Glennie

Parent Council-Pupil Partnership – Penny Fuller, Ishbel Mollison, Frank Sewell & Coralie Robertson

Community Group Link: additional support needs – Sheena Lawson, Rhona Stuart, Sarah Lewis & Donna Gray.

Alumni Project: Inspire Young People - Joe Purkis & Donna Gray

Communication: Charlotte Millburn

Parent Council Members 2020 – 2021: Quorum 6

Sharon O’Mant	(S1)
Coralie Robertson	(S1)
Fiona Henderson	(S2)
Joe Purkis (Vice-chair)	(S2)
Sarah Lewis	(S2, S4)
Grainne Patton	(S2)
Frank Sewell	(S2) (S3)
Denise Smith (Treasurer)	(S2, S4)
Monica Iloya (Secretary)	(S2, S5)
Nicola Sedgwick	(S2)
Donna Gray	(S1, S3, S5)
Sheena Lawson	(S1, S4, S5)

Ingrid Huldal (Chair)	(S4)
Charlotte Milburn	(S4)
Penny Fuller	(S6)
Richard Stroud	(co-opted member)