



Fern Hill Primary School

Draft Parent Council – Terms of Reference

Approved on

24th Jan 2022

Next Review

Sept 2022

Approved by

Fern Hill Local Academy Committee

Lead Person

Deputy Head Teacher

Background

The Parent Council is a body of parents¹ who represent the parents of children in each class. It provides a forum for parents to put forward their views to the Senior Leadership Team (“SLT”) and the Governing Body (“GB”) of the school.

Objectives

The Parent Council works in partnership with the school to:

- Create a welcoming school which is inclusive for all parents by promoting partnership between the school, its pupils and its parents
- Develop and engage in activities which support the education and welfare of the pupils
- Identify and represent the views of parents on matters affecting the education and welfare of the pupils

Scope

The Governing Body remains the decision making body and provides the strategic leadership of the school. The Parent Council will provide a forum for consultation and advice on matters such as (but not limited to):

- Procedures which affect the day-to-day operation of the school.
- Systems of communication between the school and parents on matters concerning the operation of the school.
- Matters designed to foster greater parental participation and engagement in the education of pupils by all parents.

Some topics cannot be addressed by the Parent Council & should be referred directly by individual parents to the class teacher in the first instance or a member of the school leadership team (Year Group Leaders/Phase Leaders/Assistant Heads/Deputy Head/Head Teacher). These includes matters such as, but not restricted to:

- School policies and procedures relating to general curriculum issues & details
- Issues relating to individual children or staff
- Individual complaints or grievances

How is this achieved?

The Parent Council will be a forum for gathering, discussing & conveying parental views to the school. It will be involved in working with the school to address matters identified from the annual Parent Survey and making recommendations to the Senior Leadership Team & Governing Body regarding possible actions that could be taken in relation to these. Accordingly the work of the Parent Council will complement the Senior Leadership Team & the Governing Body.

The Parent Council will meet half-termly. Meetings will be minuted and made available to all parents, the Senior Leadership Team & the Governing Body. Headline information from the PC meetings will also be presented to the Fern Hill Local Academy Committee by the associated PC governor.

Meetings will be conducted in a positive spirit, be constructive and solution focused. The impact of its work and these Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually by the Parent Council at the end of each academic year, initiated by the Chair.

Membership

Membership of the Parent Council is open to all parents and carers who currently have a child at Fern Hill Primary School. Membership will consist of:

- Ideally one volunteer parent from each class (the “Class Member”) and at least one from each year group
- The Head Teacher
- The Deputy Head Teacher
- One member of the Fern Hill Local Academy Committee – to be elected by that Committee on an annual basis

Other members of staff will be invited to meetings as appropriate.

At the first meeting of the Parent Council each academic year one of the Parent members will be selected to act as Chair and one will be selected to act as Secretary. Parent members will also be invited to volunteer for the role of Vice Chair but it is not mandatory for this position to be filled. Details of these roles can be found in Appendix I to this document. The term of office for each member shall be one year – with members able to sit in role for a maximum of three consecutive years.

Class Members

The maximum number of volunteer parents representing any given year group will be equal to the number of classes in that year - meaning that ideally the Parent Council will be made up of one parent representative from each class. The process for recruiting Class Members will be as follows:

- In the last half-term of each academic year, the Chair of the Parent Council will invite all parents to express their interest in taking up the role of Class Member for the following year.
- The Chair will then appoint the members for the following year as follows:
 - If only one parent in any given class has expressed an interest in the role they will be appointed as the representative for the following year.
 - If more than one parent in a class has expressed an interest in the role the Chair will facilitate a poll of parents in the class in order to decide who will be appointed.
 - If no parents in a class have expressed an interest in the role the Chair will not allocate a representative for that class. A representative for the class in question may join during the academic year if an individual comes forward to fill the vacancy.

The school will invite representatives from the newly started Foundation Stage classes (Reception and Nursery) to express their interest in becoming a member of the Parent Council on joining the school and by the end of September each year. The Chair of the Council will then allocate the places on the Council, in accordance with the steps above.

If a Parent Council member acts in a way that is considered by other members to undermine the objectives of the Parent Council, their membership of the Parent Council shall be terminated if the majority of parent members agree. Termination of membership would be confirmed in writing to the member by the Chair.

Meetings

The Parent Council meets once every school half- term.

- At the last meeting of the academic year the Chair will set the first meeting date and time for the following academic year.
- At the first meeting of the academic year the Chair, with input from Council members, will set the dates and times of meetings for the remainder of the year.

Meeting dates for the year will be made available on the school website.

In order for a meeting to be quorate there must be at least ten class representatives in attendance. The Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher must also be present for the meeting to go ahead.

The Chair will work with the Deputy Head Teacher to draft the topic questions, which will be sent out via Parentpay in a Google Form directly to all parents in the school one month before the meeting is scheduled to take place. Parents will give their feedback on the topic questions in the Google Form which will be returned directly to the school prior to each meeting". The feedback will be collated, and anonymised where necessary, by the Parent Council Secretary and forwarded to the Parent Council member for each class before the meeting. The topics of discussion for the year will be cascaded to each class by the Parent Council members and are also available on the school website. Paper copies are available on request from the School Office for those without internet access. The Chair will also work with the Deputy Head Teacher to draft an agenda and any additional paperwork for each meeting, which will be sent out approximately a week in advance of the meeting.

Should a vote be necessary to make a decision, each parent member at the meeting will have one vote, with the Chair having a casting vote in the event of a tie.

All meetings must be minuted and a copy of the minutes provided to the Head Teacher for approval before publication. These will be emailed to the whole school community and teachers via Parentpay.

If meetings cannot be held at school, as in the case of lockdown periods, they will be held over Zoom.

Appendix I

Role of the Chair

The Chair will lead the Council, working with the Deputy Head Teacher to set agendas, circulating agendas, chairing meetings, representing the group to the Head Teacher or Governing Body. They will be required to sign off minutes/other communications and ensure Parent Council keep to the Terms of Reference and adhere to the Code of Conduct. In addition, they may be invited to produce appropriate material for Open Days etc, & assist with the design of surveys and questionnaires. They will positively promote the role of the Parent Council. Should a vote be necessary to make a decision, each parent member at the meeting will have one vote, with the Chair

having a casting vote in the event of a tie. The Chair will also be responsible for determining the membership of the Council for the next academic year, in accordance with steps outlined in the “Membership” section of these Terms of Reference.

Role of Vice Chair

The Vice Chair will attend & chair meetings in the absence of the Chair.

Role of Secretary

The Secretary will take the minutes of each meeting. These should be submitted to the Chair within 7 days of the meeting, where possible, for subsequent approval from the Deputy or Head Teacher. The Secretary will be responsible for collating and photocopying documentation to be used at each meeting, using school resources. The Secretary will also collate all the topic feedback into one document and produce a summary report, both of which will be sent to the Chair and Deputy Head Teacher at least 10 days before the meeting.

Role of Class Members (“members”)

Details of the next meeting and a Google Form with the discussion topic questions will be sent by Parentpay to all parents one month in advance of the proposed date of meeting. Each member is expected to actively encourage their class to fill in the Google Form with their feedback. The Secretary will inform members if responses for their class are low and they should chase accordingly. Members are expected to attend each meeting or ask another member of the forum (ideally from the same year group) to represent them at the meeting where possible. Members are encouraged to participate in discussions and positively represent the views of their classes. When the minutes have been approved, members should forward these by email to their classes. It is the responsibility of each member to work with their PSA class rep to maintain an up to date parent email list for their class.

Each member will have the opportunity to raise matters pertaining to their classes under “Any Other Business” so long as it falls within the scope of the Parent Council.

The Chair may invite members to set up & attend sub-groups to assist with the production of questionnaires and other information for parents and the school. They will be expected to report back findings to the group under the guidance of the Chair.

Appendix II – Code of Conduct For Members

- Class Members recognise that their role is to represent the views of parents of the children in their class/year group. They will actively encourage the submission of feedback from parents via the Google Forms on agenda items in advance of the meetings and they will feed back their parents' responses at the meetings.
- All members will respect the confidentiality of the parents they represent and will not name individual teachers, pupils, members of staff or parents.
- Members will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct in meetings
- Members will express views openly, courteously and respectfully.
- Members are committed to attending meetings every half-term and will inform the Chair if they are unable to attend a meeting for any reason. They will endeavour to identify another member of the Parent Council (ideally from their year group) to represent them in their absence.

¹The definition of a 'parent' is an adult including mother, father, carers with parental responsibility or care for a child attending the school

