

Balmalloch Primary Parent Council Meeting

4 February 2025

6-7pm

Attendees: Ruth McCathy (Head Teacher), Emma Duff (Teacher), Mrs Patrick (Teacher), Alison Breingan (Chair), Alissa Kaufmann (Secretary), Stewart Derrick, Laura Young, Carrie Strachan, Carolann McLuckie, , Jennifer Molloy, Nicola Breen Patrick

Apologies: Eric Finney, Rhona Stillee Brown, John Paterson

No	Item	Actions
1	Apologies and Welcome	
2	Curriculum Evening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was agreed that a curriculum evening would be on the same evening as the meet the teacher evening on half hour slots. The group asked that some of the education related language is simplified for parents. It was discussed that the children could be involved in the sessions which would give them a chance to take forward their leadership skills. Ideas to be discussed further. 	
3	School Uniform Policy & Enforcement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was discussed that clearer communication outlining when children can wear Christmas jumpers should be given next Christmas. The school uniform policy was discussed, noting that black jumpers and branded clothing was against the policy. There have been incidences of bullying over clothing, which adherence to the uniform policy would address. The school explained that they would present a warning to a student on the first day of wearing a black jumper by putting a slip in the child schoolbag but on a second day, the student would be required to change into a red jumper. The uniform policy is to be re-shared with parents and enforced by the school. ACTION 	RM
4	Phone/Watch Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The current policy was shared before the meeting. RM explained that North Lanarkshire are reviewing their phone/watch policy now as well. The discussion focused on some parents wanting their child to have a phone for before/after school for safety but the challenges caused when children are not following the rule of having phones turned off and in their bags while on school grounds. RM highlighted reports from children that some are using TikTok in the playground, using phones in the toilets, and taking photos at school and sharing online. Using phones and social media at school was of particular concern because of the potential for bullying online, and safeguarding issues with students sharing photos of others who do not have permission for their image to be online. ED to look into incorporating safe phone/social media use as part of 'Developing a Young Workforce' week. ACTION The current policy specifies that only P6/7 are permitted to bring phones onto school property; however, there are students as young as P2 with mobile phones. A question was raised about consequence management of not adhering to the policy. RM explained that students were supportive of losing house points in this situation. 	ED

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RM to update the policy to remove reference to P6/P7 and introduce the consequence of losing house points if a student breaks the policy ahead of sharing with parents for feedback. ACTION 	RM
5	<p>Communications - Emails</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent Council provided examples before the meeting to highlight their ongoing concerns with communications from the school, noting the responses from the school in the Head Teacher's report. The school felt that attachments were self-explanatory and noted that staff did not have time to re-phrase in the body of the email. Parent council raised concerns with accessibility of this approach if descriptive text was not included in the body of the email. The school will explore embedding attachments into the body of the email going forward. ACTION There was a discussion on the Parents Portal example, AW noting that the attachment did not explain how it was relevant to the school's practices. One parent signed up and had used the system to report absences, but the school office staff still phoned as they were not yet integrated on the system. Tone of emails was another concern raised, noting the bluntness of many of the emails was not well received by parents. Emails from Mrs. Diamond were highlighted as a great example of a good and effective email communication. Frequency of event announcements was also raised as a concern. Parent Council suggested assessing urgency before sending out an email and consolidating the non-urgent ones and circulating via the monthly newsletter. Parent Council highlighted that poor communications is a common complaint among parents and that not taking steps to address it could impact parent/carer engagement with the school. Parent Council explained their concerns with the lack of detail in the Dress Down Day fundraiser email. Parents were not clear on what the additional money was for, given the recent success of the Christmas Fair. Providing detail on the plans for the money may have resulted in higher donations being given by some parents. 	RM
6	<p>Homework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school will consult parents on the new homework process at the end of term 3. ACTION Parent Council asked to feed-in on the content of the survey. RM to engage via the Chair closer to the time. ACTION 	RM RM/AB
7	<p>PTA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PTA joined at 6:50pm Cassie summarised their recent activity. The Valentine's Dance is the current focus and it will follow a similar format to the Halloween Dance. The budget is in a good position and they are looking to fund paint for the outdoor classroom and storage for the gym hall and some new playground equipment. The spring fair is coming up and PTA are looking to advertise plant sales this year, after the success of last year's trial on this. A parent suggested holding another partnership event with the school, like the Santa Dash, before the spring fair. AB raised Parent Council's idea of having a jumper swap stall. The idea being that parents pay £1 to take home an item of clothing, but they can also bring in gently worn items of clothing. A teacher suggested advertising the stall as a sustainability initiative and getting the ECO committee involved. AB will speak to Cassie closer to the fair. ACTION 	AB

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a discussion on the outdoor classroom and the participatory committee last week raised some idea for how they would like the facility improved (e.g. fairy lights, cushions, making cozier/more welcoming). • It was felt that a tuck shop would be challenging to introduce to the dances because it would mean that children were bringing money with them to the dance and younger ages groups could lose this. 	
	AOB <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The following item was covered at the end of agenda item 5: RM updated on the senior playground. The area will be re-tarred w/c 18th February. This is half-term week, but there may be some inconvenience on the Thursday/Friday in the parking circle. 	
	Meeting ended 7:00pm	