

Parent Council Meeting - 09.09.2025 (6-7pm)

Present

Parent Council - Alison Breingan (Chair), Laura Young, Alissa Kauffman, Jennifer Molloy, Stewart Derrick, Rhona Stille Brown, Carrie Strachan, Sarah Curran, Laura McMillan

School - Ruth McCarthy (Head Teacher), Kate Patrick, John Patterson,

In Attendance

Thomas O'Hagan (NL Council), Heather Brannan-McVey (NL Council)

Apologies

Nicola Patrick Breen

1.) Welcome

PC Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, introduced new members and noted last years' members who have not returned to the PC.

Agreed to follow the HT report for the agenda.

2.) Reflection on positive parent relationships

- HT referred to P1 last year and some incidences that occurred as well as recent incidents with parent-pupil interactions in the playground. HT reflected on no longer allowing adult parents/carers in the playground to prevent anything in future and proposed to raise change to parents. HT felt this was an important action to help build positive parent-pupil relationships in the playground and avoid future episodes of concern.
- PC asked for clarification on how it will be policed and gave an example of parents entering the school grounds to help their child if they were to get hurt.
- HT explained that it has been done before during COVID and that there are several local schools that follow this same policy.
- PC raised likelihood of concerns from parents of infant year pupils and asked if teacher/school admin presence was an option, noting this was previously explained as not feasible before 9am.
- Another PC member asked if a parent volunteer group could be a solution. The need for PVG's was briefly discussed, noting it was an item later on the agenda that needed to be resolved.
- DECISION: HT to circulate a communication to parents, ensuring to communicate clearly why the change is being implemented, potentially propose a pilot timeframe to trial it and provide an opportunity for parents to feedback

3.) PVG

- HT summarised recent workshop regarding PVG and explained there is a lot still to digest on Disclosure Scotland website, but priority for school is understanding requirements ahead of the Halloween Disco.
- It was confirmed that the rule changes took effect for the start of this term.
- TO (NLC Council) explained the council are working through a number of exceptions cases and developing guidance for circulation shortly.
- HBM explained that existing PVGs can be updated and our council specific.
- Experience with timelines for PVGs (full or updated) are a minimum of three weeks.
- Mrs. Patrick confirmed that teachers support the disco on a volunteer basis.
- DECISION: wait for the council guidance before acting ahead of school disco.
- ACTION: School to look at disclosure website and understand requirements.
- ACTION: Council to share guidance once finalised.
- NOTE: PC member confirmed the PTA have a list of roles for the disco already. Consider determining disco roles requiring PVG and requesting volunteers with existing PVGs through school communication ahead of disco.

4.) Communications

- Chair presented comms from other schools to HT and requested that the school consider where improvements can be made going forward.
- PC expressed disappointment in lack of welcome back email from the HT, noting it was a missed opportunity to build community, enthusiasm, and clarity to the parent and pupil population ahead of school starting.
- It was recognised that the newsletter shared in September was good, but a communication should have been circulated by the school before classes returned in August. For example, an email noting the important information that parents/carers needed to know ahead of school starting, including an enthusiastic welcome, any staffing changes, traffic instructions, and school contact details. It was felt that a lot of the information will be similar year on year and so could be reused again and again.
- JP noted the school receives a regular volume of queries where the answer is contained within recent newsletters (e.g. parking).
- PC highlighted their ability to support the school with answering FAQs from parents in the group chats using the school newsletters and signposting to the school website.
- A more child-friendly welcome communication (i.e. infographics) was suggested.

- DECISION: Known key term dates to be shared in next year's first newsletter as well as monthly dates for the diary in subsequent newsletters.
- ACTION: School to add to agenda for August 2026 in-service days.
- ACTION: JP to bring a comms plan to the Nov meeting.
- ACTION: PC to send out reminders and table of contents to year group chats following monthly newsletter releases with links to Sway.
- ACTION: JP to raise question to digital heroes to consider use of pupil voices in short informational videos (e.g. communicating traffic safety in and around school).

AOB

Traffic Issues.

- Let bus in and bus out and keep gate shuts.
- Big disruption coming for sewage works.
- Ali reflected on traffic warden outcomes last year.
- Today was sketchy but had improved since email.
- Gates are open all the time. Path gates
- Who will shut the gate?
- Need to leave the trial.
- Continue as it into September.
- Action: Ali to draft comms thank you and direction in parking into
- Two weeks - been trialling. This is still an issue - two more weeks and then shutting.
- Only going to work with wardens. Need volunteers?
- Gate to KA, will be open. No need for key share.

Upcoming Sewage works

- Kick off September weekend. Big issue coming in.
- Start to change behaviours.
- Still have access to the MUGA

Beach party

- There is a P7s in a dance show around the same time.
- Provisionally 24th for beach party.
- Parent should be reminded that the prom should be inclusive.

Civic week

- 2nd Saturday June for 8 days thereafter.

Homework

- Positive feedback - across all year groups
- Study ladder, words, reading
- Very appreciated

School improvement Plan

- Plan finalised and will be sent to the PC.
- Discussions around the plan will happen at November meeting.
- ACTION: HT and PC Chair to agree another date for BAU.

Individual cases

- PC to direct to the school.
- PC cannot advocate individual cases.
- PC Chair to look at an auto email response on the email.

Hyperlink in newsletter to the school websites

Fundraising –

- A big bit of money goes to the bus for school trip.
- Need to publish what the money is being spent on.
- Eg. Jumpers funded and not funded.
- Parent body should be active
- Comms on transparency of donations
- PTA are deciding tonight on where donations could be going
- Authority has a responsibility to resource for office - that should not be coming out of fundraising
- How fast can we bring Balmalloch up to date.
- Ali raised office computer question:
 - HT explained about replacing smart boards?
 - Schools budget - that's where it's coming from
 - Projectors
 - JP is the digital person

Improvements

- HT summarised the school improvement plan, highlighted the top two priorities regarding attainment and teaching.

- It was explained that JP will be focused on numeracy and math, whilst Mrs Murphy will be focused on literacy (reading and writing), and HT will be focused on health/wellbeing and listening/talking.
- TO explained that below the improvement plan, there will be a detailed action plan and this is in development.

Reports

- What's too difficult to understand.
- Learning logs - so confusing.
- Comments/personal element.
- Action: TO to share report card templates from other schools.
- Need detailed action plan under improvements.
- Action: HT to send Ali a blank template.
- Want to simplify.
- Not good use of teacher time if not useful.
- No good if you can't decipher your Childs' assessment.

Meeting end: 7:35pm