**Parent Council Minutes 7 September 2022**

Attendees – Stewart Derrick, Carolann McLuckie, Diane Colgan, Laura Young, Rhona Brown, Alison Breingan, Leann Martin

Ruth McCarthy, John Paterson

**Items discussed**

**Homework** – virtual school could be used for the extra homework. We can access this through GLOW but John has flagged already that there is no differentiation and this has been escalated to the provider to try and make it a more applicable tool for the children.

Sumdog sets it up with a diagnostic tool – any time the kids access sumdog, it will use this diagnostic tool that is set by the teachers. So lets see if we can add extra work around what we need in terms of homework. Can we expand the matrix to ensure maths homework is there. Laura flagged the bus stop method which is chimney sums when we thought about it. Ruth is not looking for loads of sheets just filled in – kids need to understand on how to write, work out and answer sums. Ruth is aligned that we should look at the homework and ensure that there should be more maths on it – to be discussed with teachers and the ask was very much for us to ensure that there is maths homework added in. **To clarify for all parents** – homework is not mandatory, and it is the parents/guardian’s choice if they engage with the homework material. There are a range of opinions with regards to homework from the parental community, and for those who do want their children to complete the homework, the ask has been for the homework to be more related to the class curriculum and a deeper focus on reading, writing and maths.

**Information nights** – primary 1 and primary 4 – the information night has been a success so far. But the ask is if we can get more nights where people get to see around the school to see what is going on in the school. Can this be looked at? Carolann flagged that they have a P1 and a P4 which meant they could not attend both meetings which is disappointing – solution is that the presentation will be put up in teams, but for the future they will check the school attendance list so they can see the scale of this risk, and condense the sessions in the one night so a teacher does two 30 minute presentations so that the parents can attend both. Leanne’s point was that you will miss out on the 30 minutes of parent interaction which is valuable – which is important. They also gave out pamphlets on the night for the presentation which worked well at Leann’s school. Let’s work a plan for next year. Can we do them all in separate nights – but the staff are only able to come in once per week, so it would take 7 weeks to cover all years so individually would not work. It would also increase the lets which would increase costs and impact on budget. We want to have the information nights completed as near to the beginning of term as possible. Perform an analysis of sibling to sibling years and if we don’t have siblings in P7 and P1 then combine those nights so that people can attend without missing out was one practical solution presented. Could send out information in advance so people can review if they want to attend.

**Parents night** – back to face to face or phone appointments so we cover all mediums of contact and give parents/guardians not able to attend in person, to have a phone appointment. This is a positive change to the parent’s night approach based on parental feedback.

**Pick up at the school** – travel policy was sent out in January and there were only three responses. For safety and security in the policy that was shared before, the clarity was captured about picking up children outside of the school. *What are the security reasons/safety reasons that have come up?* There have been a couple of incidents that have happened, that cannot be expanded upon in this meeting due to data protection. There are also incidents of some parents bringing dogs into the playground which is a safety issue around the children. The outcome of the review, and relayed in the policy is that the school has acted where it feels best supports the children’s safety in leaving school.

**Open days** – seeing around the class – the family learning. School thought the best way forward is the information evening as the other problem raised was the number of parents in the same room when we have had the previous open days. With this alternate approach the school will have a class assembly and the teachers will choose their assembly slot for parents to come in during that day, in order for them to see what the class is doing and what they have learned. In short it would be an assembly instead of the walking about the class.

**Use of Twitter** - It had been flagged to the PC that parents feel there can be quite a difference between some classes posting a lot of engaging content on Twitter and other classes not posting much/anything.

Balmalloch is a digital school so they should be comfortable to use twitter. Teachers need to tweet at least one thing a week in order to comply with the school rules. If there is to be more posting, and it’s the same across the stages – so all P5 teachers for example do the same number of tweets. It depends on what school year you look at, then some will do more than others in different weeks depending on what is going on in the year. Consistency across the years should be happening. Leanne has asked if we are ensuring that all of the kids are then posted, so they are not left out during the posts – but that’s not what happens at the moment in terms of checklist, but staff are told to ensure that it’s not the same kids that are posted all of the time. It does skew towards celebrating success because of the school of character approach of celebrating success. Diane’s point – it’s nice to see the kids, but it’s important to see what is going on in the school so we know what is happening in the school and what is going on in the school. So, ensuring information is posted – i.e. visitors or what is going on. That would be great to see. John has flagged that this will happen as they are a digital school and the digital leaders in the P7 will be posting more on twitter so they get the experience.

**Sex Education** - by 1st year, 75% of kids have viewed pornographic material was a quote stated in the PC and this is one of the reasons why it’s so important for young people to understand sex education in a safe environment and from a teacher.

Each parent needs to decide on why they think this is important to understand the facts.

For term 3, and prior to the delivery of the sex education materials this school year, we will look to work with the school on an information/workshop call/night. It is a very important subject that parents are engaged upon and involved.

**Next step re school** - is to go for cyber safety. The school are dealing with cyber bullying in primary school now due to the increased level of technology that primary age children have access to, so it’s important to focus on internet safety and resilience.