

Parent Council Meeting Minutes

Date: 4 November 2025, 6pm

Location: Balmalloch Primary School

Attendees:

Parent Council: Alison Breingan (PC Chair), Alissa Kaufmann, Carrie Strachan, Jennifer Molloy, Laura McMillan, Laura Young, Sarah Curran, Stewart Derrick,

PTA: Anne Whyte

Balmalloch Primary Staff: Ruth McCarthy (Head Teacher), John Paterson (Principal Teacher)

NLC Education: Jill Woodward, Michelle O'Halleron (Meeting Chair)

NLC Councilors: Heather Brennan-McVey, Jean Jones

Apologies:

Nicola Patrick

Welcome and Introductions

Michelle welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Jill Woodward to the group. Jill explained her role and outlined her involvement with the school and the parent council going forward – including fortnightly conversations with Ruth and termly attendance at parent council meetings.

Topic 1: School Improvement Action Plan

- Discussion Summary:

The meeting focused on reviewing and refining the school's action plan following the publication of the June 2025 HMI inspection report.

It was recognised that the parent council (PC) had limited time to review the action plan and that councilors had not received the document prior to the meeting and so formal written feedback would be submitted after the meeting.

Staff and NLC Education explained the report, outlining prioritisation of initiatives over a multi-year framework, emphasising focusing on continuous improvement for pupils rather than reactive responses to inspections.

- Decisions:
 - Agreement that the action plan should be flexible and evolving, reflecting ongoing staff and parent feedback.

- A parental version of the action plan should include a RAG rating and outline actions taken so far. Actions should be updated termly (Responsible: Ruth and Jill)
- Actions:
 - Circulate the latest version of the action plan to NLC Councilors (Responsible: Ruth)
 - Provide a glossary of terms (Responsible: Jill)
 - Prepare a Microsoft form for action plan feedback (Responsible: John)
 - Parent Council members to review action plan and feedback by 17th November. (Responsible: Alison)
 - Create a summarised version of the action plan for parents once further feedback has been considered (Responsible: Jill and Michelle)

Topic 2: Parental Engagement Strategy

- Discussion Summary:

The group discussed enhancing parental involvement and improving communication between the school, staff, and parents. It was noted that transparency and consistent messaging are key to building trust and engagement.

- Decisions:
 - Develop a formal Parental Engagement Strategy aligned with local authority guidance.
 - The communication plan outlined key communications for parents throughout the year. The engagement strategy can comment on communication channels, frequency, and content expectations from parents.
- Actions:
 - Provide parent council with examples of NLC engagement strategy guidance and other best practice examples (Responsible: Jill)
 - Setup a Microsoft forms to record interest in the new working group (Responsible: John)
 - Support setting up a new parent working group to develop a parent engagement strategy, including sharing communications via chat groups (Responsible: Parent Council)

Topic 3: Homework Policy Review

- Discussion Summary:

There was significant discussion about homework expectations, workload implications for staff, and balancing the educational value of homework with family wellbeing. Parents and staff shared perspectives on current practices and potential for more flexible, engaging approaches.

- Decisions:

- Homework policy to be reviewed to ensure consistency and to reduce any unnecessary workload for staff.
- The new policy will emphasise meaningful learning experiences and inclusivity for all learners.
- Actions:
 - A small working group (including parent representatives) to review existing policy and propose updates. (Lead: Ruth)

Topic 4: Communication and Transparency

- Discussion Summary:

There was a discussion on how children's progress is assessed and reported to parents. It was noted that there was a large amount of assessment data, although it's presently unclear how collection of that data is benefitting attainment and parents want clearer communication on what the information means for their children.

Staff briefly summarized the working time agreement arrangements and allocation for things such as homework and reporting.

Members discussed how to improve transparency between staff, parents, and the wider school community. Suggestions included clearer communication, better tracking of newsletter engagement, and more accessible language in school documents, including learning logs.

Parent Council noted improvements this year regarding communicating with parents for children with GIRFME's; however, this was unlikely to apply to the wider parent population.

The school highlighted a recent initiative by office staff to update parent email records through the push to get parents signed up to the parents portal.

- Decisions:
 - Reporting formats should clearly show pupil progress and next steps in learning.
 - Continue issuing newsletters but review content and delivery methods to ensure parents are engaging with content.
 - Parent Council to continue to support school with issuing the communications through group chats.
- Actions:
 - Refine the communication calendar and ensure all school updates are accessible (Responsible: John).
 - Collect feedback from parents on preferred communication formats (Responsible: TBD?)

Topic 5: PTA and Parent Council Collaboration

- Discussion Summary:

Discussion focused on clarifying the roles of the PTA and Parent Council and exploring opportunities for better collaboration. It was recognised that some parents are unsure of the difference between the two groups.

- Decisions:
 - Agreement to provide clear communication distinguishing PTA and Parent Council roles.
 - Future joint events to strengthen collaboration and community involvement.
- Actions:
 - Add information about both groups in future newsletters and on the school website.
 - Explore opportunities for shared projects or fundraising events.

Topic 6: Diversity, Inclusion, and Engagement

- Discussion Summary:

The group discussed inclusivity within the school parent groups and how to ensure engagement strategies reflect the diversity of families in the school. The need for conscious efforts to include all parents was highlighted.

- Decisions:
 - The engagement strategy will include measures to ensure diverse family representation.
 - All communication to reflect inclusivity and accessibility principles.
- Actions:
 - Conduct an informal review of parent engagement demographics. (Responsible: Ruth and Michelle)
 - Update the engagement strategy to include inclusive communication and participation methods (Responsible: **Parent Council?**).

AOB

PTA raised a question on where the PC meeting minutes are held. ACTION: confirm where meeting minutes can be accessed and consider sharing in a hyperlink in monthly newsletter (Responsible: Ruth and John).

Meeting end – 7:40pm