

Grove Parent Council meeting minutes

Grove Academy Staffroom, 7:00pm, Tuesday 30 January 2018

Attendance

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|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Dawn Archibald, Chair | 7. Graham Hutton | 13. Duncan McIntosh |
| 2. Stephen Bain | 8. Clare Jefferson, Clerk | 14. Fiona McLaughlin |
| 3. Bruce Burnett | 9. Ewen Jenkin | 15. Deepa Narayanan |
| 4. Jim Cochrane | 10. Clare Leslie | 16. Gopal Sapkota |
| 5. Andy Creamer | 11. Penny Lewis | 17. Cllr Philip Scott |
| 6. Edward Hall | 12. Julie Lynch | 18. Liam Walker |

Item 1 Welcome

Dawn Archibald, the chair of the Grove Parent Council, welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were a number of new attendees. Dawn invited all attendees to introduce themselves.

Item 2 Apologies

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| 1. Carole Jenkins | 3. Doreen Phillips | 5. Fiona Wood |
| 2. Tara Malik | 4. Cllr Derek Scott | |

Item 3 Approval of the previous minutes

Dawn guided the meeting through the minutes from the previous meeting (27 Nov 2017). There was one change made to the previous meetings minutes. Under item 6.4 Staffing, the name spelling of Carla Barbour was corrected. The minutes were adopted pending this change (proposed: Julie Lynch; seconded: Fiona McLaughlin).

Item 4 Matters arising from previous minutes

The following issues as they arose from the previous minutes:

- 4.1 Date of Parent Council meeting scheduled for 15 May:** Dawn noted that she had an engagement on this date and the date may need to change.
- 4.2 Grove App:** The Grove App needs to be updated to the latest version of the software in order to work properly. Graham will follow-up to see if it is possible to send out a message via the App and Grove website to inform users.
- 4.3 Friends of Grove:** Julie explained the most recent Friends of Grove meeting was postponed as it clashed with the Senior Course Choice evening.
- 4.4 Launch of the *My Homework App*:** The *Homework App* will be launched after the mid-term break. Parents/carers will receive the pin code via post after 15 Feb. This will allow up to five users to set up the App. Pupils will be given an instruction on the App during the assembly period prior to the mid-term break.

Item 5 Correspondence/meetings attended

5.1 Correspondence

a. **Scottish Parent Teacher Council:** Clare Jefferson emailed the SPTC to update their records to reflect that she was the nominated representative to receive communication on behalf of the Grove Parent Council. The SPTC acknowledged receipt of this email.

5.2 Meetings attended

a. **Anti-bullying Guidance Review:** This meeting was attended by Doreen Phillips on 18 Jan 2018. At the meeting participants were asked to give their thoughts on what constituted bullying behaviour and what restorative practices there could be in a case study situation. The city guidelines on bullying are being redone. Individual schools anti-bullying policies will need to be aligned to the new guidance and parent councils will be given the chance to give their views on both the council guidance and schools.

5.3 Upcoming meetings

There are two upcoming meetings, namely: City Wide Meeting (27 Mar 2018 7pm) and the meeting with Paul Clancy (26 Apr 2018 7pm). In the last meeting, Doreen has volunteered to try attending these meetings. Penny Lewis also indicated that she may be able to attend this March meeting.

Item 6 PE provision at Dawson Park, in particular the condition of the all-weather pitches

Mr Bruce Burnett, PE Department, was invited to attend the Parent Council meeting. Parents were concerned about the condition of the all-weather pitch at Dawson Park. Mr Burnett shared our concerns and provided an overview on the process to replace the pitch. Mr Burnet has attended three meetings with Dundee City Council to discuss this issue. However there has been no resolution. The current all-weather pitch at Dawson parks is 11 years old and needs to be replaced. Mr Burnet outlined some of the considerations for the new pitch and outlined various proposals. Ideally he feels a rubber-crumb pitch which is suitable for both hockey and football would be appropriate. New facilities need to be in place by August 2018.

The current condition of the pitch at Dawson Park has deteriorated to such an extent that it is not safe to use as an all-weather pitch. Due to issues of health and safety considerations, Grove Academy cannot allow pupils to use the pitch for the current time. It was noted that Grove Academy does not have any other outdoor facilities besides Dawson Park. These facilities at Dawson Park are in effect an outdoor classroom. Failure to provide a safe outdoor area will put further strain on indoor facilities and have a serious impact on the learning and teaching experience of the young people of Grove Academy in PE.

The Grove Parent Council will demonstrate its support to the PE Department via a letter to Dundee City Council outlying our concern. Dawn Archibald to follow-up. Councillor Scott also volunteered to write a letter of support.

A further issue arose during the discussion. This concerned the drive to upgrade the existing changing facilities at Dawson Park. There is currently an online voting system across the city whereby the public can show support to Grove Academy by voting to raise this as a priority. The Parent Council could assist in publicising this initiative. Both Grove Academy and Parent Council could assist further through social media, asking pupils, parents, former pupils (perhaps high profile) and the local community to vote.

Item 7 Arrangements for subject choice for 5th and 6th year

Parents sought clarification on the new subject choice form for fifth and sixth year. Parents were concerned about the range of subject choices and the level of access to some subject combinations. An informative discussion took place.

As background to the issue, it is recognised that pupils at a senior level obtain some of their tuition within the Grove Academy building, and some at other venues within Dundee local

authority, or in some cases within Angus. Broadly there are three tuition venues (outside of the Grove building) as follows:

- 1) **College:** This venue is for course offered at Dundee and Angus College. These are timetable in S5/S6 as well as S4 on Monday and Wednesday afternoons.
- 2) **City-wide Campus:** This venue is for course offered by Dundee City, but provided at venues such as Dundee and Abertay Universities. Some schools are also the venue, for example Grove has been the venue for Advanced Higher Geography on the city wide campus. These are mainly for subjects where there is insufficient uptake or available staffing at Grove. Usually this applies to pupils taking certain Advanced Higher subjects. These are timetable in S5/S6 on Tuesday and Thursday afternoon. Some subjects at Higher or National 5 maybe offered on this model.
- 3) **At other Secondary Schools** where there is a **Consortia Agreement:** Under this arrangement, some pupils will travel for lessons to other high schools in Dundee and Angus, while Grove will received pupils from schools within Dundee or Angus. In this manner, the provision of subjects that do not have sufficient pupils for viable class will be achieved. For instance, last year two pupils doing Advanced Highers in Design and Manufacture travelled to Monifieth High School for these lessons.

The provision for lessons at college and campus gives rise to new timetabling challenges as these delivery times are inflexible. For that reason, a new subject form was developed to reflect this constraint. However, Grove remains committed to providing pupils with the broad range of choice available. Unlike previous years, where pupils were allowed free choice of subjects, this is curtailed by the increasing provisions organised on a city-wide basis at college or campus. It is no longer feasible or sustainable to allow free choice as timetabling needs to take into consideration other players (such as college, campus). This option has been considered in the last few years but the move has been necessitated by fiscal constraints and changes in the school staffing compliment that mean that some subjects or levels can only be offered via a campus approach.

In the discussion, Grove reiterated that these new form does offer some flexibility. Pupils in consultation with their guidance teachers are able to specify subject choices out with the recommended column combinations. Parents are provided with a block for *Additional Comments* at the back of the form to specify any requests that are not on offer. Like with previous years, Grove will try its best to timetable pupils with their first choices where possible and to consider solutions for unauthorised subject combinations.

Grove Academy is facing staffing challenges as the formula for staffing has been revised down and there is a marginally smaller pupil roll. To this end, Grove can only offer viable classes. The college and campus offers mechanisms to allow pupils to take a broad range of subjects.

Some of the issues raised in the discussion by parent included the following:

- There is a difficulty when your child's main subject choice sit within choice 2. At first glance it seems that they are unable to take their chosen subject choice. Grove explained that once they have feedback from all the parents, they will see how these pupils' subject choices can best be accommodated.
- Concern was raised about how the Language Baccalaureate could be achieved. For this requirement, a pupil needs to do two advanced higher. The current system did not allow for this. However, Grove explained that they would try where possible to accommodate

the needs of all pupils in the subject selection. It was also outlined that given staffing in Modern Languages it would not be possible to deliver one of the Advanced Highers out with a campus column.

- A parent wanted to know if the provision of subjects on Campus was potentially discouraging pupils from learning or selecting this subject. Have the local authority considered the impact of campus on pupils' learning? A small debate ensued with some parents indicating that this could better prepare pupils for their tertiary education and prepare them for their future. A parent recommended that perhaps having senior pupils' feedback their experiences to junior pupils could be useful in allaying fears.
- Some parents felt that the new system gave the impression that Grove Academy is promoting certain learning pathways over traditional courses. Grove felt that there are a number of new choices on offer and this reflects the forward-thinking nature of Grove Academy. At the end of the day, parents need to realise that there are some subject choices which will not be possible, it was also pointed out that there are a number of subject choices that were not possible under the previous free choice system. While in some cases when certain subject choices are made, there is fluidity between the columns and once all the forms are submitted, these selections will be made taking into account increasing synchronisation across all the schools in the local authority before pupils timetables are finalised. This had been put in place to maximise the options open to pupils.

Item 8 Anti-bullying guidance and policies

Due to time constraints, this discussion will be held over to the next parent council meeting.

Item 9 Rector's Report, Graham Hutton

9.1 Staffing

Two new staff members have joined Grove Academy. From 20 February, there will be a full staff complement, except for a vacancy cover for maternity leave in business studies. The situation with supply teacher is still dire. There is a vacancy in the support staff.

9.2 Achievements

- Berlin trip: Graham accompanied 46 pupils to Berlin. Although it was cold, everyone had a ball and the trip was very worthwhile.
- Music Concert: The concert on 13 December was fabulous. Over 150 pupils performed. It was a very well arranged event.
- S4 attended First Minister's Questions in Edinburgh. This was a great opportunity for pupils.
- An on-going event is the remembrance of the death of former pupils during WW1.
- Grove continues to collect stamps for Mercy Ships
- Grove collected a great number of Hampers for the Dundee Foodbank
- On-going work to raise funds for Maggie's (Dundee)
- A school newsletter was produced in December 2017. Available to download at: <http://grove.ea.dundee.city.sch.uk/our-school/documents/newsletters/christmas-2017>

9.3 Trips

- Higher Geography Field trip
- S3 language and Business event at Dundee University

9.4 Events

- National 5 prelims finished, Higher prelims on currently
- Careers Convention at Morgan Academy was well attended by Grove pupils/parents.
- Senior course choice evening
- S2 and S3 parent contact evenings were well attended by parents.
- Walk-thru of the Maths and Biology Department.
- Holocaust Memorial Day Assembly was led by two pupils who had visited Auschwitz. It was very well presented.
- Yoga lessons in S5/S6 Electives.
- Grove pupil Agnijo Banerjee publishes *Weird Maths: at the Edge of Infinity and Beyond*, written in conjunction with maths professor David Darling.
- Grove U14 who beat Ellon Academy 4-2 on penalties, thus reaching the quarter finals of the Scottish Cup

9.5 Future Events

- Launch of the *My Homework App*
- AH Trip to Hadron Collider in Cern, Switzerland
- Geo Bus
- Visitors (20 people) from all over Scotland to hear about our Developing Scotland's Young Workforce programmes
- Study support to pupils is available across the school after school
- Easter School (focused on a select number of subjects)

Item 10 Any other current business

10.1 Report on the *Cost of the School Day*. Graham asked if we could add this to the agenda for the next meeting. The report raises idea on how to poverty proof the school. Grove Academy needs to look at how to develop a School Hardship Fund.

10.2 A parent raised the issue of the heightened anxiety amongst pupils due to the lateness in issuing the prelim timetable. Grove says there have been a few changes to the timetable which has made the process of finalising it very complex.

10.3 A parent raised the issues of the extensive use of plastic bottles by Tayside contracts. He questioned whether more could be done minimise the use of plastics. Graham said that there are 10 water fountains in Grove Academy which pupils can use to refill water bottles. This could possibly be an issue which the Eco Club may wish to pursue further. Graham will raise this issue with Tayside Contracts.

Item 11 Dates of next meeting

The date of the next meeting is Tuesday 13 March. Thereafter the tentative date for the next meeting is Tuesday 15 May.