

**CULTS PRIMARY SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL
Communication Strategy, Rev. 1**

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1. Purpose & Scope

The purpose of this communication strategy is to:

- Define the procedure which the Parent Council will follow to ensure that all communications are accurate, appropriate, representative of the Parent Council and aligned with its objectives.
- Define the communication plan for the Parent Council – i.e. define the type and timing of any communications which the PC will use to reach the Parent Forum.

This Communication Strategy is subsidiary to the Parent Council Constitution and will be presented to the PC for acceptance and any subsequent revision must be similarly presented.

2. Parent Council Objectives

As defined in the Parent Council Constitution, the objectives of the Parent Council are to:

- a) Support the school in its work with pupils,
- b) Represent the views of parents,
- c) Report to the Parent Forum (P.F.)
- d) Promote contact between parents / staff / children / community / Aberdeen City Council,
- e) Encourage the raising of standards of education in the school.

3. Communication Principles

The strategy is founded on the principles of open, honest and respectful communication between P.C. members, parents, staff, ACC and children. This will ensure that the PC will be accessible and approachable to all parents, able to represent the issues of families and work positively and effectively in partnership to improve standards.

The Parent Council exists to work together with everyone involved in school life – parents, learners, teachers, school staff and the wider community – to support the school, and it is therefore inappropriate to discuss or communicate in any way about individuals.

4. Communication Procedure

4.1 Within the Parent Council

- Normal meeting etiquette will be applied in all Parent Council meetings – i.e. one person speaking at a time, meetings begin on time and adhere to the published agenda.
- Agendas for upcoming parent council meetings will be issued by the Chair in advance to all Parent Council members by email.
- Where voting is required on any issue, the Chair will implement this in accordance with the Parent Council Constitution.
- Minutes of meeting will be recorded by the Parent Council Secretary and distributed according to the notes below.
- Subgroups, confirm action plan or next steps within the P.C. meetings if possible in order to ensure clarity and support. At the end of each subgroup item, the Chair will confirm with the subgroup leader what the next actions are for that group, to ensure clarity.
- The level of autonomy granted to each sub-group or to individuals in PC meetings regarding decision-making outside the meeting will be agreed on a case-by-case basis. For example the P.C. may decide that a sub-group has the authority to decide certain matters to allow progress prior to the next meeting (subject to compliance with this communication strategy).
- All Parent Council members, the Head-teacher and other school staff (if required) will be granted access to the Parent Council shared electronic folder system, which uses Dropbox and which is administered by the Chair.

4.2 With Parents (the Parent Forum, PF)

- **To avoid errors and to ensure that any communication can be considered to be representative of the Parent Council, prior to issue all messages must be checked by someone independent of the author. The checker will be the PC Chair or, in their absence, the PC Vice Chair. Where there is disagreement between the Chair/ Vice-Chair or any other Parent Council member on the appropriateness of a communication to be distributed, this will be brought to the next scheduled PC meeting and if necessary subject to a vote.**
- The Headteacher will be invited to review any communications prior to distribution, to help support collaborative working. Certain messages may be distributed without Headteacher review, at the discretion of the PC Chair – for example, general information from Aberdeen City Council, the Aberdeen City Parent Council Forum, National Parent Forum, notice of local development plan meetings etc.
- Generally, the standard form of communication with the Parent Forum will either be by Groupcall text/ email or by email via the class-reps.
- For people without email access, communications will be sent in paper via the “eldest/ only” school pupil.
- The PC Secretary will be responsible for sending out any messages to the Parent Forum, following checking/ approval by the Chair or Vice-Chair.
- Minutes of meetings will be issued as soon as possible after each meeting in an email containing a headline summary of the key points. Minutes will be made available via the school website.
- Minutes and the headline summaries will be prepared by the PC Secretary. In each PC meeting, the minutes from the previous meeting will be formally reviewed and accepted. To improve speed of communication, the minutes may be distributed to the Parent Forum prior to their formal acceptance and so still in a draft format, but any such communication must still have been checked and approved by the Chair or Vice Chair prior to distribution. The Headteacher will be invited to review the minutes prior to distribution.
- The PC will send messages out to the PF on specific topics (e.g. Local Development Plan, School Estates Review). Any such communication must comply with the checking/ approval requirement described above.
- It is acknowledged as good practice to send a paper-distribution message out to all parents via eldest/only pupils at least once a year, probably in August/ September. This will help to enrol new parents and any parent who does not have email/ web access (approx. 15 families).

4.3 With School Staff

- The Headteacher is invited to attend all Parent Council meetings and other members of the staff are also welcome to participate. The Headteacher has a standing agenda item to provide a "Headteacher Report" in each meeting.
- The Headteacher is invited to review and comment on the agenda in advance of the regular meetings and is invited to review the minutes prior to their distribution to the Parent Forum.
- The Headteacher is advised of documents or communication to be sent from the PC and invited to view this if necessary prior to publication in order to ensure collaborate working.
- The PC may arrange for all staff to receive the same Groupcall messages as parents to enable them to access meeting agendas, minutes of meeting and any other PC communications.

4.4 Ad-hoc Communication

- Any member of the PC can prepare a message for distribution where they believe there is value in notifying the PF. However, any such message must be reviewed by either the Chair or Vice-Chair and issued via the Secretary.
- Chair and / or Vice Chair to check the inbox of the PC email address regularly in order to keep updated of information and messages and respond to these at the next planned PC meeting or as appropriate if the issue requires a more timely response.

4.5 RACI Chart

The following chart summarises the roles and responsibilities described in this document:

	Responsible	Accountable	Consulted	Informed	Notes
Prepare message	Any PC member	Chair	Others	Chair Vice-Chair Secretary	
Record minutes	Secretary	Chair			
Approve message/ minutes for distribution	Chair (Delegate: Vice Chair)	Chair	Headteacher	Chair Vice-Chair Secretary	
Issue message (via Groupcall email or Groupcall text/ email and school website)	Secretary	Chair		Chair Vice-Chair	
Prepare PC Agenda	Chair	Chair	PC Members Headteacher		

Key:

- **Responsible** – the person who is charged with directly carrying out the task
- **Accountable** – the person with overall responsibility for the task (but has delegated to the Responsible person)
- **Consulted** – a person who is given right of review prior to an activity taking place or provides input to a decision.
- **Informed** – a person who needs to be advised after an activity is completed or decision taken

5. Communication Plan

This section (Communication Plan) describes the types of communication that the Parent Council will use and also the approximate timetable for this communication. The PC will communicate with the Parent Forum in the following ways:

- Publication of agendas and minutes for each PC meeting, via the school website
- Ad-hoc notices by Groupcall, as required
- Noticeboard at school – general information on the role of the PC and notification of its current members
- Parent Council Newsletter distributed via eldest/only, twice per year (November and May/ June)
- MBC News article – four times per year:
 - Early Jan (for Feb issue)
 - 1 April (for April)
 - 1 July (for Aug)
 - 1 Oct (for Nov)
- Website – once the new school website has been launched, target 3Q13
- Attendance at parents evenings in May and November, nursery and P1 induction evenings (June?), and PTA Summer Fair (8 June)
- Attendance at Open Days will be considered