

**Grantown Grammar School Dynamics Group**  
**13<sup>th</sup> November 7pm**

**Apologies:**

Claire McGonigal  
Jaci Douglas  
Elaine Cullen  
Anne Sullivan

**Present:**

Giles Baker	Chair, Parent Council
Irene Carson	Head Teacher
Ene-Karmen Forsyth	Chair of Dynamics Group
Lindsay Coleman	Clerk
Zoe Cooke	
Liz Amphlett	
Debbie Strang	
Catherine McAuly-Brand	
Vicki Cowan	

1. Ene welcomed everyone and explained that the Dynamics Group is the renamed Policy and Planning Group.
2. **Standards and Quality Report**  
Irene is required to write an annual report about the latest school year. This goes to the Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee. This year there is also a Wider Achievement report outlining all the activities and achievements that have taken place during the year. It also mentions particularly outstanding pupils by name. Irene invited all parents to look at the draft copy that has been emailed out and to contact her with any comments by Monday 18<sup>th</sup> November.
3. **Parenting / Early Child development and teenage development**  
At the last meeting there was a lot of strong feeling regarding the Parenting classes that the school is holding for girls. Ene opened this discussion again and generally it was felt that boys should also be included in this subject. Irene agreed to discuss this with Jan Johnson the school nurse who would be running the class.

Ene believes that the parents will also have the chance (possibly in the Spring 2014) to see the films that the children will be seeing about human development, brain development and the importance of the first three years of a child's life.

Pregnancy rates across the world were discussed.

Sept. 2013 – the UK tops the league of teenage pregnancy in Western Europe.

2.9: 100 girls aged 15-19yrs give birth in the UK each year.

The lowest rate of 0.35: 100 is in Holland.

The fact that young children are getting pregnant as a means to financial benefits (Recent research by the Prince's Trust,) rather than through ignorance was discussed.

An understanding of human development in the first 3 years of life: and also during the teenage years, would allow young people to make more positive and informed choices, when considering future pregnancies. Babies born to young people would

have a better chance of thriving; not only physically, but also emotionally, socially and intellectually.

4. **“Back to School” campaign** – [www.futurefirst.org.uk](http://www.futurefirst.org.uk)

This campaign is linked in with the Future First Charity – an organisation in England which is trying to encourage former students from state schools to act as mentors and return to their schools to help motivate and inspire current pupils. This is because research has found that where children have access to role models, (which is usually at fee paying schools), pupils gain more confidence and do better when they leave school.

Irene agreed that although this is a great idea, due to our location, the inspirational pupils tend to leave the Grantown area which makes it hard to get them to come back and visit the school. Ways were discussed on how to find ex pupils who have left only a few years ago. Facebook was one way as was the Former Pupils Group. Irene also hopes that the new Depute may be able to help with bringing in employers to talk with pupils. It was decided that it would be a good idea for someone to go along to the Former Pupils Group/ Committee biennial events. It was also suggested that a request to ex pupils goes out in the Grapevine section in the Strathy.

5. **Six of the best traits needed to thrive in class!**

Research has shown that there are 6 traits that will lead a child to success in the future.

- JOIE DE VIVRE – feeling loved, secure and happy. Feeling connected. Feeling appreciative, receptive, curious and willing.
- SELF DISCIPLINE – ability to listen, stay focused, keep going through difficult patches, stick at hard tasks.
- KINDNESS – keep a “good voice” in their own heads to encourage themselves on. A kind disposition also draws other people to them, which provides help, support and confidence. A kind disposition also feeds listening and empathy, which foster deeper and more complex learning.
- RESILIENCE – understand that learning has lots of setbacks, but these can be overcome. Don’t say “I’ve failed my test!” but “Ugh, that was a horrible maths test! Next time I’ll do more revision!” Look at the wider, more positive picture.
- HONESTY – Great learners don’t say “I’m brilliant at biology!” but “I’m OK at photosynthesis, but not sure about myosis!”
- COURAGE – Great learners are able to try, fail, and try again. They need moral courage to turn away from distractions, and be willing to be seen as a “geek” if they want to study.
- RESEARCH SHOWS THAT THESE QUALITIES HELP STUDENTS TO:-
  1. Build more confidence
  2. Face challenges better
  3. Have more satisfying careers
  4. Earn more money
  5. Build stronger relationships
  6. KEEP DEPRESSION & ANXIETY at bay.

Irene believes that resilience is a very important trait and often lacking in the school. The new Depute has been working with children on this particular characteristic and it is hoped that he will do this when he is settled in at Grantown.

The Primary School looks at compassion and kindness with their pupils.

**6. Topics suggested by parents to discuss**

As time was short this section was left until the next meeting. Topics which had been suggested by several parents included confidence/self-esteem, financial life skills, cooking/baking/basic food survival at university etc, teacher sharing, First Aid.

**7. Any other topics**

**Drugs** – Irene told the group that a letter will be going out to parents informing them of a forthcoming visit from the Police and drugs dog. The Police will be talking to the children about drugs and demonstrating the work of the dogs. This is to show the pupils and parents that there is a zero tolerance policy in the school towards both alcohol and drugs. Giles offered to view the letter before it is sent out. There is also a letter going to the Strathy saying how the school is working with the police on this matter.

The conversation led to Prom Night where Irene assured the group of the schools zero tolerance towards alcohol at this event.

**Parent Council Constitution**

Debbie Strang brought to the group's attention the matter of reviewing the wording of the current Constitution. The three areas to consider are the length of time in post, the nomination process and the process used to remove a person from the Parent Council should it be decided that this is the best course of action.

Debbie Strang, Catherine McAuly-Brand, Giles Baker and Ene-Karmen Forsyth will meet to discuss this further.

Ene welcomed any feedback, or ideas and suggestions,  
Contact: 01479 831457 or [ene@live.co.uk](mailto:ene@live.co.uk)  
She then thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

**8. Date of next meeting** – 14<sup>th</sup> May 2014, 7pm.