

## **Parent Council Meeting – 7 November 2023**

**Present:** Stewart Derrick (chair), Ruth McCarthy, John Paterson, Laura Young, Diane Colgan, Carrie Strachan, Carolann McLuckie, Rhona Stillie Brown, Alison Breingan (notes), Lesley McBride, Alissa

### **AGM – Parent Council Election**

Not discussed.

### **Swimming**

Ruth advised school still doesn't have enough helpers. There were originally 3 sessions but only 2 now as some pupils didn't return their forms so they can't attend. Clerical staff then had to chase up. We need to get across to parents so the school doesn't lose money. Carrie suggested using an app to book, John is hoping to get parents to sign up to parent's portal. John confirmed himself, a member of the clerical team and a digital practitioner need to be trained. Once they are trained they will put on a night in the school to show parents how to use the app. John is waiting for North Lanarkshire to confirm training dates.

Ruth spoke about the need for the EV5 form (emergency contact details) to be up to date, school need emergency contact information. These forms are sent out yearly, clerical staff then spend time chasing these up. The school can't let the children go on trips if they don't have a form

If a child receives free school meal cost is reduced.

Ruth commented that if we can't get helpers then need to pull support staff which will have an impact on another children's learning.

Stewart confirmed we will do another group call to see if we can get more helpers.

### **Homework**

Stewart commented that he felt that he was receiving more direction in the past three months from the teacher however he asked why the children were learning such styles as writing backwards/bubble writing. John confirmed that they need to offer children strategies that works for them and appropriate to other children in the class, some children are visual learners. John will add this in to the newsletter.

Laura commented that the numeracy homework is minimal and this doesn't prepare them for secondary school and isn't related to what they are doing in class. John commented that the current policy is to focus on reading, literacy and spelling, that was agreed through parental feedback. Carrie commented on the lack of reading books. John confirmed certain ages won't get a reading book but the library is available. Stewart asked if there are somewhere teachers highlight similar type books to what they are reading in class. Laura made the point that reading is family learning. Ruth noted that only 2 people signed up to John's family learning group, this is why it's on the improvement plan as the school want

parent to be involved in their children's learning. This group would be a better forum to discuss this issue. PC happy to join the family learning group. Stewart commented that we shouldn't be working to the lowest denominator when it comes to home work. If other parents don't want to get involved then that shouldn't mean the parents who do are penalised. Stewart asked if parents can have more direction on what books we should be reading with kids. Ruth informed the group that inside snapshot jotter there is a glossary of books, and words appropriate to year but as these are only given out for a few weeks she will arrange for these to be put on website. Ruth commented that in order to change the homework policy it would need to go onto the improvement plan and she would need to relook at the working time agreement. Good to use family engagement group to continue the discussions on homework. Stewart asked if the school can share working time agreement with the group. Carrie asked if there was an opportunity to speak to the teacher, Ruth suggested it could be arranged through the day.

John confirmed that this will need to be a school improvement priority for next year or the year after, it's not a quick process to make changes. Laura asked if in the meantime could we influence the homework grid, Ruth confirmed yes.

#### **Injury Policy/Contacting Parents & Carers**

Carrie stated that the reporting is inconsistent, letters/phone call's across parent chat. Ruth confirmed that phone calls are made for head injuries.

#### **Flagship Family Award & Family Engagement Group**

Ruth spoke about the flagship award and stressed that parental engagement is high priority, how we get parents involved. There are a few activities that require parents input such as making a poppy for Remembrance Day. Other activities like the danceathon aren't asking parent to do anything, only to join in. Laura stated that she has an issue with points system, some parent doesn't have a support system and are unable to participate and she feels that this is a judgement on working parent. Stewart would like us to discuss this topic in more detail at the family learning group meeting.

#### **Reporting**

Stewart confirmed we are happy with the improvements on reports. Need consistency across teachers in terms of comments so we will be collecting feedback which will be passed the Ruth. Ruth confirmed she has met all staff regarding what's expected in the reports.

#### **AOB**

##### **NL Swimming**

Laura asked why Balmalloch weren't entered into the recent NL swimming competition, parent told school know nothing about it. Ruth explained that it must have been an oversight as she would always put children forward for these types of things. Laura asked if the information was sent to all schools in NL, Ruth and John confirmed they hadn't seen anything regarding this competition. Laura also commented that she was disappointed that in the run up to the Gala week swimming competition the children weren't given a chance to meet up prior or have a practice. The organisation could have been better with more communication, no ownership from the school. Stewart asked if the school can contact St Pats re what information they receive so we are better prepared.