



**MINUTE OF MEETING OF PARENT COUNCIL AND PTA REPRESENTATIVES  
held on TUESDAY 26 NOVEMBER 2008**

The representatives were welcomed to the meeting by Gordon Ford, Director of Education and Cultural Services who expressed his appreciation of the high number of participants.

**Multi Faith Schools**

Gordon outlined the proposal to change the title of non RC schools from non denominational to multi faith schools. West Lothian had looked at good practice in other local authorities across Scotland and the proposed paper was based on this good practice.

Some issues as identified were:

- 1 Religious and Moral Education is a valued part of the curriculum
- 2 Roman Catholic schools have a clearly defined ethos, which is not easily replicated in non denominational schools
- 3 Issues of religion and faith surface and are governed by legislation
- 4 Primary schools deal with these issues well, working from a multi faith approach and focusing on Christianity
- 5 This is not so apparent in secondary, with sometimes a lack of a consistent moral background
- 6 Very good work has been developed through the chaplaincy team, led by Iain Scoular.

A short life working group is being formed to take this forward. The next meeting of the parent council and PTA representatives is on 27 May and Gordon would like this group to complete its contribution prior to that meeting. The draft proposal will then be presented to the policy development panel and then the full council executive for approval.

**Action**

Volunteer group members from non denominational schools to contact Gordon.  
Email [gordon.ford@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:gordon.ford@westlothian.gov.uk)

## **Charter Mark/Customer Services Standard**

Joe Murray, a Quality Development Officer working for the Council and parent member from St Mary's RC Primary School, Polbeth, gave a presentation on how members of the Parent Council there plan to help teaching staff achieve accreditation in the new Customer Service Standard (formerly Charter Mark) at St Mary's.

Points to note:

- 1 All schools in West Lothian are expected to achieve Charter Mark or the Customer Services Standard once.
- 2 This first application will be financially supported by West Lothian Education and Cultural Services. If a school wishes to re-accredit, the school will be financially responsible.
- 3 Schools are expected to maintain the quality of service achieved
- 4 Heather Readman, Quality Standards Officer, tel 01506 776025, is employed to assist schools in achieving accreditation.
- 5 After June 2008, the Customer Services Standard will replace Charter Mark.
- 6 Both of these are awarded in recognition of excellent customer services
- 7 Parent Councils can offer schools good support in achieving the standards.

## **Action**

Email presentation.

## **Formation of a new West Lothian Council Parent Association**

A paper by David Mitchell, parent, Linlithgow Academy, had been circulated in advance of the meeting. He was looking at the existing arrangements for parents to be represented on issues, share best practice and have influence on policy matters. As part of his review he was trying to determine the most effective methods for the organisation of parental involvement. He wishes to explore the need or demand for a more formal structure through which parents could have a direct influence on education issues, including looking at a multi-level approach, i.e. school level, local cluster level, local authority level and national level.

David suggested that a new West Lothian Parents Body allowing parents to play a leading role, should be formed. Following discussion, it was felt that there would be no advantage in forming yet another body, but that it would be preferable for the parent representatives to take over the running of the current Parent Council and PTA Representatives Meetings. The Council should be invited to contribute to the agenda and officers invited as and when required.

## **Action**

It was agreed that David should continue with this work and, in liaison with officers, focus on developing strategies allowing parents to play a leading role and to participate more fully in such meetings. Presentation to be emailed.

## **Scottish Parent Teacher Council**

Judith Gillespie, Development Manager, Scottish Parent Teacher Council (SPTC) attended the meeting and spoke to members at the conclusion. In particular, she drew to the attention of those present the importance of public liability insurance. Where PTAs were separate from Parent Councils, they required their own insurance cover. However, any sub-group of a Parent Council would be covered by that Parent Council's policy.

For further information contact Judith on telephone 0131 226 4378/1917 or email [sptc@sptc.info](mailto:sptc@sptc.info).