

**Parent Council Meeting of Cults Academy  
Monday 22<sup>th</sup> January 2018 7-9pm.**

**Attendees** Rachel Soplantia (RS) Chair; David Strang (DS) Depute Head; Brian Angus (BA) Depute Head; Tony Rafferty (TR) Vice Chair; Robert Brew (RB); Jim Gauld (JG); Martin Barker (MB); Julia Crighton (JC); Tahar Konider (TK); Corrado Giuliani (CG); Daniel Verhamme (DV); Sonya Angus(SA); Kay Sutcliffe (KS); Michelle Henderson (MH), Kirstin Gove (KG); Andy MacIntosh (AM); Gill Flett (JF); Ros Harper (RH); Tony Brady (TB); Idris Yamusa (IM); Abuhena Mamun (AM)


**Apologies** Anna Muirhead

Agenda items	<u>Updates and discussions</u>	Action
1.	<u>Welcome and Apologies</u>	
2.	<p><u>Matters arising:</u></p> <p>2.1 Facebook</p> <p>The Facebook page now has 114 likes with usage statistics showing a much higher number of visitors. The feedback has been positive with many parents appreciating that they can access information very readily.</p> <p>It was noted that the number of people following the page so far represents only a small proportion of parents/carers, so there is potential for many more parents to join the Facebook group.</p> <p>2.2 Proposed Database of businesses and parents as resources or voluntary helpers</p> <p>Lynne Robinson and Rebecca Conn have issued a document to be used to collate a database of parents and businesses able to offer career advice, interview practice, work experience. The aim is that the database can be used by each teacher as a resource and that it forms part of a body of work on “Developing the Young Workforce”.</p> <div data-bbox="240 1290 1370 1391" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p><b>Action:</b> <b>The PC have been asked to review the document, make any changes or additions and to start circulating it.</b></p> </div> <p>2.3 Future arrangements for PC meetings</p> <p>A proposal was made and agreed to move the Parent Council AGM to the June meeting and combine this meeting with a joint social event to be held with the PTA. This will allow the other 5 Parent Council meetings to be used for formal business.</p> <p>2.4 The cost of the school day</p> <p>TR reported that the more formal guidelines regarding The Cost of the School Day are forthcoming. This initiative has been slightly delayed by reorganisation within the Council however. Mr. Angus reported that a number of meetings of the Senior Management Team had been held to discuss the issue. It was proposed that further discussion by the Parent Council be deferred to a future meeting when more information would be available.</p>	RS/ALL
3.	<p><u>Head Teacher Report</u></p> <p>Deputes Brian Angus and David Strang were kindly attending the meeting instead of Anna Muirhead (Head Teacher), who was on sick leave.</p> <p>Staff vacancies: 1 teacher in English and 1 teacher in Physics.</p> <p>Interviews for the English position were imminent at the time of this meeting. It is possible that the</p>	DS/BA

	<p>existing cover teacher will continue for a while after an appointment is made, so that the transition is smoother.</p> <p>The search for a teacher of Physics is ongoing. For both vacant positions, faculty groups have been covering the gaps very effectively.</p> <p>Mr Angus reported that Eleanor Ross will be retiring shortly and that the recruitment process for a new Depute was underway. It was noted that the Parent Council has a role in interviewing candidates but that training is required. A number of Parent Council members made it known that they had received the training already.</p> <p>It was asked if the school or Aberdeen City Council conducted exit interviews as maintaining adequate staffing is as much about retention as it is about recruitment. Mr. Angus said that he believed the Council did conduct exit interviews when teachers left its employ and that Department Heads were likely to conduct informal queries of their own.</p>	
4.	<p><u>Selection of subject choices including timing and number of subjects</u></p> <p>There was a lengthy discussion on subject choices. Questions were raised about the why the school offered only six National 5's when other schools offered eight. The concern being that narrowing of the curriculum occurred too early and before any formal external assessment.</p> <p>It was explained that this was Aberdeen City Council policy and evidence based as beneficial to pupils in achieving an optimum level of qualifications.</p> <p>Mr. Strang contrasted the approach under the Curriculum for Excellence where pupils work to a basket of qualifications with the 2+2+2 linear progression from junior phase to Standard Grades to Highers that some parents may be more familiar with.</p> <p>He also stated that attainment had been raised across the board with the introduction of Curriculum for Excellence. It was agreed from PC members that the Curricular evening was very effective in explaining the process.</p> <p>DS informed the PC meeting that all pupils are given regular assessments, so each individual has a good idea about how well they are doing.</p> <p>DS gave an overview of the subject choices throughout different stages S1—S6:  S1—S3: Pupils experience a broad range of subjects, with deliberately limited choice. Personalisation is only available for Expressive Arts and technology.  S4—S6: Pupils choose 4 elective subjects, with English and Maths.</p> <p>Subject choice options is communicated to S3 parents, so that they can assist their children to make informed choices. A Transition Meeting for S3 parents (30 January) is likely to be very useful.</p> <p>The 6-subject structure used by Cults Academy provides a choice, while allowing for greater teaching intensity.</p> <p>There was also a discussion on streaming, which is not practiced at Cults Academy.</p> <p>Mr Angus explained that the current system had benefits; especially in through peer-to-peer teaching of less able pupils by the more able and that attainment across the school was at the highest that had ever been.</p>	DS/BA/All

<p>5.</p>	<p><u>Consequences of unacceptable behaviour</u></p> <p>There was a discussion on the disciplinary system and the perception among some pupils of inconsistency of application. It was explained that there would always be differences in perception whatever the system used. The current positive behavior notification system was explained as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Note of concern – should not be seen as anything more than a teacher raising a concern with a parent</li> <li>2) Level 1 – has associate punishment such as a detention and signature by the parent. Parent signature is indicative of receipt of notification only.</li> <li>3) Level 2 - possible warning of being close to exclusion</li> <li>4) Exclusion for three days with a meeting with the Head Teacher on return with conditions imposed</li> </ol> <p>This system is being replaced shortly with a new system influenced by UNICEF and Rights Respecting Schools. In particular the Note of Concern will be replaced by an email or letter on progress.</p> <p>It was acknowledged that parent support for the process is important and noted that permanent exclusion could arise associated with illegal substances or concerns about safety.</p> <p>There was a lengthy discussion on vaping, which was raised by a PC member whose children have been reporting concerns about incidents involving vaping-related behaviour within the school’s premises. This behaviour reportedly includes attempts to sell vaping paraphernalia, bullying associated with purchases, as well as vaping itself. BA/DS informed the PC meeting that the school has a zero-tolerance policy regarding vaping. SMT do proactive checks in toilets where vaping is thought to take place.</p> <p>Some parents were concerned that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Their children report prevalent incidents involving vaping.</li> <li>(b) The way in which the school dealt with these incidents did not seem to be consistent across all those pupils who are subject to disciplinary action</li> </ol> <p>BA/DS explained the school operated a positive management system. The school responded to disciplinary matters with each pupil in a contextual way. Other pupils are not necessarily aware of the wider circumstances of each disciplinary decision.</p> <p>Mr Angus stated that the school policy was that vaping was banned on the school premises and that regular patrols at lunch and break time were aimed at deterring breaches of this policy. BA/DS explained the school operated a positive management system. The school responded to disciplinary matters with each pupil in a contextual way. Other pupils are not necessarily aware of the wider circumstances of each disciplinary decision.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p><b>Action – Mr Angus to check what was included in PSE with regard to vaping and health implications.</b> <b>Post meeting update – confirmation that Vaping and heath consequences are discuss within PSE lessons.</b></p> </div>	<p>DS/BA/All</p> <p style="text-align: center;">BA</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p><u>Update from the Aberdeen Parent Council Forum and Consultations.</u></p> <p>Tony Rafferty reported back following the information session held at Mile End Primary regarding the Scottish Government’s Governance Consultation. It was stated by those present that some elements of the proposed changes may be welcomed by Cults Academy, particularly control over budgets.</p> <p>There was a discussion on why Aberdeen had been grouped with Moray and the Highlands in the new regional “Collaborative” rather than with a similar city such as Dundee.</p> <p>There was also a discussion on The Presumption of Mainstreaming following a meeting with the Scottish Government that TR had attended. There was feeling from parents that this was not working well for many pupils in Aberdeen because of budget constraints.</p>	<p>TR/All</p>



	<p>stated that it was as part of the Quality Assurance process.</p> <p><u>8.6 Reading Lists</u></p> <p>Following a discussion with a science teacher at a recent parents' evening, it was requested that the new librarian could consider publishing a cross-curricular reading list with the help of department suggestions. Mr. Strang stated that the new librarian was working on a number of ideas, and this suggestion could be added if indeed it was not already being looked at.</p>	
9.	<p><u>DATE &amp; TIME OF NEXT MEETING</u></p> <p><b>Next PC MEETINGS - Monday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2018 Cults Academy Room 1</b>  <b>Monday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2018 Cults Academy Room 1.</b></p> <p>Any parent or guardian of a pupil at Cults Academy is welcome to attend any Parent Council meeting.</p> <p>The Parent Council can be emailed at <a href="mailto:PCCultsAcademy@aberdeen.npfs.org.uk">PCCultsAcademy@aberdeen.npfs.org.uk</a></p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; gap: 20px;"> <div data-bbox="240 613 432 669">  </div> <div data-bbox="523 622 919 685"> <p><a href="https://fb.me/CultsAcademyPTA">fb.me/CultsAcademyPTA</a>  or <a href="https://facebook.com/CultsAcademyPTA">facebook.com/CultsAcademyPTA</a></p> </div> </div>	