

**GROVE ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL
DRAFT MINUTES OF PARENT COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT GROVE ACADEMY
ON TUESDAY 19 JANUARY 2016**

Members in Attendance

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|-------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Dawn Archibald | 5. Graham Hutton | 9. Tara Malik |
| 2. Stephen Bain | 6. Clare Jefferson | 10. Fiona McIntosh |
| 3. Lesley Elder | 7. Clare Leslie | 11. Doreen Phillips |
| 4. Cllr Ken Guild | 8. Penny Lewis, Chair | 12. Karen O'Rourke |

1. Welcome

The meeting was opened by the chair, Penny Lewis. Everyone was welcomed.

2. Apologies for Absence

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|------------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Fiona Anderson | 4. Sally Hart | 7. Julie Lynch |
| 2. Cllr Laurie Bidwell | 5. Mary Holligan | 8. Deepa Narayanan |
| 3. Caroline Burke | 6. Susan Kidd | 9. Cllr Derek Scott |

3. Minutes of Previous Parent Council Meeting

There was feedback provided on an error in the previous minutes. A correction was made to the spelling of the surname for Cllr Ken Guild in the draft version of the minutes from 10 November 2015. Thereafter the minutes were proposed by Stephen Bain and seconded by Dawn Archibald.

3.2 Matters Arising from Minutes of Last Meeting

3.2.1 Feedback was provided on the 33 period week proposal.

On 25 January 2016, the Education Committee for the Dundee City Council will take the decision on whether to adopt the revised proposal for the asymmetrical 33 period week comprising of 50 minutes each. The current proposal as supported by the Grove Academy and the Grove Parent Council is for an asymmetrical week at secondary schools comprises of: two shorter days ending at 14:50 on a Thursday and Friday, and three longer days ending at 15:40 on a Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. The start of all secondary schools across Dundee would be 08:45.

According to Mr Hutton the new arrangement of school periods would create an additional 114 periods across the school year which would be used at S1 to S3 for additional literacy or numeracy support, drama classes and inter-disciplinary learning. At the senior levels, the additional periods would be used to even out the time awarded to each subject column. Should the proposal be adopted by the Education Committee, Grove will implement the new timetable at the end of May/beginning of June 2016, in order to iron out any teething problems prior to the new session roll out at the start of the new academic year in August 2016.

Ken Guild provided background on the prevalence of the asymmetrical week across Scottish secondary schools. Currently 24 local authorities have asymmetrical weeks, 6 local authorities are presently consulting on the introduction of asymmetrical weeks, and only 2 local authorities have symmetrical school weeks. He provided an overview of the consultation process around the 33 period week proposal reiterating that the initial proposal as introduced at the start of November 2015 received both positive and negative feedback. In response to various concerns raised, a revised proposal was circulated in December 2015 for a further round of consultation.

In the meeting parents raised an ongoing concern relating to the impact of the timetable change on the issue of parking and congestion as a result of the close proximity of Grove Academy and Eastern Primary. Mr Hutton said that this concern was reflected in the proposal to have all secondary schools across Dundee start at 08:45 rather than the initial proposed start time of 08:55

(to avoid a clash with Eastern Primary' start time of 09:00). In addition to this the variable end times of 14:50 and 15:40 would not clash with Eastern Primary' end time of 15:15. The Parent Council confirmed that these start and end times would not coincide with the start and end times of Eastern Primary, and hence not further compound the congestion in the area.

4. GIRFEC and the named person

Lesley Elder provided a comprehensive overview on the Get it Right For Every Child (GIRFEC), as well as the purpose and implications of the named person at Grove Academy. GIRFEC is the national governments policy that tells agencies and practitioners (such as health care workers, social workers, teachers, police) what they need to do when they work with children, young people, carers and families. GIRFEC will come into law in August 2016, and will hold a direct bearing on how Grove Academy provides support to pupils (although all current procedures and interventions undertaken by Grove Academy are in harmony with GIRFEC). GIRFEC is informed by seven health and well-being indicators, which are identified by the acronym SHANARRI indicators (**S**afe, **H**ealth, **A**chieving, **A**ctive, **R**espected and **R**esponsible, **I**ncluded). The aim of GIRFEC is to ensure that all children and young people achieve these SHANARRI indicators. In a practical sense, for those pupils that are not on course for achieving their SHANARRI potential, the school will develop and implement a Child's Plan – which can vary in duration – to support the child to achieve the SHANARRI indicators. The plan may include a wider range of agencies and practitioners than just the school, and it will include the parents or guardians as appropriate.

The vast majority of Grove pupils are on level 0 which is the means they were receiving the standard or Universal Support, while last term 70 pupils were receiving either level 1, 2 or 3 support guided by an individual Child's Plan. It was felt that having a formal plan in place provides better support to the child or young person. Parents raised concern about the impact of the named person on parental rights. It was felt that the purpose of the GIRFEC was to ensure that no child or young person falls through the gaps, and that all the people that hold different parts of the puzzle that make up the child or young persons' life are coordinated to form a support team around the young person.

5. Dundee City Council Budget cuts

Ken Guild led the discussion providing the meeting with an update of the current status of the Dundee budget development. It is necessary for the Dundee City Council budget to balance, and in order to achieve this, there have been seven budget meetings in recent months in order to make financial savings without affecting front line services. Dundee City Council needs to reduce their expenditure by approximately £35 million over two years. The final balanced budget needs to be approved by the end of February. The main areas targeted for cuts are identify as any areas of duplication within the City Council. Dundee City Council will make no compulsory redundancies, but look at the potential savings that could be made from voluntary redundancies and early retirements in a limited number of duplicate posts. There is currently no set figure for the number of jobs that will be lost, although speculation is rife.

The discussion continued to look at the impact of budget cuts on education in the city. It was noted that the school budgets are largely protected. It is likely that single largest savings will be made by integrating the NHS and the Health Boards. Ken Guild also reiterated that large strides for the removal of duplications across the Dundee have been made in recent years. In 2009 there were 13 directors, and by 2016 there are only 4 directors showing a general streamlining of Council Departments.

It was reiterated that the number of teacher across Dundee are protected and that teacher have a national not a local agreement. However support staff and technical staff are not protected by this agreement.

6. Report by Rector, Mr Graham Hutton

The speaking notes from the Rector's Report are available as **annex 1**.

6.1 School Improvement Plan

For the past six months the school has been developing their three year (2015-2018) school improvement plan. This plan is now finalised, and Mr Hutton provided a handout which summarised the plan. Refer to **annex 2**. The plan sets out the priorities as projects for the school to achieve in the next three years as follows: a) attainment and wider achievements; b) impact on learners; c) delivering the curriculum; d) self-evaluation. Each of these four projects has a number of targets which need to be achieved. In the meeting, two targets were highlighted as pertaining directly to the Parent Council. These included under project 2: the improved impact on learners, the following targets: (4) improve parental involvement in the school and its improvement and (5) promote positive parenting skills to support young people's achievements.

The purpose of the SIP is to explicitly state the priorities of the school for children's learning at Grove. SIP is a working document to guide pupils, parents and staff. The full version of the plan is available at: <file:///C:/Users/Ally/Downloads/Grove%20Academy%20School%20Improvement%20Plan%202015-18.pdf>

6.2 Contact with parents

There are a number of meetings with parents at Grove.

- On Thursday 21 January, parents of senior pupils are invited to a briefing on subject choices and career paths with an emphasis on the development of flexible pathways. This meeting is entitled as the Senior Course Choice Evening. The meeting is open to all S3, S4 and S5 parents. The meeting has been widely publicised with a letter in a bag drop, a group text and alerts on the school website.
- Grove is currently in a cycle of Parent Contact evening as follows:
 - S3 Parent Evening on 28 Jan 2016
 - S4 Parent Evening on 17 Feb 2016
- On the 20 January, the parents of prospective P7/new S1 parents for the start of the 2016/17 intake will be coming into the school for a briefing.

Parents are reminded that the school calendar is kept up to date with key information, and this is available on the website at: <http://grove.ea.dundeeecity.sch.uk/calendar>

6.3 Recent events

The following recent events occurred at Grove:

- The Grove students that visited Japan gave a talk to the local Rotary Club.
- Pupils undertook a trip to Berlin
- The school held a very successful Christmas Fayre. More information about the Fayre is available in the Eco Club Report (refer to **annex 3**).

6.4 Other planned events

Other planned events include:

- On 26 and 27 January the 'Tree of Knowledge' is hosting an event at Grove for the S3 pupils to learn about the hospitality industry.
- The school has purchased a set of ipads to enhance learning and teaching across the curriculum. This development will be piloted by a number of departments.

6.5 Fire at Grove

Mr Hutton spoke about the fire incident at Grove Academy on 3 December 2015. The cause of the fire was due to an electrical fault, and although there was not too much physical damage the fire left a horrible smell in the building. As a result of the incident, the school has revamped their school Evacuation Policy with specific attention focused on what to do during a building evacuation during break or lunch time. The school continues to hold regular fire drills to ensure compliance and preparedness.

6.6 Staffing

For the first time in many years, Grove is proud to announce that all current vacancies are filled. The school welcomes the appointments of a Business Manager and Pupil Support Worker. However, due to long term illness, there are a number of supply teachers providing cover. Mention was made of the postponement of the Design and Technology preliminary examination paper due to such a circumstance. The school assures parents they are working to their best to try remedy the situation.

7. Friends of Grove feedback

The Christmas concert went well. Friends of Grove provided the refreshments for the event. Julie Lynch asked that we thank Karen O'Rourke and the other four parent volunteers who helped set up and clear up on the night.

Friends of Grove would like more parents to volunteers to be on our list so that we have adequate cover for existing events and a stronger team to plan new events. Our next meeting is being held on February 1st at 7pm in the Grove Academy conference room. Please join us if you are able. If you cannot make the meeting but want to join our communication list please email the chair of Friends of Grove, Julie Lynch at julieannelynch@gmail.com

8. Communications

8.1 E-mailing problems: The Grove Parent Council would like to extend our apologies to our mailing list as we have experienced technical hitches with the Go Daddy Service Provider which hosts our email services. Clare will follow up with Talletta Jamieson to see how we can improve the email communication system.

8.2 Database integrity: There are currently 589 contacts on the Grove Parent Council database. There is a regular number of contacts joining and leaving the database. As the end of the academic year looms, we would like to remind parents of school leavers that the onus is upon them to notify us should they wish to unsubscribe from the database.

9. Any other current business

9.1 Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme

A discussion was held in response to a parental query on the process for getting involved in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme (D of E). Information regarding D of E is intimated via the daily bulleting as well as on the D of E notice board. Grove Academy does not provide any curriculum time for the Duke of Edinburgh as this is an extra-mural activity which pupils need to pursue outside of the curriculum.

The DofE Award at Grove Academy is open to all pupils. Information is displayed in the school bulletin. Interested pupils are invited to a presentation about the award and the schools' expectations. Thereafter if they wish to sign up they are issued with supporting parental information. Pupils wishing to participate in the DofE scheme at Grove Academy are expected to undertake the skill, service and physical activity sections prior to the expedition. There is an expectation that pupils will use their initiative in arranging these sections themselves but there is initial and ongoing guidance. The award website is very comprehensive. Expedition opportunities will be arranged for groups as they complete these sections. The school manages all the training for expeditions. It also plans the final expedition but last year for the first time, Grove deployed Abernethy Trust to supervise and assess the final expedition. This does incur a cost for pupils but it helps manage the increase in numbers as well as relieve the pressure on school for the release of staff.

9.2 Report back on meetings attended

Penny attended the National Parent Forum meeting on 14 November in Glasgow. Angela Constance was one of the speakers. Some of the issues raised in the meeting were as follows: i) the national education focus is on narrowing the attainment GAP; ii) parents are concerned whether

pupils with special needs will be neglected in the drive to narrow the attainment gap; iii) it is ten years since the introduction of the 2006 Act on changing the nature of parental participation in education and the dissolution of school boards.

9.3 Upcoming meetings

The Parent Council is looking for volunteers to attend the some of the upcoming meetings. As follows:

- Meeting with Cllr Hunter on 26th January at 10am or at 6.30pm for all Chairs, Committee Room 1, City Square
- City Wide Parent Forum with Talletta Jamieson on 1st March at 6.30pm (Venue to be confirmed)

9.4 EcoClub report

A copy of the Sustainable Development Education Report / Wider Achievements was made available. It covers EcoClub activities from November 2015 to January 2016. If any pupils would like to get involved in the EcoClub they meet weekly on Tuesday lunchtime in ML 6. Refer to annex 3 for a copy of the report.

9.5 STPC

Grove Parent Council joined the STPC. Thanks to our treasurer, Stephen Bain, for making the arrangements for the payment of these annual fees. More information about the STPC is available at their website: <http://www.sptc.info/about-sptc/>

10. Next Meeting

The next Parent Council meeting is due to take place on Tuesday 15 March 2016 at 7pm. Suggested agenda items include the Wood Report and careers, as well as looking at traffic congestions/safety around the school. To raise a raise an agenda item, you can either email the Parent Council or attend the meeting.

List of Appendices

Annex 1 Notes from Mr Hutton's report

Annex 2 SIP Brochure (as discussed in the Rector's report)

Annex 3 Sustainable Development Education Report (EcoClub), January 2016