



Parent Council

AHS Parent Council Meeting Minute & Action Tracker

**Wednesday 12 November 2025
6.30pm**

Parent Members:	Carrie Macdonald (Chair), Kenny Pottinger (Vice Chair), Anna Moar, Vaila Knight, Sandra Summers, Reka Szucs
In Attendance:	Robin Calder (Head Teacher – AHS), Dawn Ratter (Clerk/Treasurer), Jessica Johnson (Staff Rep), Ashley Robertson (Staff Rep), Cllr Arwed Wenger
Apologies:	Brian Goddard, Carly Cheyney, Louise Milne, Gowri Saravanan, Caroline Henderson, Nick McCaffrey, Cllr J Fraser, Cllr G Robinson

Agenda No	Information / Action	Person(s) Responsible
1	Welcome CM welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
2	Approval of Minutes – Wednesday 12th September 2025 The minutes were approved by KP and seconded by VK.	
3	Review of matters and actions arising from previous minutes <u>Wool Week Café</u> The Wool Week Café raised over £4,500 for school funds – a fantastic achievement and a huge fundraiser for the school. Despite stormy weather, there was an excellent turnout with many visitors to the school. This success was thanks to a real team effort involving staff, parents and pupils. The Parent Council support on the day was greatly appreciated. RC expressed sincere thanks to everyone involved.	
4	Head Teacher’s Report <u>Remembrance Day</u> A special day was observed in the school. A wreath was laid in the Social Subjects area, and the whole school community respectfully marked two minutes of silence. <u>Lunchtime Clubs and Events</u> Details of all clubs and activities are now available on the school website.	

School Roll

Compared to the 2024/25 session, the school roll is falling, with a smaller S1 cohort this year. Rolls are declining in primary schools, and projections indicate further decreases in future years.

Week to week overall school attendance information

Attendance continues to be a key focus for the school. The overall figure for last week was 87%, with the aim to reach the 90% range. Attendance typically dips around the October break, as some families take holidays before or after the official school holidays.

Significant work is ongoing to understand reasons for absence and to support families, including collaboration with other agencies. Challenges include lack of engagement and mental health issues affecting pupils, as well as self-esteem and confidence concerns. There has also been a cultural shift since COVID, with some families placing less emphasis on daily attendance and the value of education.

The school is closely monitoring individual circumstances, particularly for pupils with attendance below 80%, and is exploring creative strategies to improve attendance. This remains a major challenge for the school.

Staffing

The Parent Council discussed the staffing update provide in the Head Teacher's Report (attached). Recruitment remains a significant focus, with several vacancies across departments and a number of staff approaching retirement age in the next 1-3 years. RC noted the challenges in attracting specialist teachers and the importance of appointing suitable candidates to maintain high standards. It was also acknowledged that these recruitment pressures are common across schools in Shetland and the Scottish Mainland. RC confirmed that interviews for key posts are imminent and that staffing improvements in Support for Learning are already making a positive impact.

Prelims

The Parent Council discussed the Head Teacher's update on prelim arrangements. For S5 and S6 pupils, study leave will be reintroduced during the two-week prelim period. Pupils who choose to attend school will not receive new teaching content but staff will be available to provide support and answer questions.

RC confirmed that this approach has been discussed with the Local Authority and Principal Teachers, who are supportive. Further information will be shared with staff and parents/carers of S5 and S6 pupils.

No new content will be taught for the pupils who choose to come to school but staff will be available to answer questions/support study.

5 **Feedback from Term 4 Parental Survey**

RC invited Parent Council members to highlight any specific comments or categories from the Term 4 Parental Survey that this wished the school to explore further.

School Meals and Queues

Members discussed ongoing concerns around lunchtime queues, with some pupils waiting up to 15 minutes depending on meal choice. On occasion, sandwiches run short, although catering staff continue to introduce new items and options. Rolls with fillings such as saucermeat or sausages remain a popular break-time treat. It was noted that predicting daily demand can be challenging. Menus continue to be promoted through pupil bulletins and the morning display screens.

Social Spaces

Members noted feedback regarding the limited number of social areas. S1 pupils use the school hall; S2/3 generally use the lower dining area; S4/5 use the upper dining area; and S6 have their own separate space. The current building design does not allow for dedicated social areas for all year groups. Pupils also make use of the library and other safe spaces, and the library continues to provide an excellent service during break and lunchtimes. The SMT remain visible throughout these times, supporting pupils who may be isolated and addressing any emerging issues. Efforts continue to discourage groups from congregating in toilets.

Work Experience

RC updated members on the updated Scottish Government guidance and the shift in emphasis following COVID-19. Priority for work experience now lies with S4-S6 pupils, with more bespoke placements available for those who need them. Pupils can access online resources, Local Authority co-ordination and DYW support. Some pupils arrange their own placements, and the hospital remains a strong supporter for potential medical applicants.

Placements vary in length, from single days to weekly attendance with a reduced timetable. S6 pupils, who already undertake fewer subjects, often benefit from this flexibility. Some teachers feel that the previous universal S3 work experience model is missed. Further work is required to support pupils who may be considering leaving school and would benefit from early exposure to the world of work. CM noted that giving young people a “taste” of different types of work can be valuable. RC noted that the SMT will continue to reflect on survey feedback, with future surveys planned.

Mobile Phones and Digital Downtime

Current practice requires phones to be out of sight during class time, with permitted use at break and lunch, in line with Local Authority policy. Members discussed approaches used elsewhere, including police-funded phone pockets trialled in some English schools; however, such systems would require significant supervision and

	<p>administrative time, including ensuring pupils could collect their phones in time for school transport. SS noted that unless the Local Authority were to implement a full ban, a system of this type would be unlikely to be effective.</p> <p>RC emphasised the need for greater consistency around digital downtime, including clear expectations in corridors and between classes. He also highlighted the wider issue of ensuring pupils have appropriate devices for learning and teaching. A circular from the Local Authority on mobile phones is expected shortly.</p> <p>RS asked when information would be shared with parents. RC confirmed that the Local Authority has undertaken engagement with staff, pupils, parents and stakeholders as part of developing a revised mobile phone policy. Once the policy is finalised and approved by Shetland Islands Council, information will be published on the SIC website and circulated with parents and carers.</p>	
<p>6</p>	<p>School Improvement Plan</p> <p>Priority 1 includes the development of a digital strategy. As a starting point, all departments were asked for their views on the school's current position in relation to digital learning and teaching strategy. Responses focused mainly on access to devices, the number of machines available in school, and the potential for each pupil to have their own device. This will be a key driver for the strategy.</p> <p>RC noted that the current Scottish Government had previously committed to providing a device for every child, although this has not materialised. A pilot is currently underway in the West Mainland, where some primary pupils have been issued devices. The Local Authority is reviewing the successes and challenges of this approach, with the expectation that learning from the pilot will inform any future wider rollout.</p> <p>Once there is more clarity on the strategy, a stakeholder group will be established, including parent representation. A letter from the Parent Council advocating for a device for every child may be prepared once the Local Authority's decision on mobile phones has been confirmed. This issue is gaining momentum.</p> <p>RC informed members that there is a digital inclusion strategy in place to provide devices to families who may be disadvantaged, e.g. broadband access, economic circumstances, or the number of children in the household. In addition, some devices require upgrades, creating additional work for ICT services. These challenges would need careful consideration if the Council were to move towards a device-per-child model.</p> <p>The school continues to manage the recall of digital devices, which should only be retained while a pupil is in education. The school office remains in contact with families to arrange returns.</p> <p>If each pupil were to have their own device, practical considerations would included storage, security and charging capacity within the school.</p>	

	<p>The West Mainland pilot remains ongoing, and RC will share further information from the recent Head Teachers' meeting when available.</p>	
<p>7</p>	<p>School/Parent Council Fundraising – Activities Programme, 2026</p> <p>The Pupil Council were unable to attend the meeting. At their previous meeting, pupils had been asked to bring forward fundraising ideas. A range of suggestions were received, including fashion shows, a swap shop, car wash, bingo, and Sunday teas. The Chair and Vice Chair will now consider these options and agree which activities to prioritise.</p> <p>Further information will follow, with the aim of holding an event in Term 3.</p> <p>CM and KP confirmed they are happy to meet with the Pupil Council to support them with the chosen event.</p> <p>AR updated that the planning for Activities Committee Week has begun, with a meeting scheduled for later this term. Activities planning will run from now until May. There was a suggestion to contact Toyota regarding a funding opportunity. CM will contact Emma Manson.</p> <p>CC will look into the feasibility of running a Bonus Ball fundraiser.</p>	<p>CM</p> <p>CC</p>
<p>8</p>	<p>Information Evening for Parents/Carers</p> <p>Parent members discussed plans to hold an Information Evening for parents and carers and agreed to engage with the wider parent forum to gather interest. A communication will be issued explaining the purpose and value of the event, along with a Doodle poll/MS Form to gauge preferred dates and topics.</p> <p>The proposed title for the event is “Health & Wellbeing Event”.</p> <p>There was a discussion about the structure and timing of the sessions, including the option of incorporating a session involving stalls in the foyer area.</p> <p>Possible session topics included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAMHS / Mind Your Head • NHS Smoking & Vaping • Drugs and Alcohol • Digital Safety – including gaming, device access, recent legislative changes, and questions around enforcement. 	

	<p>It was suggested that if four or five topics were offered, attendees could choose on the night which sessions they wished to attend.</p> <p>It was proposed that the event be held around March/April/May allowing sufficient time for promotion.</p> <p>CM will draft an engagement letter/MS Form for circulation to the parent forum.</p>	CM
9	<p>Parental Comments None.</p>	
10	<p>AOCB <u>Staff Incident Reporting and Media Coverage</u></p> <p>KP referred to the recent Shetland Times reporting regarding the number of instances of abuse against school staff and asked for clarification on the data referenced. RC explained that the figures related to the whole school estate and are drawn from incidents recorded on the Health & Safety Assure system. Staff complete these forms online following any incidents such as physical assault, verbal abuse, or clashes between pupils, including where staff are affected.</p> <p>It was noted that a significant proportion of incidents arise with the Support for Learning (SfL) department, reflecting the high level of complex needs among some pupils, including non-verbal young people and those requiring personal care or multiple staff to support them. However, incidents are not confined to SfL, and some pupils in the mainstream can also become distressed or dysregulated. The school continues to ensure staff feel supported to report incidents and that all reports are followed up to reduce risk and put appropriate support in place for staff, pupils and families.</p> <p>VK acknowledged the sensitivity of the issue and highlighted that the current environment is not ideal for the increasing number of pupils with complex additional needs. This cohort has grown significantly in recent, and staffing levels do not always match the level of need. VK stressed the importance of understanding every incident fully and ensuring measures are in place to help prevent recurrence wherever possible.</p> <p>SS updated members on ongoing work around trauma-informed practice. Workforce Development has invested heavily in trauma training to help staff better understand the causes of dysregulation and respond appropriately. Ten sessions will have been delivered by Christmas, supporting staff. While progress is being made, SS noted that the challenges are complex and cannot be resolved all at once.</p> <p>Members also noted that the increase in recorded instances partly reflects the encouragement for staff at all levels to report concerns consistently.</p>	

	<p>KP expressed concern about the way the news report had framed the issue, particularly the reference to “bad behaviour” and the repeated use of imagery of AHS, which may unfairly draw focus onto the school. He suggested that the Local Authority might engage with the Shetland Times to provide clearer context. RC confirmed that the wider review of Support for Learning is currently underway withing the Local Authority.</p> <p><u>3G Pitch</u></p> <p>RC provided an updated on the new 3G pitch. The facility will offer valuable outdoor opportunities and experiences for pupils and will be available for use during PE as well as at break and lunch times. The school is exploring arrangements for staff supervision to ensure pupils can use the pitch safely during break times, ensuring the new environment is respected.</p>	
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3G Pitch

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DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Thursday 5 February 2025

APPROVED

Anderson High School Parent Council, Wednesday 12 November 2025

Head Teacher's Report

1. School highlights since the September Parent Council meeting

- Pupils from the Craft, Design and Technology Department visiting Ocean Kinetics, supported by Developing Young Workforce in September 2025.
- S1 Safe Shetlander Event, Friday 26 September 2025.
- The S2 Heart Start Workshop organised by NHS Shetland, Wednesday 01 October and Thursday 02 October 2025.
- The Anderson High School, Wool Week Café, Saturday 04 October 2025.
- Shetland Science Fair, w/c 03 November 2025.
- Remembrance Commemorations in the school, Tuesday 11 November 2025.

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

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/sh/anderson/lunchtime-activities/>

2. Forthcoming key dates/events

Date	Event
Friday 14 November 2025.	S5/6 Reports handed out to pupils.
Tuesday 18 November 2025.	S5 Parents' Evening.
Thursday 27 November 2025.	S6 Parents' Evening.
Monday 01 December 2025.	S1 and S2 Beanfeast.
Thursday 04 December 2025.	S3 and S4 Beanfeast
Friday 05 December 2025.	S4 Reports handed out to pupils
Monday 08 December 2025.	S4 Parents' Evening.
Friday 12 December 2025.	S5 and S6 Beanfeast.
Friday 19 December 2025.	S1 Monitoring posted to parents and carers.
Friday 19 December 2025.	Last day of the term.

3. School Roll, November 2025

The current breakdown is as follows for 2025/26:

S1	137
S2	178
S3	151
S4	167
S5/6	337
TOTAL	970

4. Week to week overall school attendance information

Week	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	Total
17/Aug/25 - 23/Aug/25	97.72%	93.95%	87.03%	88.38%	90.93%	91.60%	91.54%
24/Aug/25 - 30/Aug/25	93.70%	89.33%	81.45%	83.71%	91.07%	91.91%	88.52%
31/Aug/25 - 6/Sep/25	92.17%	86.59%	85.13%	85.45%	90.52%	91.39%	88.45%
7/Sep/25 - 13/Sep/25	93.26%	87.08%	82.69%	84.37%	91.34%	91.01%	88.30%
14/Sep/25 - 20/Sep/25	94.57%	90.17%	86.03%	82.57%	93.57%	92.92%	89.98%
21/Sep/25 - 27/Sep/25	95.86%	86.24%	86.75%	85.51%	91.82%	92.52%	89.59%
28/Sep/25 - 4/Oct/25	92.63%	86.97%	82.45%	82.69%	90.60%	89.48%	87.47%
5/Oct/25 - 11/Oct/25	89.64%	82.87%	79.40%	83.89%	84.93%	83.33%	84.00%
26/Oct/25 - 1/Nov/25	94.16%	84.36%	84.11%	84.43%	89.64%	86.69%	87.11%
2/Nov/25 - 8/Nov/25	95.62%	85.00%	84.90%	82.10%	88.26%	88.73%	87.16%

5. Staffing

Subject	Staffing Update
English	<p>Mrs Kerr, Principal Teacher of English, left the school at the October holidays.</p> <p>Miss Cluness is our Acting Principal Teacher of English for term two.</p> <p>We are working through the recruitment and selection process for a permanent Principal Teacher of English.</p>
Maths	Mr Dorrat retired at the end of last session.

	<p>We have re-advertised twice for a replacement and are working through the recruitment and selection process.</p>
Science	<p>Teacher of Science and Physics, Miss Morrison, moved on to a Principal Teacher post in Brae High School in term one.</p> <p>Ms Goodlad has replaced Miss Morrison.</p> <p>Meanwhile, part-time teacher of Biology and Science, Mrs Shephard, moved on from the school at the October holidays.</p> <p>Following a recent recruitment and selection process, we have a full-time preferred candidate.</p>
Modern Languages	<p>Mr Harpe is our acting Principal Teacher of Modern Languages, covering Mrs McNicol's period of leave.</p> <p>We have a preferred candidate to replace Mrs Nicolson who moved on from the school in August 2025.</p>
Music	<p>We have a new music teacher, replacing Mrs MacKenzie, who moved on from the school in August 2025, Miss McLaren.</p> <p>Miss McLaren commenced in post from Monday 06 October 2025.</p>
Business Education and Computing Studies	<p>Mr Thorsen, Principal Teacher of Computing Studies, retired in August 2025.</p> <p>Mrs Tulloch, Principal Teacher of Business Education also moved on from the school.</p> <p>We have established a single Principal Teacher between Business Education and Computing Studies. Teacher of Business Education, Mrs Lamming, has taken on this acting Principal Teacher role on a temporary basis for 2025-26.</p> <p>We have preferred candidates for two vacancies in this department.</p>

In Pupil Support, Mr Regan, Principal Teacher of Pupil Support, retires at Christmas. We are working through the recruitment and selection process for his replacement.

In Support for Learning, we are working through the recruitment and selection process for a permanent Principal Teacher of Support for Learning (Curriculum), seeking a replacement post holder for Mr McAdoo. Mrs Maxwell is continuing to cover this post on a temporary basis.

Also, in Support for Learning, we are seeking a temporary Principal Teacher of Support for Learning (Nurture), previously referred to as the Social and Emotional and Mental Health Base (SEMH), and undertaken by Mrs Harpe, prior to her becoming Depute Head Teacher for Support for Learning in May 2025.

Further updates on staffing are shared in the regular updates to parents and carers.

6. Other School News

Prelims

- S4 Prelims will commence on Monday 12 January 2026 and finish on Tuesday 20 January 2026.
- S5 and S6 Prelims will commence on Monday 02 February 2026 and finish on Thursday 12 February 2026.

Regarding S5 and S6 Prelims, during last two prelim diets, 2024 and 2025, the vast majority of S5 and S6 pupils have chosen to study at home over the two-week period on the days they have not had an exam, supported by their parents/carers. This has meant that pupils are effectively marked absent during these two weeks unless they are in school sitting prelims.

Given the number of pupils studying at home, during the S5 and S6 prelim period, we plan to re-introduce study leave, for this two-week period in 2026.

However, all departments will still be available to support young people, in S5 and S6, who wish to come into school on the days they do not have prelims.

There will be **no** study leave for S4 pupils as most S4 pupils will be in school daily, sitting their prelims, during their prelim diet.

Anderson High School

School Improvement Plan (SIP) 2025-26 - Overview of the SIP Priorities and Actions

Priority 1: Continue to develop and embed approaches to learning, teaching and assessment.

Implement the learning, teaching and assessment toolkit and establish learning and teaching networks.

Develop moderation opportunities for teaching staff and approaches to differentiation.

Review tracking and monitoring and reporting.

Develop a digital strategy.

Priority 2: Continue to evolve the school's curriculum including the ethos and life of the school.

Develop our shared ambition for the curriculum and our values.

Develop the curriculum in the Broad General Education and Senior Phase.

Reinforce and develop whole school expectations.

Improve approaches to feedback to staff.

Develop more leadership and professional learning opportunities for staff.

Priority 3: Develop approaches and practice in relation to wellbeing, equality and inclusion.

Develop our collective understanding of wellbeing.

Improve approaches to tracking pupils' health and wellbeing.

Continue to address barriers to learning including attendance.

Ensure planning and assessment documentation is in place and up-to-date for children with additional support needs and review other aspects of Support for Learning provision.

Priority 4: Raise attainment and develop opportunities for personal achievement.

Improve attainment and close the poverty related attainment gap.

Continue to review approaches to pupil presentations and withdrawals in the Senior Phase.

Develop more wider achievement and leadership opportunities for pupils and approaches to digital profiling.