

Parents as Partners in South Lanarkshire

Strathaven Academy

Parent Council Constitution



Accepted by the Parent Council on 7 June 2022

1. Objectives of the Parent Council

1.1 The objectives of the Parent Council (PC) are:

- To work in partnership with the school to create a welcoming environment which is inclusive for all parents/carers.
- To work in partnership with the school to decide on the key priorities to take forward.
- To promote partnership between the school, its pupils, and all parents/carers.
- To develop and engage in activities which support the education and welfare of all pupils.
- To identify and represent the views of parents/carers on the education provided by the school and other matters affecting the education and welfare of pupils.
- To engage with the wider community and to promote the school's objectives.
- To capture the unique and varied skills, interests, knowledge, and experience that parents/carers can offer.
- To assist the Headteacher or Deputy, and his/her staff in promoting the ethos of the school.

1.2 Representation – Suggestions or Ideas

Parent/carer members of the parent forum are encouraged to offer positive suggestions or ideas to the PC and may choose to do this through discussion with a member of the PC. Alternatively, suggestions can be directed to the PC chair or secretary via the school office.

1.3 Representation – Complaints or Concerns, General

Parent/carer members of the parent forum are encouraged to discuss any complaints or concerns with the Headteacher or other members of staff. Parents/carers may discuss general complaints or concerns with PC members, and should the PC member feel the matter requires discussion at a PC meeting, the matter should be intimated to the Headteacher or Deputy, and Chair in advance of a meeting.

1.4 Representation – Complaints or Concerns, Individual

The Parent Council is not to be used by parents/carers who have a complaint or concern regarding their individual child.

Should a parent/carer have a complaint or concern regarding their child, the topic should be raised with the child's teacher and/or the Headteacher or Deputy, in the first instance. If a parent/carer is dissatisfied with the response of the Headteacher or Deputy, the matter should be brought to the attention of South Lanarkshire Council Education Resources.

2. Membership of the Parent Council

- 2.1 The Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher will be a member of the Parent Council. In addition, the school will normally appoint a DHT to attend. These two members of staff do not hold voting rights.
- 2.2 All members of the Parent Forum, i.e., all parents/carers of pupils attending the school, are eligible to serve as members of the Parent Council. Only in exceptional circumstances will more than one parent/carer of a pupil be permitted to serve on the PC.
- 2.3 The school “year” runs from August to June. Membership of the Parent Council for the coming year will be decided at an Annual General Meeting (AGM) which will normally be held each September.
- 2.4 There will be a minimum of five parents/carers elected to serve on the Parent Council. The maximum number will be twenty. Of the maximum twenty parent/carer members, the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Communications Lead count as three members, leaving a maximum of seventeen other parent/carer members.
- 2.5 Each parent/carer member of the PC is elected for a period of four years. Five parent/carer members should retire each year by rotation.

For example, where a parent/carer member is elected to an Office Bearer post, this will not affect the term for which they were originally elected as a parent/carer member, e.g., one year as a parent/carer member followed by one year as an office bearer would leave two further years as a parent/carer member.

If a parent/carer member leaves before completing their four-year term, a vacancy for the remaining term can be offered if all four-year terms have been allocated.

- 2.6 Retiring parent/carer members can offer themselves for re-election at the AGM.
- 2.7 In the event that the number of volunteers exceeds the number of vacant places available, as set out in the constitution, members will be selected by nomination and voting; in this scenario, the names of any unelected volunteers will be noted. These parents/carers may be asked to participate in subsequently formed sub-groups as a means to encourage full parental involvement.
- 2.8 Where there are more volunteers than vacancies, only existing parent/carer members from the previous school-year group will take part in the election process and each will have one vote.
- 2.9 Should a parent/carer wish to join the PC at a time other than the AGM then, if there is a vacancy, the parent/carer will be invited to join. If there is not a vacancy, the parent/carer will be informed, and their name held until a vacancy arises or the time of the AGM.

2. Membership of the Parent Council Cont.

- 2.10 The Parent Council may co-opt up to four individuals, who are not members of the Parent Forum, to assist it with carrying out its functions. These may include at least one staff member other than the two noted in 2.1 above. Co-opted members do not hold voting rights; they are co-opted for their experience/expertise, and this should be respected during the discussion of all topics.
- 2.11 The Parent Council will extend an invitation to local councillors to attend meetings, but they will not have voting rights.
- 2.12 The names of PC members along with those of Office Bearers will be held in the school office, posted on the school website, and sent to the local education authority.
- 2.13 Notwithstanding 2.13 below, the posts of chair, vice-chair, secretary, and communications lead, will be determined by election at the first PC meeting after each AGM. The position of chair will normally be filled by a PC member with at least one years' PC experience. All members of the PC will have one vote for each election.
- 2.14 Should the term of a PC member who is an elected office bearer, i.e., chair, vice-chair, secretary, or communications lead, terminate by the time of the AGM, the PC should vote on re-election to the PC at the final meeting of the school year, normally held in June. If an office bearer wishes to leave the PC, parent/carer members should normally elect a replacement at the June meeting.

3. Roles of Office Bearers

3.1 Chair

The role of the Chair is to guide the Parent Council to achieve its aims, and more specifically to:

- Liaise with the Secretary and Headteacher or Deputy on the agenda and meeting arrangements,
- Welcome members and introduce guests,
- Ensure fair discussion and that everyone has a chance to have their say,
- Stop anyone taking over or dominating discussions,
- Get through the agenda on time,
- Sum up issues, points, and decisions.

3.2 Vice Chair

The role of the Vice Chair is to directly assist the Chair and to substitute for the Chair as necessary.

3. Roles of Office Bearers Cont.

3.3 Secretary

The role of the Secretary is to:

- ensure communications between the PC and the PTA
- ensure the business and decisions of the PC are effectively communicated to the Parent Forum
- prepare and circulate minutes of meetings, see Section 8
- maintain the list of PC Membership Terms
- to liaise with the Communications Sub-group.

3.4 Communications Sub-Group

The role of the Communications Sub-Group is to assist the Secretary with communications between the PC, the parent forum and where necessary, the wider community. More specifically the sub-group should:

- ensure communications in all forms between the PC, parent forum and wider community is up to date and accurate
- ensure all communications are cleared with the school prior to release
- report on communications to the PC at each meeting

4. Parent Forum AGM

4.1 The Parent Forum AGM will be called by the Headteacher in the month of September each year. All parent/carers with children attending the school are invited.

4.2 The Parent Forum AGM will be chaired by the Head Teacher accompanied by the Chair of the Parent Council.

4.3 The Headteacher and Chair of the PC will deliver a brief report on the business of the PC over the previous year and set out the objectives of the PC for the coming school year.

4.4 The PC Chair will announce the number of vacancies on the PC and seek nominations to join the PC from the floor. If the number of nominees does not exceed the number of vacancies, new members will be invited to join the PC immediately. If the number of nominees exceeds the number of vacancies, the names will be taken to the first meeting of the PC for the purposes of election.

5 First Parent Council Meeting of the School Year

- 5.1 Where there have been more nominations than vacancies for the PC, the Chair will calculate how many vacancies and associated terms are available for new PC members (see Section 2 above). These vacancies will be filled by nomination and election.
- 5.2 Should there be any vacancies for office bearer or sub-group positions, the chair shall conduct elections to fill these posts.

6. Parent Council Meetings

- 6.1 The Parent Council will normally meet every six weeks during the school year but no less than once in every school term.
- 6.2 Any meeting of the Parent Council shall be quorate when there are at least three parents/carers, including at least one office bearer, in attendance.
- 6.3 Business will normally be conducted through discussion and agreement. Should there be an issue raised where a consensus cannot be reached, the Chair will conduct a vote. Those eligible will have one vote each and in the event of a tie, the Chair will have the casting vote.
- 6.4 Any new business will, where possible, be brought to the attention of the Chair and Headteacher or Deputy, prior to inclusion on the agenda.
- 6.5 Members of the Parent Forum may be invited to attend a meeting of the Parent Council for a specific purpose by prior agreement.
- 6.6 Any sub-groups created should meet as often as required and have a PC member as liaison. The liaison should provide feedback to scheduled Parents Council meetings.
- 6.7 Any two members of the Parent Council can request that an additional meeting be held, and all members of the Parent Council will be given at least two weeks' notice of date, time, and place of the meeting.

7. Removal of Office Bearers or Members

- 7.1 Any Office Bearer who acts against the values of the constitution can have a vote of no confidence brought against them. This can be called for at the request of at least three members of the PC. The Office Bearer will be removed from office should there be a two thirds majority vote. Their removal from office does not remove them from the PC.

7. Removal of Office Bearers or Members Cont.

- 7.2 If a Parent Council member acts in a way that is considered by other members to undermine the objectives and smooth running of the Parent Council, their membership of the Parent Council will be terminated if a two thirds majority of PC members agree. Termination of membership would be confirmed in writing by the chair or a designated representative, to the member.
- 7.3 The Parent Council reserves the right to remove an individual's membership of the group should their attendance fall below an expected standard e.g., missing three consecutive meetings or failing to attend more than twice in a given school year.

8. Minutes of Meetings

- 8.1 Minutes shall be taken by the elected Secretary or an Administration representative from the school. The minutes should be proof-read by the Chair and Headteacher or Deputy, prior to circulation by the secretary and communications sub-group.
- 8.2 Copies of the minutes will be available to all parents/carers with children attending Strathaven Academy and to all teachers/staff at the school via posting on the school website. In addition, copies will be circulated to all co-opted members, local councillors and to the Council Education Authority. This will be completed within a reasonable time after the minutes have been agreed by the Chair and Headteacher or Deputy.

9. Funds

- 9.1 The Parent Council will not normally require funds to carry out its business.
- 9.2 Where a project or function is identified as coming within the remit of the PC and which requires the management of funds, a Treasurer will be elected from the PC group. Such funds may come from external grants, personal donations, short-term loans, or an agreement with the PTA.
- 9.3 The Treasurer will manage a bank or building society account in the name of the Parent Council for all PC funds. Withdrawals will require the signature of the Treasurer and one other Parent Council member. There must be a minimum of two signatories assigned to this account. The names of the signatories will be circulated in the same way as the other Office Bearers and PC members.

9. Funds Cont.

- 9.4 The Treasurer will keep an accurate record of all income and expenditure and will provide a summary of this for each Parent Council meeting along with a full account on an annual basis at the end of each school year. The Parent Council's accounts will be audited, if required, by an auditor appointed by the Parent Council.
- 9.5 The Parent Council shall be responsible for ensuring that all monies are used in accordance with the objectives of the Parent Council.
- 9.6 Should the Parent Council cease to exist, any remaining funds will be passed to the PTA to be used for the benefit of the school, where this continues. In the unlikely event of school closure, the funds can be split between other local schools.

10. Changes to the Constitution

- 10.1 The Parent Council may change its constitution at a meeting called for the purpose. Members of the Parent Forum will be sent a copy of any proposed amendment and given reasonable time to respond to the proposal.
- 10.2 A copy of this constitution will be held in the school office, posted on the school website, and sent to the local education authority.

**The Parent Council is accountable to the Parent Forum of
Strathaven Academy**