

What is a Parent Council

Why create a Parent Council?

Students succeed better when parents and carers are fully engaged in their education. As Horizons Academy is not the school of choice for parents, this can evoke negative feelings toward the placement at our school. Worry about the future, the education their child will receive and the bad press often portrayed about Horizons Academy, can lead to parents not actively participating in their child's education or a reluctance to engage with the staff team regarding difficulties and concerns.

Horizons Academy is a good school as judged by OFSTED. Whilst students may arrive to our school at different times and with varying academic abilities, all young people are offered intervention, support and a broad and balanced curriculum designed to increase their opportunities as they move forward in to the world of work or further study. Our values and ambitions for our students is the same as all other mainstream schools and academies.

Whilst we are proud of our school, communication regarding the positive aspects of Horizons Academy is more valuable from those who have experienced it first-hand. Horizons Academy has a student council who are actively involved in their education and the support and interventions available to them. We hope a Parent Council will enable our parents and carers the same opportunities.

What is the role of the Parent Council?

The main functions of the Parent Council will be as follows;

1. To work in partnership with Horizons Academy to create a welcoming school that is inclusive for all parents;
2. To promote partnership between the school, its students and all its parents;
3. To develop and engage in activities which support the education and welfare of the students;
4. To identify and represent the views of parents on the education provided by the school and other matters affecting the education and welfare of the students.
5. To build an ethos of social enterprise to enable opportunities, support and intervention for whole families.

What level of commitment will be expected from parents?

The Parent Council will consist of parents of students in our long term provision who are happy to volunteer their time as Parent Ambassadors. We are hoping to recruit four parents who will be responsible for driving the Parent Council forward. We understand parents have commitments and busy family lives and would anticipate the council would meet each half term (every 6 weeks). Whilst the Parent Council would be small in number, we hope the opportunities generated by the council will be available to all parents of all students from across the academy. Designated staff will work in partnership with the council to take forward the concepts and ideas and to facilitate Parent

Council meetings and activities. There will not be a budget available to the council, but all costs related to agreed activities and initiatives will be funded by Horizons Academy.

What makes a suitable Parent Ambassador?

Parents who have experienced working in partnership with Horizons Academy and whose children have benefited from the education, support and intervention available would make great ambassadors. Whilst we anticipate a positive relationship between parents and staff, there may be times when differing opinions or views or an inability to take forward a concept or idea causes frustration. It is an expectation that all parent ambassadors act appropriately at all times. Parent Ambassadors will be role models to our students and to other parents and must adhere to a high standard of personal conduct. Parents who breach these expectations will not remain on the Parent Council.

Who will be responsible for the Parent Council?

Designated staff will be allocated to the Parent Council and will attend all meetings to participate and minute the discussion and actions agreed. Whilst staff will actively participate, it is important to establish a Chair of the Parent Council who will be responsible for the coordination of meetings, setting the agenda and participation at local stakeholder events. The Chair will be democratically elected by other Parent Ambassadors and will remain Chair for the full academic year. Elections will take place each year to provide opportunity for all parents to experience the role.

What will the Parent Council do?

There will be many exciting opportunities for the Parent Council to explore and to become involved in school life. These may include but are not limited to the following suggestions;

1. Parent Coffee Mornings with guest speakers or presentation on topical issues.
2. Parent Council Network Meetings with parents from Aspire Academy and Endeavour Academy.
3. Understanding the Curriculum- establishing a workshop for parents of students in year 11 to enable them to support their children in their studies.
4. Participation in targeted programmes and workshops delivered to students to enhance understanding of parents regarding the interventions available.
5. LSEAT college partnership presentations to inform parents of opportunities available to students, siblings and themselves.
6. Functional Skills opportunities for parents and siblings to enable them to achieve level 1&2 in English and Maths.
7. Participation in the new Parent Support Group to share experiences and to advise on the local and national help available to parents.
8. Arranging second hand uniform and educational resources for parents on low incomes.
9. Feedback and suggestions regarding Horizons Academy behaviour policy and sanctions applied to students.
10. Parent Council and Student Council network meetings to share ideas for fundraising and charity events.
11. Mindfulness sessions for parents to establish coping strategies and alleviate stress.

The Parent Council will be active participants in our school and will create opportunities for all parents and carers to benefit from advice, guidance and support that will help whole families as their children receive a quality education at Horizons Academy.

When will the Parent Council start?

We hope the Parent Council will begin in September 2019 with the first coffee morning planned for October 2019. We would like to work with the council to establish an activity schedule for the academic year which will be updated at each Parent Council meeting. Meetings will take place in September 2019, November 2019, February 2020, April 2020 and June 2020. All meetings will take place at Horizons Academy.

How do you become a Parent Ambassador?

Parents are welcome to apply to become ambassadors by completing an Expression of Interest form. All applications will be reviewed by the Parent Council and letters sent out to parents informing them of the council's decision. Parents are expected to commit to the council and we ask that all parents attend as many meetings as possible.

For more information please contact a member of our designated team:

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