

Parent Council Terms of Reference

First approved by GB 21st June 2011

What is a Parent Council?

1. A Parent Council is a body of parents which represents parents and provides a forum for them to put forward their views to the head teacher and the governing body of their children's school. Parent Councils are a more accessible way to involve more parents in decisions about the school. A Parent Council can be less formal and require a lesser commitment than being a member of the governing body. It also enables more parents to make a real contribution to their child's school
2. The Governing body remains the decision making body and provides the strategic leadership of the school. Parent Councils have a consultative and advisory role. They are not a fund raising body. They are a means of expanding the communications between parents and the school, strengthening the voice of parents and enabling more parents to express their opinions and influence decisions.
3. The Ofsted self-assessment and inspection arrangements require schools to assess and demonstrate how well they listen to, and act on, parents' views. Parent Councils are seen as excellent way to do this.

What will our Parent Council do?

4. The Mayfield Parent Council will focus initially on three key roles
 - Providing a route through which parents as a group advise the governing body and school leadership of their views and for the governing body and school leadership to consult and discuss issues with parents
 - Reaching out to parents and bringing parents together
 - Enabling parents to get involved in the life of the school, including supporting learning activities inside and outside of school hours
5. The Council will usually meet once each term. Meetings may take different themes, sometimes focussing on general issues, sometimes focussing on one large theme affecting lots of parents/carers.
6. Meetings will be arranged at times best suited to make it possible for the maximum possible number of members to attend. This may involve alternating meetings between different times of day.
7. The Council will keep a note of issues raised during meetings and actions taken as a result. The Council shares the outputs of discussions through minutes on the school website and Google group messages for each year group.

Who can join the Parent Council?

8. Each class will have at least one representative on the Parent Council.
9. Representatives will be members of the Council for two years and will be rotated at the beginning of the next academic year (i.e. moving up with a change of year group). The appointments run from September to September. Appointments will be organised by the existing members of the Parent Council in consultation with the class teacher. If necessary, should several parents come forward, there will be an election - the aim is to have 2 representatives for each class. Once a representative has served a two year term they may stand down from the Council. However, if no other representative comes forward for a particular class, the existing representative may remain in post if the class is happy for them to do so.
10. Membership of the Council is open to any parent or carer with a child at Mayfield School, except for School Governors. There is no reason why a member of MAPS Committee should not also be a member of the Parent Council.
11. The Head teacher, or a member of the school leadership team nominated by the Head teacher, will attend each Parent Council meeting. Other teaching staff may be invited to join a meeting if an issue falls within their specialist teaching area.
12. The Governing Board will nominate one of the School Governors, from the Pupil and Premises Wellbeing sub-committee, to take a special interest in the Parent Council, attend its meetings, report back to the Governing Body and make efforts to ensure that the Parent Council receives appropriate support to carry out its role and develop its contribution to the school.
13. Other School Governors will also be invited to the meetings when it is felt that their input is needed.
14. Chairs will serve for one year, at the end of which the Council will be asked to elect a replacement Chair. A parent serving as Chair may put themselves forward for re-election and may serve up to two consecutive terms before standing down for at least a year before offering themselves for re-election. If no Chair is in post the Parent Council will operate a 'rotating Chair' sharing the role between the year groups.
15. The role of the Chair is to:
 - Lead the Council, setting agendas, chairing meetings, representing the group to the head teacher or governing body. Sign off of minutes/other communications.
 - Updating and keeping Parent Council to terms of reference.

The Chair is supported by 2 other roles – Secretariat and Communications. It is at the discretion of the Chair, in consultation with the Parent Council, as to who takes on these supporting roles.

Secretariat – with responsibility for: arranging meeting dates, minute taking, room bookings and getting minutes onto school website. Maintaining parent council e-mail list and ensuring website and classroom posters are up to date.

Communications - with responsibility for: gathering agenda items, drafting generic messages from minutes for other representatives to post on Google groups. Sending agenda and supporting information to school leadership team before parent council meetings. Drafting and checking text for website/ school newsletter/Google groups with Chair and school leadership team.

16. The School will assist the Council by providing copying, admin support, meeting rooms etc and by using all avenues available to publicise meetings and activities of the Council (e.g. via Parent Mail).

Seeking Participation

17. The Parent Council will use a variety of means to publicise its activities and achievements as widely as possible. Meetings will be arranged well in advance and notice given of their time and place. Minutes of meetings will be available through the Mayfield School website.

Reviewing our effectiveness

18. These Terms of Reference are agreed by the Governing Body. Small revisions can be made by the Parent Council to improve its own effectiveness. Any significant changes will require approval from the Governing Body.
19. At least once every two years the Parent Council will evaluate to what extent it is meeting its initial aims, identify the benefits and impact of its work, and ways in which it could be improved or made more effective. The evaluation should normally include a consultation with interested groups including the wider parent body, the governors and the school leadership.

Revised July 2014