



**Parent Council**

## **AHS Parent Council Meeting Minute & Action Tracker**

**Thursday 23 May 2024  
6.00pm**

<b>Parent Members:</b>	Fiona Nicholson (Chair), Carrie MacDonald Vice-Chair), Kenny Pottinger, Anna Moar, Gowri Saravanan
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Robin Calder (Head Teacher – AHS), Dawn Ratter (Clerk/Treasurer), Cllr John Fraser, Cllr Neil Pearson, Nick McCaffrey (Co-opted Member); Amy Sandison (Teacher Rep)
<b>Apologies:</b>	Amanda Hawick, Cameron Mackenzie (Teacher Rep)

<b>Agenda No</b>	<b>Information / Action</b>	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>
1	<b>Welcome</b> The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
2	<b>Approval of Minutes</b> <u>Minutes of Meeting – Thursday 22 February 2024</u> The minutes were approved by KP and seconded by GS.	
3	<b>Matters Arising</b> <u>Beanfeast</u> The senior beanfeast timings were changed to try and accommodate pupils living in the isles. However, there is still an issue with the Unst pupils returning home due to the ferry times. A parent member is still querying if the the school can revert back to holding the senior beanfeast on a Thursday evening as opposed to Friday. RC informed parent members there are issues with holding the beanfeast on the Thursday evening in relation to young people and activities after the event which the school have no control over and the impact these have on pupils attending school the following day. The Thursday evening also poses similar challenges for the AHS Hostel.  The school will continue to keep an eye on this but the principal of an earlier start/finish time will continue for 2024.	
4	<b>Head Teacher's Report, May 2024</b> <u>School Roll</u>	

There are 183 pupils joining S1 in August. Every P7 pupil has had the opportunity of a tour of the school and there are various enhanced transition visits ongoing. There has been 2 information events for parents/carers which were really well attended. A virtual tour of the school can also be found on the school website. The English department are working closely with the feeder primary schools delivering a couple of English lessons to give pupils an idea of what English will look like in S1. Science teachers have also been visiting schools over the last week. There will be 6 non-practical classes and 9 practical classes. It will be a very busy S1 year group.

P7 pupils will receive their timetable in the post a few days before the timetabled visits, along with information on what class they will be in, arrangements for the visits and who their Pupil Support Teacher will be. Pupils moving up into S2/3/4/5/6 will have a period of registration to receive their new timetable on the morning they move up.

Clr J Fraser asked how many of the S1 year group are from placing requests. RC noted around 21 of the pupils coming into S1 are placing requests. The majority of pupils from Cunningsburgh Primary School and Dunrossness Primary School are coming to AHS. There are also some P7 pupils from Sandwich who have submitted placing requests. All of these placing requests are approved as the Admissions Policy is very clear that a placing request can only be rejected if the school is at full physical capacity. All of these pupils have also been included in the transition events.

AM asked why pupils up move at the end of May and not at the end of the school year. Primarily this is to allow time to deliver the senior phase of education and the intensity of the S4 onwards. For the younger pupils, the S2 pupils have chosen their subjects for S3, it is harder to keep up the level of engagement in subjects the pupils are not continuing. The change in timetable is logically really challenging but it gives pupils and the staff a fresh start

RC added that they are expecting some movement in the projected rolls for the S5/6 year groups as the exam results have been received but they have already accounted for some of the cohort leaving after the exams.

The AHS school roll is continuing to grow but the staffing resources are not necessarily increasing to mirror that school roll. There has been significant timetabling implications with a big S1 group coming into the school and that could potentially restrict the subjects offered further up the school.

#### SQA Exam Diet

The main thing for the school is that the experience for the young people sitting the exams is as smooth and sensitive as possible.

Clr J Fraser asked if the school have a sufficient supply of invigilators and if there is any support they require in preparation for next year. RC it has been quite tight for a number of reasons but with some support from the Support for Learning department, teaching staff and learning support workers, all areas have been covered. This includes

pupils who require scribes and pupils who require individual rooms. RC noted they will need to look closely at plans for next year as there may be some changes with the Chief Invigilator who has had to step down temporarily this year which instantly created a challenge for the school. The invigilators are primarily retired teachers. It is a lot of work for Mr Redman, Depute Head Teacher. At this time of year, a lot of his work is based on ensuring everything runs smoothly for the SQA exams. There has also been members of the Central Inclusion Team who come in to help.

#### Staffing

There are currently some gaps and challenges in staffing for English and Music. The school are keeping a close eye on the position with English as it is such a crucial subject. RC confirmed they were able to release Mrs Kerr from the English department because they had Miss Cluness as acting principal teacher and they were then able to backfill Miss Cluness's post. The secondment agreement for teachers is very clear, if a secondment is offered to a member of staff or if they apply for a secondment, the appropriate backfill has to be in place.

The overall management and responsibility of probationers sits with central management in Children's Services but there is discussion between head teachers and central management. The school discuss where they could benefit from having probationers and that will influence the request submitted to the Scottish Government. However, it is the Scottish Government and the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) who decides the allocation of probationers to each local authority.

AHS will have probationers for Maths and English in the new school year and possibly access to part of a probationer for Technical. Probationers bring a lot of enthusiasm and new ideas to the school.

There continues to be challenges with recruitment for Learning Support Worker (LSW) posts. There are not always suitable or appropriate candidates applying for these positions, even when permission has been granted to recruit additional staff. These posts are often having to be re-advertised. There are concerns that social care positions are becoming more lucrative than LSW positions and there is a risk that staff will be lost to other areas of the Council. The school are looking really carefully to ensure they have the appropriate level of staff to support the pupils who are currently in Support for Learning and the pupils who are joining the school after Summer. FN asked if the LSW job profile has been job evaluated recently. RC advised that this is being looked at by the Central Inclusion Team at Children's Services, including the remit, pay grade and what the role involves.

Cllr J Fraser commented that he never considered the detrimental effect the increase to social care work grades would have on support staff for schools.

<b>5</b>	<b>Update on the Pupil Safety and Health and Wellbeing – previously discussed at February's Parent Council meeting</b>	
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RC updated the parent council on the progress with the Pupil Safety and Health and Wellbeing Plan. RC stressed this document is confidential to the Parent Council and is not to be shared externally.

There are 14 actions on the plan which runs alongside the School Improvement Plan.

Action (c)

The school have strengthened their social and emotional provision in the school. There is an increased number of children accessing the Social and Emotional Base (SEB) as part of Support for Learning. SEB supports pupils with issues around confidence, resilience, mental health, anxiety, communication and behavioural issues. There were 6 pupils receiving support in 2020 and there will be around 70 pupils receiving some form of support in the new academic year. The school are in the process of developing another room to accommodate the additional demand on this provision.

Action (d)

It has been confirmed that the Dogs Against Drugs dogs will not be used in a sniffer capacity in the school but the team are working with pupils in an education capacity. They have had a block of time with the S2 year group with really positive feedback. The school are committed to working really closely with the Dogs Against Drugs, including involving them in parent's evenings, staff meetings and the information event being planned.

Dogs Against Drugs deliver assemblies to all year groups in the school, where they provide real life case studies and lived experiences of young people that have been involved in substance use and some of the consequences resulting from this. They also explain what the dogs do and in a carefully controlled way are able to show the dogs in action in terms of being able to sniff certain drugs too outside on the school campus.

NM added that the Dogs Against Drugs team are really good and have delivered training to the AHS Hostel staff. They have brought in protected samples for staff to see what particular drugs look like and see what the street variant of particular things look like. This gives the hostel staff a better insight should they come across something. The Dogs Against Drugs team provide some real time knowledge, local context and understanding of the issues ongoing in Shetland.

Cllr J Fraser asked if there would be an opportunity for the school to engage with organisations such as the Scottish Drugs Forum, Scottish Recovery Consortium and Faces and Voices of Recovery who are all reporting to Public Health Scotland and helping to formulate policy at Scottish Government level. These organisations would have in depth and working knowledge of what is happening due to engaging with recovery communities. He would like to see some focus on the education of clearly defined models of providing recovery routes for affected people, as well as the harms and dangers of illicit drug taking and all the outcomes resulting from that. Cllr J Fraser would highly recommend contacting Annmarie Ward, CEO of Faces and Voices Recovery.

	<p>AM would like to see some focus on alcohol awareness for young people as it is still very prevalent in the young generations. FN informed the group that representatives from OPEN attended the recent bi-annual parent council meeting. They have recently done a huge piece of work on alcohol and substance abuse and would be happy to attend an information event in the school. RC added that there is some coverage of alcohol risks and consequences in the PSE programme but this could be reviewed and further developed.</p> <p>AS informed the group that they touch on alcohol and smoking and the effects on the body in Science but they could look to expand this to incorporate the effects of drugs as well.</p> <p><u>Action (i)</u></p> <p>RC is interested in exploring options for the outdoor environment e.g. multicourts, seating areas, play areas, to possibly improve pupil safety and give young people something more positive to do at lunch times. RC would be very keen to work with the parent council to see if they can generate some funding. FN asked if Hjaltland Housing Association have a Community Benefit factor to the new builds in the area. AM suggested contacting Toyota for funding.</p> <p><u>Action (n)</u></p> <p>The school have been working with the Health Improvement Team around a focus on the risks and concerns of vaping. Posters have been produced to be displayed around the school and in the toilets to highlight some of the risks.</p> <p><u>Action (o)</u></p> <p>The school are in discussions with the Learning Estate team to explore expanding the CCTV provision around the school.</p> <p>The action plan is a live document and will be continually updated.</p> <p>GS asked if inappropriate behaviour on school buses is dealt with separately or if the school would have input into this. RC said within the Anti-Bullying Policy, there is a joint responsibility between the school and the SIC Transport Planning department to work together.</p>	
6	<p><b>Update on current whole school self-evaluation</b></p> <p>The school have been carrying out quite systematic evaluations this year. Parent/Carer surveys were completed in Term 2 and last term staff have been meeting with groups of pupils to complete the pupil surveys. RC met with each of the S1/2/3 classes to explain the purpose of the survey. Pupils were encouraged to be open and honest in their responses and reassured that all survey responses are anonymous.</p>	

	<p>The school are currently analysing the feedback from the survey but RC shared some general feedback with the parent members. Pupils were asked some questions on bullying and if they had any suggestions on how the school can improve the way they deal with bullying behaviour.</p> <p>The staff team are being asked for their views this term. Once all surveys are complete, the school management team will collate the information and this will support the key priorities for the school moving forward.</p>	
7	<p><b>Progress with the 2023/24 School Improvement Plan and initial planning for the 2024/25 School Improvement Plan</b></p> <p>The current School Improvement Plan priorities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving attendance at school and in classes</li> <li>• Raising attainment</li> <li>• Developing self-evaluation and pupil voice</li> <li>• Reinforcing whole school experiences, behaviour management strategies and consistency</li> </ul> <p>RC informed the parent members of some changes the school are making to help improve attendance. Pre-pandemic attendance was around 96% but more recently it has slipped, at times, to around 83%. This is a trend that has been replicated nationally. The school have been looking at ways to improve the number of children coming in to school, and how to ensure the children in school are attending their classes and engaging in their learning. This needs to be looked at holistically, taking into consideration relationships, how children feel connected to the school and the sense of belonging. The school have been looking at the systems for recording and monitoring attendance and one of the practical outcomes for this year is that the system for notifying parents/carers of pupil's absence is changing. Previously parents/carers were notified by a phone call from 11am onwards. From Monday, starting with the S2 year group, this will move to an automatic text messaging system through SEEMIS. Parents/carers will receive a text message at 9.30am if their child is absent and the school have not been notified, asking them to contact the school.</p> <p>RC will share a paper on the proposed priorities for the School Improvement Plan for 2024/25 to parent members for comments. The emerging themes at the moment are attendance and engagement, pupil voice and pupil leadership on all aspects of school life.</p>	RC
8	<p><b>Chair's Report</b></p> <p>Following the last meeting, FN expressed her disappointment that confidential information discussed at the parent council meeting was shared with the press. FN reiterated that items shared at meetings are confidential and should not be shared wider. FN is genuinely worried about how this impacts the school, parents and their feelings towards</p>	

	<p>the parent council. She asked that if someone isn't happy with something said at a meeting to please contact her as Chairperson or another parent member to discuss the concerns.</p> <p>RC added that there was a real sense of disappointment from the staff. There were some key documents that had been shared with the school management team and principal teacher level but had not necessarily been shared with the wider staff team and then staff are finding out information from the local media. This has caused some tension within the staff team and the relationship with the parent council.</p> <p>All parent council members want these meetings to be safe spaces for parents to raise concerns. Parent members are there to support the school and staff, and not to undermine them.</p> <p>FN suggested it would be a good idea to share a summary with the parent forum on the topics/themes discussed following each meeting to promote the work for the parent council and provide an opportunity for any parents to come forward with any items they would like to raise. RC would be happy to include a section in the next update to parents/carers.</p>	FN/RC
9	<p><b>Review of Parent Council Action Plan</b></p> <p>It was noted that the parent council haven't organised a fundraising event this year but this is something members are keen to commit to over the next year.</p> <p>FN suggested it would be good to include the parent forum and invite them to come forward with suggestions for priorities to be included in the Action Plan.</p>	FN
10	<p><b>AOCB</b></p> <p><u>Trauma Informed Practice</u></p> <p>Cllr N Pearson asked what level of the staffing team have been involved with Trauma Informed Practice. RC advised that primarily it has been pupil support staff and support for learning staff. Cllr N Pearson feels this would be a useful tool for staff and also feels it would help some pupils understand trauma following COVID, or for pupils portraying bullying behaviour and pupils experiencing bullying behaviours. AS has completed the online training and found it very beneficial.</p>	

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 10 September 2024**