



**Parent Council**

## AHS Parent Council Meeting Minute & Action Tracker

**Wednesday 14 May 2025  
6.00pm**

<b>Parent Members:</b>	Carrie Macdonald (Chair), Kenny Pottinger (Vice Chair), Sally Ferguson, Brian Goddard, Louise Milne, Amanda Hawick, Gowri Saravanan, Heather Jamieson
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Robin Calder (Head Teacher – AHS), Dawn Ratter (Clerk/Treasurer), Nick McCaffrey, Cllr J Fraser, Cllr A Wenger, Cllr G Robinson, James Johnston
<b>Apologies:</b>	Caroline Henderson, Carly Cheyney, Anna Moar, Tracey Hawkins, Cllr S Leask, Cameron Mackenzie (Staff Rep)

Agenda No	Information / Action	Person(s) Responsible
1	<b>Welcome</b> CM welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
2	<b>Approval of Minutes – Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2025</b> The minutes were approved by KP and seconded CM.	
3	<b>Review of matters and actions arising from previous minutes</b> <u>School Meals</u> Information has been added to the pupil bulletin. Neil Beattie was unable to attend the meeting tonight as he is off island with work.  <u>Councillor Attendance</u> Parent members agreed to broaden the invitation to attend Parent Council meetings to include all Councillors representing the Anderson High School catchment area. Once the meeting schedule for the 2025/26 academic year is confirmed, dates will be shared with the relevant Councillors via Members Support.	DR
4	<b>Update on Local Authority Mobile Phone Consultation</b> <b>Attendee:</b> James Johnston, Children’s Services  James Johnston attended the meeting to provide an update on the Local Authority’s review of mobile phone use in schools. The review was prompted by a petition received from some parents at Anderson High School and builds on an existing LNCT agreement dating back to 2007. Children’s Services had already identified this as a policy area requiring attention.	

## Consultation Overview

Feedback was gathered from parents, staff, and pupils across the school estate. The consultation received:

- 113 teacher responses (50% secondary, 33% of those were AHS staff)
- 500 parent/carer responses.

Full details are available online: [Mobile Phones in Schools Review 2025 – Shetland Islands Council](#).

The key themes from the feedback include:

- **Staff:** Desire for consistent enforcement, improved IT infrastructure, and clear communication.
- **Parents/Carers:** Expressed heightened concerns around cyberbullying, addictive behaviours, and mental health impacts.
- **Pupils:** Mixed views – some see phones as beneficial for learning and organisation, while others acknowledge distraction. Most common use during school is messaging parents (72%).

The data highlights include:

- HWB Census 2021: Most pupils spend 3+ hours per day on phones, with 7+ hours on weekends.
- Over 50% of pupils accessed social media by age 12.
- 74% of pupils believe phones should be allowed in class.
- Contact during the day is often initiated by pupils, though focus groups suggest parents also initiate contact.

Policy Development Timeline:

- Review began in January and has progressed through assessment, consultation, research and drafting.
- Next steps included feedback on the draft, approval, implementation and monitoring.
- Target for policy approval is August 2025, transitioning from LNCT agreement to an official SIC policy.

The Local Authority aims to develop a balanced and sustainable mobile phone policy that reflects:

- Pupil voice
- Behavioural considerations
- The realities of a digital society
- Parental perspectives
- Impact on learning and teaching.

The goal is to establish a policy that is deliverable, management and sustainable across the school estate. The draft policy will be shared for feedback, with opportunities for parents, pupils, and staff to contribute prior to final approval.

	<p><b>Discussion Points</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RC confirmed the intention to establish a stakeholder group to explore the policy in greater depth, particularly in relation to AHS. This group would support meaningful dialogue around restrictions and help shape a practical and inclusive approach.</li> <li>• BG asked about parental access to the consultation data. James acknowledged the request and will explore options for redacting confidential information to enable safe and appropriate sharing, ensuring compliance with data protection regulations.</li> <li>• SF queried which parents were involved in the consultation. James confirmed that a survey link was sent to all parents, and responses were collated and considered. He assured that further opportunities for parental engagement will be provided before final approval. The policy will be submitted to LNCT and SIC, with final consideration by the Education &amp; Families Committee.</li> <li>• SF also expressed concern that parents were being unfairly blamed for mobile phone issues and emphasised the importance of parental involvement in shaping the policy.</li> </ul> <p><b>Next Steps</b></p> <p>Parent members expressed disappointment that James had to leave the meeting after delivering his presentation, limiting time for questions and discussion.</p> <p>CM proposed holding a separate meeting with James focused specifically on the mobile phone review to allow for deeper engagement.</p>	CM
5	<p><b>Head Teacher's Report (attached)</b></p> <p><u>School Roll</u></p> <p>The academic year commenced with a pupil roll of 1,028, which has since decreased to 995 due to transfers to other destinations. Despite the reduction, the roll remains healthy. The projected roll for the new academic year is 1,035, though this may fluctuate as pupils in S4-S6 may leave, not all departures are currently known.</p> <p>It was noted that pupil numbers will need to be monitored closely, as declining primary school rolls are expected to impact secondary enrolment in the coming years.</p> <p><u>Staffing update</u></p> <p>In response to the growing school roll and an increase in pupils with additional and complex needs, a new Depute Head Teacher (DHT) for Support for Learning will join the team from 26<sup>th</sup> May. This appointment is expected to significantly strengthen strategic oversight and collaboration in support for learning.</p>	

Recruitment, however, remains a challenge. The school continues to experience a limited pool of applicants, with its geographic location cited as a contributing factor. SF highlighted the difference in notice periods between England (one term) and Scotland (four weeks), which can further complicate recruitment timelines.

The current staff age profile also presents long-term challenges in maintaining a sustainable pipeline of teachers and Principal Teachers (PTs). The school is working closely with the Local Authority to “grow our own” teachers and promote the school to attract new staff. Despite these efforts, the staffing situation remains fragile.

On a positive note, RC confirmed the technical department is now fully staffed, which was welcomed.

Retention remains a key focus, with the school committed to supporting staff wellbeing and ensuring the feel valued. SF raised concerns about the limited number of DHTs and suggested exploring incremental leadership roles, such as year heads, to enhance management capacity. RC clarified that DHTs also serve as year group heads. However, while the school roll has increased significantly since 2010, the number of PTs for pupil support has remained unchanged.

SF also raised concerns about staffing levels within Children’s Services. Cllr J Fraser clarified that the 100 staff within Children’s Services support the entire Children’s Directorate including social work, early learning and child-care, catering and cleaning and sport and leisure.

AH asked about pupil attendance. RC reported that current attendance is approximately 90%, down from pre-pandemic levels of 93-94%. Shetland has the highest rate of authorised absences, often due to pupils travelling for sport or music. Absence figures include a range of bespoke situations, such as outreach teaching, part-time provision, youth work involvement, and agency support to help pupils complete qualifications.

The Support of Learning Base (SEB), established in 2020, now supports over 60 pupils, some of whom work through qualifications in the base due to difficulties attending mainstream classes.

In English, staffing has been affected by secondments and promotions. While these changes support career progression, they can disrupt continuity. Despite challenges, most curricular areas are well-staffed. Compared to other local authorities, the school is in a relatively strong position.

The broader school estate was discussed. With many schools across Shetland, resources are spread thinly. There is a need for strategic leadership to assess whether the current estate best serves all pupils and staff. A more consolidated approach could improve resource allocation and overall effectiveness.

<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>Progress with the 2024/25 School Improvement Plan and initial planning for the 2025/26 School Improvement Plan including a forthcoming parental/carer survey</b></p> <p>RC provided an update on the current priorities within the School Improvement Plan. An external visit was recently conducted, with reasonably positive feedback received. The visit provided constructive suggestions for further development, which will be shared at a future Parent Council meeting.</p> <p>A key next step is to gather updated views from parents and carers. The last survey was conducted in November 2023.</p> <p>Emerging key priorities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued development of learning and teaching</li> <li>• Ensuring senior phase curriculum remains broad and suitable for all learners</li> <li>• Strengthening inclusion and wellbeing, particularly support for children with additional support needs (ASN) in classrooms</li> <li>• Upskilling staff in areas such as trauma-informed practice and neurodiversity</li> </ul> <p>It was noted that getting these themes right will positively impact attainment and overall pupil outcomes.</p> <p>Surveys are considered crucial for providing insight into how the school is perceived, including communication and engagement. RC will share the results of the parent/carer survey at the next meeting.</p>	<p>RC</p>
<p><b>7</b></p>	<p><b>Review of the Parent Council Action Plan</b></p> <p>The action plan was reviewed and agreed with the following amendments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Annual Information Evening for Parents/Carers:</b> It was agreed to organise an information evening for parents and carers on an annual basis.</li> <li>• <b>Support at Parents' Evenings:</b> It was confirmed that support at parents' evenings will continue as part of ongoing practice, rather than being reinstated.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>8</b></p>	<p><b>Fundraising</b></p> <p>CM expressed interest in supporting the school with a fundraising request towards pupils activities but noted the need for a dedicated group or committee to take this forward. AH suggested organising a raffle, potentially with donations from Northlink and Loganair, highlighting it as a strong opportunity to raise funds.</p> <p>The Parent Council and the school could work collaboratively. RC advised AnnMarie Jamieson would be the link contact in the school.</p> <p>Fundraising ideas included:</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular car boot sales</li> <li>• Collaboration with the Pupil Council to showcase talented musicians and support pupil-led events such as music evenings</li> <li>• Sunday teas</li> <li>• Exploring Tesco token schemes.</li> </ul>	
9	<p><b>AOCB</b>  <u>Parent Resignation</u></p> <p>AH expressed appreciation for the opportunity to work with the Parent Council, noting it has been a pleasure to collaborate with such a professional and dedicated group. AH acknowledged the range of topics addressed – some positive, others more challenging – and thanked everyone for their commitment. Best wishes were extended to all pupils, particularly those sitting exams and those requiring additional support, with hopes they continue to progress successfully.</p> <p>CM thanked AH for her valuable contributions during her time on the Parent Council. RC also expressed gratitude on behalf of the school, acknowledging AH's efforts in raising important issues.</p>	

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 09 September 2025**

**Anderson High School Parent Council, Wednesday 14 May 2025**

**Head Teacher's Report**

**1. School highlights since the last Parent Council Meeting**

- Careers Fair and Opportunities Event, Tuesday 18 February 2025.
- Anderson High School involvement in the North of Scotland final of the UK Teams Maths Challenge, Monday 03 and Tuesday 04 March 2025.
- S2 Conservation Volunteering Days, February 2025.
- S4 into S5 Information Evening for Parents and Carers, Thursday 06 March 2025.
- An Evening of Science, Wednesday 12 March 2025.
- S2 YPI finals in the school, Tuesday 25 March 2025.
- S2, John Muir Award, school trips, March 2025.
- S1 English Achievement Assembly, March 2025.
- Success in the recent UKMT Intermediate Maths Challenge, April 2025.
- S3 Business Management, Recipe Book project, term three and term four.
- S3 Speed Career Event, May 2025.
- S3 pupils attending a music workshop at the Mareel, led by Elias Alexander, a multi-instrumentalist, producer and songwriter, May 2025.
- S3 History pupils' trip to the Hestmanden Norwegian Warship, May 2025.

Keep up to date with our school news on our school's facebook page, and our school website is regularly updated [Anderson High School – Dö Weel and Persevere \(glowscotland.org.uk\)](https://www.andersonhighschool.org.uk).

All current lunchtime clubs and activities are also available to view on the school website.

## 2. Forthcoming key dates/events

Date	Event
Monday 19 May 2025.	Occasional holiday day.
Monday 26 May 2025.	New timetable commences for pupils in S2, S3 and S4.
Tuesday 03 June 2025.	New timetable commences for pupils in S5 and S6.
Thursday 19 June and Friday 20 June 2025.	P7 pupils following S1 timetable.

## 3. School Roll, May 2025

The current breakdown is as follows for 2024/25:

S1	181
S2	153
S3	168
S4	183
S5/6	305
Adult Learners	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>995</b> (includes 37 placing requests)

The projected school roll for 2025/26 is approximately 1035 (includes 55 placing requests).

## 4. Staffing

Subject	Staffing Update
Support for Learning	<p>Mrs Harpe will commence as our new Depute Head Teacher, Support for Learning, on Monday 26 May 2025.</p> <p>Mrs Harpe will oversee the three Support for Learning Departments in the school (Complex</p>

	<p>Needs, Mainstream and the Social and Emotional Base) and line manage our three Principal Teachers of Support for Learning. The new post reflects the increase in the number of pupils with additional support needs in school, the growing number of pupils assigned to the three Support for Learning Departments, and the rising school roll in general.</p> <p>Miss Grant moved on from her Principal Teacher of Support for Learning, Complex Needs Department, post, to a vacant teacher of Music post in the school on Monday 17 February 2025. Following a recruitment process, we have a preferred candidate to replace Miss Grant, who we hope will commence in the school on Monday 18 August 2025.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Mrs Whittle's replacement as teacher of Support for Learning, Complex Needs, is Miss Goodlad and she will commence in the school on Monday 18 August.</p> <p>Mr Young is our temporary teacher of Support for Learning, the post which Miss Willins was previously carrying out prior to her moving on from the school at the end of term two.</p> <p>Mrs Mathewson, Central Inclusion teacher, is also supporting the Complex Needs Department two days a week.</p> <p>In Support for Learning, Mainstream Department, Mr McAdoo, Principal Teacher, moved on from the school at the end of term three. The Principal Teacher post is currently being covered, temporarily, by Miss Maxwell.</p> <p>We continue to recruit new Learning Support Workers into the Support for Learning Department.</p>
Modern Languages	Mrs McNicol, Principal Teacher of Modern Foreign Languages has applied for a period of extended leave in 2025/26.

	Mr Harpe has been appointed to cover Mrs McNicol's post for the academic session 2025/26.
Physical Education (PE)	PE teacher Mr Williamson moved on from the school on Sunday 12 January 2025.  Miss Veitch will replace Mr Williamson and commence in her role from Monday 18 August 2025.
Business and Computing	Mr Thoresen, Principal Teacher of Computing Studies and Mrs Tulloch, Principal Teacher of Business Education, will move on from the school in August 2025.  We are currently recruiting to a new post, Principal Teacher of Business Education and Computing Studies to bring the two departments together.
Science	Mr Arthur, Teacher of Chemistry and Science is taking a one-year sabbatical from the school in 2025/26. Mr Arthur's post in the Science Department will be covered by Mrs Sewall.
Janitor	Mr Anderson is our new Head Janitor following the retirement of Mr Morrison at the end of last term.

Updates on staffing are shared in the regular emails to all parents and carers.

## 5. External Visit to the Anderson High School

The Anderson High School received an External Visit from representatives from the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES) on the 03 and 04 March to support our self-evaluation and our understanding of the school's strengths and areas requiring improvement.

The representatives from ADES spent time with children and young people, staff, parents and carers and the school's partners.

The representatives from ADES were considering five themes:

- Theme 1: Leadership of change.
- Theme 2: Curriculum.
- Theme 3: Learning, teaching and assessment.
- Theme 4: Wellbeing, equality and inclusion.
- Theme 5: Attainment and achievement.

Verbal feedback from the visit will be shared as part of this report.