

## Robert Burns Academy

Barony Campus, Auchinleck Road, Cumnock, KA18 1FQ

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Dear Parent / Carer

We recently conducted a consultation with pupils, teaching staff and parents / carers on the on their preferred format for parents evening meetings. I would like to share with you the key findings:

### **Online meetings or face to face meetings?**

Traditional face to face meetings that take place inside the school was the clear preference across all parties. (77% of parents 77% of teaching staff 70% pupils)

### **Online booking system or traditional appointment sheet**

This question was for parents / carers only. The result showed that 66% would prefer to use an online booking system. For our recent S1 & S3 parents' evenings, which took place in the school, we used a traditional booking sheet. This was to avoid excluding parents who do not have access to, or have unreliable ICT / internet connectivity at home. This was an issue that became apparent during the different bouts of online learning. Due to the high demand from parents, we will trial an online booking system for the remaining parents evenings this year.

### **Response to frequently raised points:**

***'The online system was unreliable...we lost connection...appointments ended abruptly'***

Teaching staff and parents reported issues during each of our online parents' evenings last year. These issues were raised with the provider we used, unfortunately they could not always be resolved to our satisfaction.

***'An online booking system would be better'***

The online booking system put the responsibility for making appointments on to parents / carers. It has many advantages, however, not everyone can access it and appointments can still fill up very quickly. We will trial an online booking system later this academic year to compare the uptake for appointments.

***'The sign in process for the parents evening (in school) took too long and made us late for our first appointment'***

This was an issue that affected our S1 parents evening and was rectified for the S3 parents evening. Four separate sign in stations were in place (organised alphabetically) and parents were asked to arrive ten minutes before their first appointment, this ensured there was no delay in getting to the first appointment.

***'Nobody knew where to go'***

For the S1 and S3 parents' evenings we had a team of House and School Captains who assisted SLT in helping parents find their way to appointments. We also provided a printed guide to show where teachers were located for both evenings. We are confident that parents / carers will become more familiar with this layout each year.

***'There aren't enough appointment spaces / Five minutes isn't long enough / The two hour evening isn't long enough / There should be a guaranteed appointment for each teacher'***

After consultation with our teaching staff, we will now return to the 2.5 hour parents evening format. Any increase in the duration of the appointment times would reduce the overall amount of appointments each teacher has available.

Secondary teachers, on average, teach approx. 250 pupils per week, our parents evenings are one part of our tracking and reporting schedule. Although in some instances teachers are not able to offer every pupil an appointment for parents evening, they will still receive one full written report each academic year in addition to four tracking reports.

***'People weren't sticking to their appointment times'***

This is something that requires parents and teachers to work together to ensure that appointment times are met. Often teachers will try to accommodate parents who are not on their appointment sheet, we have asked our staff only to do this if they have free space on their appointment sheet to avoid taking up another parent's slot.

***'There was no privacy when speaking to teachers, it would be better if they were in classrooms'***

Both of our parents' evenings that have taken place in RBA have utilised central areas to reduce travel time between appointments. The nature and size of our campus makes it impractical for teachers to host meetings in their classrooms. The use of the dining areas and Barony Hall keeps staff in a central area and allows SLT and Principal Teachers of Guidance to supervise and assist where necessary. This is also the most convenient area for lift access.

We have areas nearby where more sensitive conversations can take place. The system outlined above is in keeping with the set up that worked best at Auchinleck and Cumnock Academy previously.

I would like to thank everyone who contributed to this consultation and hope that the response above provides clarity for future evenings.

Yours Sincerely,

P. McGurn  
Depute Head Teacher