



**Parent Council Meeting of Cults Academy
Monday 21st January 2019 7-9pm**


Attendees: David Barnett (DB) Head, Rick Sansom (Chair)(RS), Robert Brew (Secretary)(RB), Jim Gauld (JG), Vannin Bloch (VB), Tony Brady (TB), Daniel Verhamme (Treasurer) (DV), Oma Okoliegbe, , Ros Harper, Sonya Angus, Martin Barker, Julie Cooper, Kirstin Gove, Julia Crighton, Kay Sutcliffe, Julie Baghurst, Liz Horgan

Apologies: Tahar Kouider, Gill Flett, Michelle Henderson

Agenda items	<u>Updates and discussions</u>	Action
1.	<p><u>Introductions, welcome, apologies and confirmation of previous minutes</u></p> <p>Minutes approved - Insight data presented at the November Parent Council meeting will be updated in February for school leaver destinations and marker reviews. Julie Cooper, Julie Baghurst and Liz Horgan were co-opted onto the Parent Council</p>	RS
2.	<p><u>Head Teacher Introduction</u></p> <p>DB gave a presentation used with staff to introduce himself. Starting his career in Fraserburgh as a French teacher, he has worked at Kincorth, Summerhill (with responsibility for curriculum development), Bankhead, Cults (2005-2007 at Depute), Buckie (2007-2011 as Head Teacher– taking the school through an inspection), Elgin Academy (2011-20180, before taking the opportunity to move back to Aberdeen for family reasons.</p> <p>Relationships and Teamwork</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil-centred – all decisions serve needs of pupils • Learning and Teaching – improvement plan • Leadership – for both staff and pupils, distributed leadership, Senior Leadership Team rather than Senior Management Team • Inclusion – aim to do the best for all pupils, which can be a challenge given staff levels, finance and resources – is the opposite of “exclusion” which should be a rarity <p>Curriculum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cults Academy has a high percentage of very able pupils that makes the delivery of a curriculum suitable for all a challenge, particularly with tight staffing <p>Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where teachers and pupils should be able to talk about what happens in classrooms • where teachers reflect on their own practice • all major decisions involve consultation <p>6 “A”s</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attitude – e.g. holding doors open, smiling, respect • Appearance – uniform – notable that all Cults pupils wear a blazer (unusual in Scotland) – important for security and sense of belonging • Attendance – through the day • Ambition – has to come from within • Attainment • Achievement – extra-curricular <p>Renewal of shared vision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently not well known by average pupil or parent • Needs to be something short and snappy 	DB

	<p>Outcomes, particularly attainment, are of a very high standard – marginal gains rather than transformative change needed.</p> <p><u>Gathering Views</u> DB then moved on to discuss the effort to canvas views on the school. These included focus groups for parents, meeting staff members individually for 15 minute sessions and focus groups for pupils. DB believed there was a need to improve how the school hears of the opinions of learners and pupil councils will be looked at.</p> <p><u>Communication</u> An early theme from this fact finding was “communication”. Parents will be able to access daily announcements which will now be made available on the school website. Additionally, a weekly update will be issued by email.</p> <p>Twitter and Facebook will be used for highlighting good news stories. Social media will <u>not</u> be a substitute for GroupCall which will remain in place.</p> <p>The school website would benefit from some improvement as currently old news (e.g. activities week) can be found on the front-page news section.</p> <p>Additionally, a Head Teacher surgery will be held weekly, Thursdays 4pm to 6pm (subject to uptake dependent change) for parents to drop in and discuss any matters of concern.</p> <p><u>School culture</u> DB discussed how events and activities can build a sense of community. The recent “Battle of the Bands” was cited as an event that created a sense of buzz in the school with wide involvement across all years.</p>	
3.	<p><u>Head Teacher Update</u></p> <p><u>Staffing</u> English – all classes are currently covered with long-term temporary cover. The vacancy will be re-advertised. Design and Technology – the vacancy will be re-advertised Pupil Support – maternity leave will create a temporary need for cover</p> <p><u>Course Choice Meetings</u> The S4-S5 subject choice parent information meeting had been held the week commencing the 14th January, with a high turnout. The S3 subject choice parent information meeting was to be held the 24th of January.</p> <p><u>Parental Engagement</u> Dr Janet Goodall of the University of Bath was to present a session on parental engagement on behalf of Aberdeen City Council.</p> <p><u>School Budget</u> There was some confusion at the Council on the final budget for the school year which the Head Teacher was working with the Council Finance Department to reach clarity.</p>	
	<p><u>Parent Council Actions</u> There was a brief discussion on the Pupil-Teacher Ratio issue covered at previous meetings.</p> <p>A letter be sent to Angela Scott, Eleanor Sheppard and Education Convenor, John Wheeler, based on a version of the letter previously sent to Derek Samson.</p> <p>A second letter to Derek Sansom to better understand timing of process and ask if additional allocated teachers could be provided to Cults Academy as an interim measure. It was agreed that these could be drafted and issued by RB and RS without further approval from the PC.</p>	

	<div data-bbox="245 188 1362 304" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Action: PC to write to Angela Scott, Eleanor Sheppard and Education Convenor, John Wheeler, with a version of the letter previously sent to Derek Samson</p> </div> <div data-bbox="245 338 1362 454" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Action: PC to write second letter to Derek Sansom to seek better understand timing of process and ask if additional allocated teachers could be provided to Cults Academy as an interim measure</p> </div> <p>There was a brief discussion on widening the lobbying effort through the Aberdeen City Parent Forum, MSPs, as the broader issue of teacher shortages in the North East of Scotland appeared to be lacking an owner or an integrated attempt to find a solution.</p> <p>VB suggested that Cults Academy could have a more immediate impact on recruitment by becoming known as a school of choice for applicants. Promotion of a positive image could improve recruitment.</p> <p>Ideas for Parent Support</p> <p>Running Club – a Cults Academy running club could build on the success of Primary running clubs, such as that at Cults Primary.</p> <p>Walk-a-Mile at Lunchtime – during winter pupils get little exposure to daylight. Could a lunchtime walking club help?</p> <p>Former Pupils’ Association – Other schools have active former pupil associations that help with matters such as new sports strips and academic prizes.</p> <p>DB made some suggestions on areas for parental support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial – fund raising • Support on the staffing issue • Parent Council presence at Parents’ Evenings • Support for extra-curricular activities • Mock interviews • Career talks • Work experience <p>JG noted that the school had previously held careers fairs. JG also posed the question of whether invigilator talks could assist with allaying exam nerves.</p>	<p>RS</p> <p>RS</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p><u>AOB</u></p> <p><u>School Reports and Assessments</u></p> <p>VB raised the issue of school reports not providing the information that parents needed to help guide their children in subject choices. As the written reports refer only to the working level of a pupil it is difficult to understand that pupil’s strengths and weaknesses. It was felt that written reports are drafted in such positive language that they lose meaning. This is of particular concern as the first exam conditions assessments take place at Prelims in S4, long after subject choices have been made.</p> <p>VB asked if there were any standardised tests that could assist. MIDYS is one such system used by the school in S1 and S2.</p> <p>DB noted that there was a need to be mindful of staff time, but noted that other schools adopted a range of approaches such as pupils writing their own reports or monthly tracking of attainment, but with written reports replaced by having two parents’ evenings.</p> <p>RB suggested that formal examinations in S3 could be helpful, not only to determine strengths and weaknesses but also because they gave pupils the opportunity to experiment with revision techniques</p>	

	<p>to find what works for them and also dispel exam nerves through repeated exposure. Others noted that earlier examinations would also deal with the practical aspects of examination taking (clear pencil cases, no phones, etc).</p> <p><u>Parent Directory</u> Returning to the issue of parental support mention was made of the Parental Directory set up the year before and that this could be revived</p> <div data-bbox="244 450 1361 539" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Action: Find current version of parent directory (Action on JB)</p> </div> <p><u>Former Pupil LinkedIn Group</u> TB discussed the opportunity to set up a LinkedIn Group to establish contact with Former Pupils and businesses with a strong Cults Academy connection. A search established that an unofficial group already existed.</p> <div data-bbox="244 741 1361 860" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Action: TB/KG to undertake further research on how best to use LinkedIn and on current Group moderator</p> </div> <p><u>Next Steps</u> Given the range of ideas it was felt that a further meeting to prioritise and determine actions would be useful</p> <div data-bbox="244 987 1361 1077" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Action: An interim meeting to be set for the 4th of February</p> </div>	<p>JB</p> <p>TB/KG</p> <p>RS</p>
5.	<p><u>DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING</u> <u>Next PC MEETINGS -</u> 7pm - Monday 4th March 2019 Cults Academy Room 1, DB to see if larger room available Outline agenda to be agreed in advance and circulated Local Councillors and student representatives will be routinely invited to all future meetings</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 PCCultsAcademy@aberdeen.npfs.org.uk</p> <div data-bbox="244 1458 432 1547" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">  Find us on: facebook </div> <p>fb.me/CultsAcademyPTA or https://www.facebook.com/CultsAcademyPTA</p>	