

**GROVE ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL
DRAFT MINUTES OF PARENT COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT GROVE ACADEMY
ON TUESDAY 24 MAY 2016**

Members in Attendance

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|------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Dawn Archibald | 6. Marcelle Harper | 11. Penny Lewis, Chair |
| 2. Stephen Bain | 7. Graham Hutton | 12. Deepa Narayanan |
| 3. Cllr Laurie Bidwell | 8. Clare Jefferson | 13. Doreen Phillips |
| 4. Andy Creamer | 9. Elaine King | 14. Karen O'Rourke |
| 5. Cllr Ken Guild | 10. Clare Leslie | 15. Jaqui Spence |

1. Welcome

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

2. Apologies for Absence

1. Julie Lynch
2. Tara Malik

3. Minutes of Previous Parent Council Meeting

The minutes from the previous Parent Council meeting were reviewed. There were no corrections made to the previous minutes. These minutes were proposed by Doreen Phillips and seconded by Clare Leslie.

4. Matters arising

4.1 Information Technology, Andy Creamer

A proposal was made to the Marie Stewart Charitable Fund for the provision of for 50 ipads and the associated training in their use to enhance learning and teaching at Grove Academy. The staff provided positive feedback on the existing consignment of 70 ipads and training. Grove is currently working with Corporate IT to open ports within the firewall to allow for the optimal use of technology. Grove has established links with the Abertay University on their cyber security course. In the discussion, a suggestion was made to look at ways to undertake evidence based research to measure the impact that the new information technology is having at Grove.

4.2 PE Kit

After the consultation with staff, pupils and parents, Grove Academy has approved the official PE kit. The kit is available for online order from and purchase via the link: <http://www.directsoccer.co.uk> The PE kit comprises of navy shorts, white shirt and navy tracksuit pants. The use of the official kit is voluntary/optional. Pupils that do not purchase the kit will continue to use the plain navy shorts and white t-shirts.

Penny provided feedback on the parental survey. Of the 28 parents that emailed a response, 20 were in favour of the PE kit, 6 were against the PE kit and 2 provided unspecified responses. The main issues in the discussion included: 1) the cost of the kit for families with multiple children in the family; 2) the unisex kit was felt to be too masculine for female pupils and there were concerns about the level of transparency of the white top.

A general discussion was held on the PE kit. It was noted that the tracksuit pants was a new addition to the kit not mentioned in the consultation. Parents are reminded that the School Clothing Grant (<https://www.dundee.gov.uk/education/clothinggrants>) is available to qualifying parents and as official uniform, the costs of the PE kit could be covered by the grant. There is more information about the grant in the School Handbook.

4.3 The 33 period week

As of Tuesday 31 May 2016, the new 33 period week timetable will be implemented at Grove Academy. We are reminded that under the new asymmetrical timetable, school ends at 15:40 on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday while on Thursday and Friday school ends at 14:50. Lunch times are also staggered: on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday 13:10-14:00; and on Thursday and Friday 12:20-13:10.

4.4 House system

The school has been operating a de factor four house system, with each deputy head responsible for a house at Grove Academy. In the new 2016/17 session, a fourth house will be introduced and it will be named after Gilles Park in Barnhill. Staff met with the specific pupils effected by this change to discuss their name preferences. From 2016/17 the four houses at Grove will be as follows: Ceres; Dawson; Gillies; and Orchar.

5. The Wood Report: Developing Scotland's Young Workforce and developments in the curriculum provision

Andy Creamer, Deputy Head, provided a detailed presentation on the current and future changes in the way Grove Academy prepare pupils for their future pathways. He explained that there are a number of pathways and routes available to pupils and Grove is adapting the curriculum options to support pupils in both traditional and non-traditional routes. Traditionally, 55% of Grove pupils enter university from Grove. However, with the changing economy, entering university is no longer a guarantee of employment. His presentation was focused on explaining how those 45% of Grove pupils are supported and focused on the different options available.

The school engage parents on the issue at S4 level with an open night, but there is extensive information on the school website: <http://grove.ea.dundee.city.sch.uk/school/documents> As the education curriculum changes, S1 to S3 pupils are also being introduced to the options to ensure they make informed choices.

Under this pathway, pupils that wish to enter the workplace soon after school leaving, are accommodated by combining school subjects and college courses with a practical apprenticeship. An example of how this timetable can be arranged is as follows: Pupils spend two days at Grove undertaking Maths, English and Practical electronics; two days at Dundee and Angus College undertaking relevant subject modules (such as electrical / plumbing or engineering course work) and one day as apprentice with an with employer placement. Evidence suggests that this improves the employability of our pupils. It was found that of the 12 pupils enrolled on this apprentice pathways, one obtained immediate full time apprenticeship after completing their studies, while the rest secured employment in 3-4 months. There are a number of apprenticeship pathways including: electrical/plumbing; engineering; health and social care; early years education; financial services; and software development. The aim of all these apprenticeships is to ensure that pupils secure links with employers and to widen their pathways from the traditional to one that increases or advances their future options. The types of thematic areas have been identified in consultation with employers to ensure that pupils are encouraged to obtain qualifications and skills in growth areas and sectors where there are skills shortages.

The college based programmes offer a wider selection of vocational qualifications than the apprentice pathways. These include college link courses, HNC courses and HN units. Many of these units will enhance pupils applications for employment and expand their skills. For instance, to gain employment in the childcare, travel and tourism and hospitality industry.

Working closely with Abertay University, pupils can also gain employability focused qualifications (NPA) in computer games design and cyber security.

Pupils are also able to achieve industry certification such as in the fitness industry with NPLQ lifeguard qualifications and fitness instructor qualifications.

The S4 employment transition aims to target those pupils at risk of disengaging with school. Under this program, the aim is to increase pupils awareness of options available and to provide recruitment training (such as on how to prepare a CV, mock job interviews) as well as a suite of qualifications and certifications (such as first aid training) and work experience placement to enhance employability.

As part of the employer engagement, Grove Academy is working on providing work placements which are suitable to the pupils interest and selected future pathway. Our main partners include Broughty Traders, Balgillo Nursery, Future Fossil, YoYo Games, Microsoft and Tokeim. Any parents that would like to explore providing work placements for pupils from Grove Academy should contact Andy Creamer.

At the S1-3 level, Grove is building career awareness through the use of events such as Taste the Industry and Apprenticeship information sessions. Under the Broader General Education (BGE), Grove hosted a 2 day workshop on the hospitality industry which demonstrated the potential progression routes.

The S2 Inter-disciplinary learning project will be accommodated in the new timetable. It will demonstrate the ties across sectors or subjects, and will show how this improves employability. On a six week rotation, students will engage in project work at the IDL level. In the S2 level, pupils will cover six projects in one year. For instance, pupils will design a computer game. During English lessons, pupils will develop the storyline charters and characterisation. In information technology, pupils will develop the computer game; in art pupils will design the characters and scenes; and in music pupil will do the sound and audio. Other IDL projects will look at the development of a fitness app; a cafe focused on the tourist market; developing a play drawing on the issues of population movements and the related ethical issues. Furthermore at the S2 level, pupils will also go to college to do a tester to get a feel for what they will experience if they go to college.

Looking to the future, Grove will look at replicating the experience of working within the gaming industry. In partnership with a school in Florida, S6 pupils will work to develop a game replicating key skills in the game industry. The first assignment will be a data mining study where Grove pupils will gather information on their US pupil counterparts.

Grove will also run focused parental information evenings such as a childcare career. This will be useful to show the different pathways available to pupils that wish to enter this industry.

In the discussion which followed, Mr Hutton outlined that this is a major focus of the work undertaken at Grove to ensure that we offer all pupils a sustained future pathway and to ensure that we future-proof our pupils and that we get it right for every child. The traditional way of going to university is not suitable for every child. Also, few pupils are able to leave school nowadays and go directly into employment.

Parents wanted assurance that there is still sustained support provided to those pupils that do wish to go to university. The school does provide S1-S3 pupils with incremental information on their future options, with more intensive information from S4 onwards.

The most recent HBI report said that Grove could improve their performance by supporting pupils in the lower attainment levels, and the presentation was explaining the manner in which Grove will undertake this recommendation.

6. Report by Rector, Graham Hutton

6.1 Staffing: Mr Hutton reported that there had been substantial cuts on the staffing formulae. In order to reach the current targets, the following staff changes have taken place:

- 4 members of staff have been redeployed to schools within Dundee
- 4 retirements
- 1 new redeployment staff received
- 1 sabbatical
- 5 maternity leaves

6.2 Achievements

- Anna Whitehall
- Hamish Rice: National School Hockey
- Football: Grove Academy had made exceptional progress in football this season.

6.3 Minibuses

Grove Academy has leased a new 16 seater mini-bus for school activities. Previously grove rented a minibus, but it was felt that a lease was a more cost effective model given the volume of transportation required.

6.4 Events

- On 16 March the Easter Concert a very successful Easter concert was held. Special thanks to Ruth and the music department for their sustained support on getting this event off the ground.
- Grove pupils were involved in two city-wide music concerts at the Caird Hall.
- Mr Zigi Shipper, Holocaust Survivor delivered a very moving address on his experiences in the Second World War on 22 March.
- Jill Pringen, from the Insight Initiative, came to Grove to provide insight into the Grove Exam results.
- Susan Duff will conduct a extended review of Grove in September 2016 under the How Good is Our School assessment.
- S6 Leaver event: The S6 Leavers event was a very successful and collaborative day between the pupils and staff at Grove. It started with a pancake breakfast, followed y a ceremony where each pupil was given a personal award as well as a Leavers Mug and Pen. This was followed by BBQ provided by Tayside Contract. There after the school leavers held a water balloon fight in the quad. The day was well attended and there was positive coverage in the press.
- Grove continues to build its linkages with the Royal High (Edinburgh) and Madras College (St Andrews). The exchanges between faculties continue on a regular and sustained basis.

6.5 Upcoming events

- S1 reports are being printed for distribution on Thursday
- Friends of Grove will hold their Doors Open Day on 17 September
- On Wednesday 8 June, the P7 parents of the new S1 pupils will have an orientation evening.
- On 14 June the Underwood Prize will be awarded on performing arts
- 28 June, in the Games Hall, the S1-S5 Celebrating Achievements award will be undertaken

7. Friends of Grove

Friends of Grove provided the following update on their activities.

7.1 Fundraising folders have been approved at SMT and any parent business wishing to advertise on the folders to be distributed next year can email Mark Doherty or Julie Lynch and they will pass their details on to the company (Funding Solutions for Education).

7.2 Doors Open day is still in the planning stages for September 2016. Volunteers welcome to help us celebrate the school and build our archive material. Date of Open Doors now fixed for Saturday 17th September 10.30am to 2.30pm. Contact Mark Doherty or Julie Lynch if you can help.

7.3 The next Friends of Grove Academy meeting will take place on Monday August 22nd 2016 at 7pm.

8. AOCB

8.1 Outside benches: There is discussion about the possibility of parents providing school benches to enhance the outside spaces and create more on campus social spaces at Grove Academy. This issue will be carried over to the next meeting.

8.2 Marcella Harper was introduced as the new pupils support worker at Grove. Her focus area is on support to pupils pursuing the Duke of Edinburgh award. Information on the DoE is available via the FB page, the notice boards and bulletins.

9. Next Meeting

The next meeting is due to take place in the second week of September 2016. The dates for the 2016/17 session still to be confirmed.

List of Appendices

Annex 1 Sustainable Development Education Report (EcoClub), May 2016

Annex 2 Hand-out, Andy Creamer