



LINLITHGOW ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL

Linlithgow Academy Parent Council Meeting
Tuesday 7th October 2025
7.00 pm – 8.30 pm
Meeting in school and Zoom video conference

Minutes

Attendees

Parent Council Members:	Helen Jenkins (Chair), Karen Marriott (Clerk), Adam Schofield (Treasurer), Nick Goldfinch, Stuart Hamilton, Laurence Kenny, Maili Konczak, Jennifer Melville, Gina Vereker.
Parent Forum Members:	Thea de Joode, Karen Foster, Rheannon Galloway, Nicholas Garcia, Kirsten Lamb
School Representatives:	Grant Abbot (Head Teacher), Ed Marsh (Depute Head Teacher for Learning & Teaching)
Student Representatives:	Elsie Kenny, Tom Diamond, Maisie Flint

1. Welcome and Apologies

The meeting opened with a welcome to all attendees, both in person and online. Introductions were made, and apologies were noted from: Kelda Bryson and Laura McGowan (Co-Vice Chairs), Lindsey Campbell and Julia Miller (Parent Council Members), and Sarah Carney (Staff Representative).

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising

2.1 Previous Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting of 4th June 2025 were accepted without amendments.

2.2 Matters Arising

Helen Jenkins reported that she had recently met with Grant Abbot to review the focus topics suggested by attendees and it had been agreed that the topics would be scheduled for discussion at the 2025/26 meetings as outlined below:

- Tuesday 7th October 2025: CORE Teaching and Learning
- Wednesday 26th November 2025: Learning Support / Specialist Resources
- Thursday 29th January 2026: Course Choice processes
- Monday 23rd March 2026: Reporting
- Tuesday 5th May 2026: AI in Education
- Thursday 11th June 2026: School Improvement plan priorities

It was noted that the topic headings were broad and that feedback would be welcomed from members to narrow down the focus of the topics so that school staff could more effectively prepare ahead of the meetings.

3. Items from Parent Forum

Discussion items submitted by parents/carers in advance of meeting

A question was asked by a Parent Forum member about the regular Health and Wellbeing surveys undertaken by pupils and in particular the responses received for the question 'I feel safe when at school.' A summary of the discussion, led by Grant Abbot is below:

- All students are asked to complete a survey twice a year. The survey questions are informed by HMI and West Lothian Council and allow comparison across schools and council areas. The student responses are one of the resources used by senior school staff to take immediate action, where required, and to develop the School improvement priorities for the following academic year.
- The most recent survey is from May 2025 which was completed by 88% of pupils at Linlithgow Academy (West Lothian average 68%). The question referred to by the Parent Forum member is: 'I feel safe when I am at school' and there were 91.3% positive responses to this by Linlithgow Academy students, compared to 89.2% across West Lothian. The proportion of students reporting feeling safe has increased from previous surveys, but it was acknowledged that there are a small proportion of students who do not feel safe at school for a variety of differing reasons.
- The survey responses are not anonymous, and students can be identified. This enables key staff to have conversations with individual students who raise issues of concern through it. Feedback on other issues including student safety is also collected in other ways such as individual feedback and via the pupil parliament.
- Previous feedback from students has informed changes to increase safety and respect at the school such as the new 'open-plan' toilets (as some students reported feeling unsafe using the old ones), the development of a referral system (QR codes) where students can report concerns, the set-up of a daily football games at the school to provide an activity to divert students from unstructured activities at lunchtime, and a way for students to submit an audio recording to assist teachers pronouncing their name, were some of the examples given.
- Making students feel safe is always a priority at Linlithgow Academy and the school follows the appropriate West Lothian policies on this. Parents can also raise issues of concern directly with the School Leadership.

4. Focus Topic: CORE Teaching and Learning practices

Dr Ed Marsh (Depute Head Teacher for Learning & Teaching) attended to outline a new resource (a staff portal) created at Linlithgow Academy for the use of teachers to support learning and teaching within the school.

CORE is a pedagogical approach built on **12 key teaching elements**, grouped under C-O-R-E. CORE helps staff to enact the school's vision [Together We Thrive](#) within the classroom. The approach helps teachers design lessons to facilitate great classroom practice that, amongst other things is:

- Engaging and challenging
- Encourages discussion and thinking
- Builds strong foundations of knowledge

The School website has more information about the CORE approach to teaching and learning:

<https://linlithgowacademy.westlothian.org.uk/article/86177/Our-Approach-to-Teaching-and-Learning>

All schools in Scotland are required to consider and respond to questions and findings generated as part of various national reviews and reports. This can be challenging as the position and focus shifts at national level and it is hard for all staff to keep up with new developments, particularly as the funds are not always available for staff to undertake continuing professional development to assist with this. This increases pressure on teachers in leadership roles to consider how to implement changes in classroom practice across their school.

It was additionally noted that the current Scottish 'Curriculum for Excellence' is also being reviewed at a national level, with a particular focus on the Broad General Education (BGE) phase of secondary education (year groups S1-S3). With a possible radical shift in the approach nationally on the horizon for the BGE phase it is sensible to consider now how that can be implemented at Linlithgow Academy. An example of this is the use of 'Big Ideas' in lessons (a way to frame the way concepts are explained to students within the classroom) which should allow easier transition between levels for students.

In August 2025 a local staff portal was developed and launched to support teachers at Linlithgow Academy to consider and apply this CORE pedagogical approach within their individual classroom. The content of the portal has been generated over the last few years based on research in the educational sector and will be updated regularly. All teaching staff at Linlithgow Academy are encouraged to further develop and add to the content to create a live learning community with a shared understanding of good practice.

PC members questioned the response from teachers, whether the success of the portal will be externally validated, and for examples about how it had been used:

- It was noted that staff had been very positive about the launch of the portal.
- While there was no formal external validation of the resource, it will be reviewed as part of the usual HMI School inspections which look at classroom practice. Likewise, it will form part of the resources considered by the annual validation exercise undertaken by all schools within West Lothian, and other reviews such as the annual 'Collaboration in Action' review and those undertaken by the General Teaching Council.
- It was already being used as a resource when feedback is given to teachers following classroom observations, and in 'Learning Rounds' when considering how best to deliver effective teaching.

It was also noted that, while no specific tasks have been removed from teachers to enable them to have additional time to use the portal, it is hoped that by providing all the resources in one place it will assist staff with making the best use of their existing development time.

It was agreed by members that this new resource was a great development and that it would be useful to revisit this later in the year as the resource becomes more embedded in school life.

ACTION: Grant Abbot to provide an update on the impact of the staff portal resource at a PC meeting later this session.

5. Treasurer's Report

Adam Schofield (Treasurer) presented a verbal update on the current financial position of the Fundraising Committee.

6. Fundraising Update

Adam Schofield (Treasurer) provided a verbal update on the activities of the fundraising committee:

- The 2025/26 Lottery has launched with 128 entries sold so far and with parents and supporters able to purchase an entry until 29th October 2025.

- We are still waiting the outcome of the recent Tesco blue tokens drive.
- The first event of the school year where the fundraising team will provide refreshments is coming up. This is the autumn concert by the school orchestra. Several volunteers have come forward to help on the night or with baking, but more volunteers are welcome.

7. Head Teacher Update

The Head Teacher gave an update including:

- The national Student Support offering was launched recently for SQA courses
- The launch of the new Linlithgow Academy 'Homework Standard' which will be highlighted at upcoming assemblies
- Student reports: the senior phase ones are available now, with those in the BGE phase due out in the next few weeks
- Staffing: a new part-time Business Studies teacher has been appointed and should start later in October; maternity cover roles in English and Biology are currently being advertised
- Student trips: the annual music trip takes place later this week
- The Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) will be renamed and relaunched in February 2026

8. Any Other Business (AOB)

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm with thanks to all attending.