



# Parent Advisory Council (PAC)



**Wednesday 25 February 2026  
6.00pm – 7.00pm**

Mr Bray

PAC members (Mrs Culling, Mrs Hook, Mrs Bradley, Mr Steel, Mrs Ulph)

---

Mr Bray greeted the group and everyone agreed they had read and reviewed notes from the past meeting, as well as the agenda pack for this session.

The group discussed the small number of members available for the meeting and JC mentioned that various members had messaged to say that the early time of 6pm was difficult to attend. Some also struggled with availability no Wednesdays. Mr Bray understood the limitations of a fixed day of the week and time, so suggested mixing this up for future meetings, possibly adding the ability to join via Teams – which would accommodate more people.

Mr Bray offered a variety of useful updates, including the encouraging news that there had been significantly more sixth form applications than last year. The local advertising and increased push to highlight the plans for the sixth form have had a positive impact.

He also shared that the redevelopment of the sixth form would start during May half term. The plans are exciting and will bring a 'university feel' to the space.

**Action:** Longsands to investigate making next meeting available via Teams or on a different day/later time.

**Action:** Longsands to add a rolling advertisement for the PAC in the newsletter or on social media, in an effort to recruit more members who will help represent the wider parent population.

## Phone Free Schools

Having read the pre-meeting agenda items on Phone Free Schools, a useful discussion was had around views on the implementation of this policy at Longsands. If it were to go ahead, it would follow the successful launch of the policy at Ernulf Academy during this academic year. Other Astrea secondary schools have also adopted the policy, including Woodfields in Doncaster.

Mr Bray noted that phone use in school is more of a problem than many parents will realise. The use of Phone Free Schools policies has been widely seen as positive by secondaries who have already embarked on this journey. A decrease in online bullying and not being disturbed by constant notifications are just a couple of the many benefits to going 'phone free' in school. Students socialise with each other more, and friendships thrive. Mr Bray explained that there are two available options for implementing the policy at Longsands. One would be individual phone pouches that are locked and unlocked via a staff member's magnet key, at the beginning and end of the school day.

The other would be a form group 'phone safe' where each student has a slot where they drop off/collect their phone at the end of the day – again supervised by a member of staff. The phone safe system is a lot more cost effective for the school and reduces the worry about losing a pouch or accidentally picking up someone else's, etc.

Any attempts to get round the phone free school policy, i.e. using dummy phones or opening pouches, would incur sanctions in line with the existing phone/behaviour policy.

Ernulf Academy are already using the 'pouch' system with great success. One PAC member reported that their children had friends at Ernulf who had welcomed the policy and settled into it very quickly. They had heard positive feedback from parents and children at Ernulf, saying that going phone-free 'did not massively change the school day'.

Mr Bray reiterated that any child who needed their phone for a medical reason (using an app to monitor levels/medication) would be given an appropriate medical exemption in those circumstances.

He also noted that the school was looking at moving towards a central hub for admin – a main school office – rather than admin staff being based around the building. This will make it easier for parents to reach the school when needed, and ensure parents are not concerned about being able to contact their child quickly if required. PAC members discussed some of the possible objections from children and parents. JC shared the thoughts of PAC members who were not able to join the meeting but had sent their comments in advance.

Mr Bray shared an example communication that detailed the reason for a Phone Free Schools phone safe or pouch policy, and included all the information and research backing the benefits of the policies, as well as possible parent Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

#### Sports and Extra Curricular offerings

Mr Bray and the PAC members discussed the clubs offered at Longsands. Mr Bray noted that there was a vision for Longsands to be a hub for sport in St Neots and that the hockey pitch would be being rejuvenated.

Many members felt that there were a good number of sports clubs available, but there were some limitations to these, such as:

- Unreliability of sports clubs, often children aren't finding out a club is cancelled until after the school day, making going home arrangements challenging and children unsure about joining regularly.
- Inconsistent opportunities by year groups for sport and competing (ie. no flag football for current Yr 9, despite success by current Yr 10s in this sport). Limited or no fixtures in hockey compared to previous years (example) yet widespread opportunities for netball and football.
- The group discussed possibility of having other volunteers, outside of staff, help run sports clubs but there are safeguarding issues around this that would need to be addressed.

When it came to other clubs, the PAC felt there was a widespread offering, but many non-sports clubs are only offered at lunchtime, which some children found difficult to manage with eating/spending time with friends.

We discussed the possibility of adding clubs like Debate Society. There could be an option to make clubs like Chess Club as an after-school club too.

#### AOB

Plans for the upcoming PAC litter picks were shared by JC and Mr Bray reported that he had joined some members of staff litter picking at the site over the recent break.

**Action:** JC to communicate litter pick dates with whole PAC and continue liaising with Mrs Smythe (Operations Manager) regarding Yr 7 space improvement project.

Meeting ended at 7pm