

## **Parent Council Meeting Minutes**

Date: 3 February 2026, 6–7pm

Location: Balmalloch Primary School

### **Attendees**

Parent Council: Carrie Strachan (CS) (Chair), Kimberly Wilson (KW), Sarah Curran (SC), Nicola Patrick (NP), Jennifer Molloy (JM), Alison Breingan (AB), Alissa Kaufmann (AK), Laura Young (LY), Stewart Derrick (SD)

School Staff: Ruth McCarthy (HT), John Paterson (JP)

NLC Councillor: Heather Brennan-McVey (HBM)

NLC Education: Gillian Goldie (GG), Jill Woodward (JW)

### **1. Welcome**

#### *Discussion Summary*

CS welcomed attendees to the meeting and confirmed agenda items. It was agreed that the HMle Inspection update would be covered at the end of the meeting.

HT provided a brief update, confirming that the action plan remains as previously shared and that priorities for next term are outlined within it.

### **2. Health and Safety**

#### **2a. Head Lice (Nits)**

##### *Discussion Summary*

PC raised concerns regarding ongoing cases of head lice and queried whether the hairdressing station in the infant area could be removed.

HT confirmed that emails had been issued over the winter break regarding increased case numbers and that best practice treatment guidance has been shared with families.

## *Decisions*

Further communication to be issued to parents.

## *Actions*

- JP to arrange an additional email to parents regarding head lice treatment and expectations.

## **2b. Ice, Outdoor Access and Poor Weather**

### *Discussion Summary*

NLC policy regarding maintaining two clear paths during icy weather was noted. HT outlined that janitorial staff must work within policy and practical constraints to ensure safe access throughout the school day.

PC noted that there are more than two paths into the school and asked whether clearer communication could be provided regarding which paths are prioritised. HT confirmed that information has previously been shared and that text messages may be used in exceptional circumstances (noting cost implications).

JW explained NLC's staged approach to extreme weather, issued annually each October. She clarified that priority is safe access at the start and end of the school day, and that decisions regarding ongoing maintenance throughout the day are made collaboratively by HT and janitorial staff, taking account of feasibility and safety.

PC expressed concern that children are frequently kept indoors during icy or wet conditions and highlighted feedback from families that outdoor time is being reduced. PC sought clarification on flexibility within policy.

HT confirmed that courtyard access and rotation of classes may be used where appropriate to ensure outdoor opportunities.

PC raised the possibility of volunteer support during severe weather and queried whether janitorial priorities could be adjusted on such days to support break times. JW advised that discussions around what is feasible at school level are appropriate but must consider service-wide priorities.

Further discussion took place regarding outdoor play in wet weather, clothing management, and ensuring consistency across classes.

## *Decisions*

Outdoor access during adverse weather to be reviewed ahead of next winter to consider clarity, consistency and feasibility.

#### *Actions*

- HT and PC to revisit outdoor play procedures and communication before next winter session.

## **2c. Pre-9am Supervision and Road Safety**

#### *Discussion Summary*

CS outlined ongoing concerns regarding supervision and road safety prior to 9am.

PC raised issues including parking, bus safety, and inappropriate behaviour from adults on occasion. Suggestions included adjusting support staff hours, gate closures, walking buses, improved signage, and increasing awareness of High School car park access.

HT advised that ASN staff currently support bus supervision at the end of the day and agreed to explore whether start times could be adjusted.

HBM advised that closing gates may displace the issue rather than resolve it and noted previous NLC Roads involvement, including modifications to the traffic circle.

JW suggested linking with Active Schools regarding walking buses and re-establishing junior pupil safety programmes.

PC proposed improved communication regarding High School parking and student-designed signage to promote road safety awareness.

#### *Decisions*

Further exploration of practical supervision adjustments and community-based solutions.

#### *Actions*

- HT to consult ASN staff regarding adjusting hours to 8:45am–2:45pm where feasible.
- PC to issue reminders to year groups regarding use of the High School car park.
- PC to liaise with PTA regarding potential fundraising for pupil-designed road safety signage.

## **2d. Pupil Leadership and Supervision**

### *Discussion Summary*

PC sought clarification regarding supervision of upper primary pupils undertaking leadership roles (e.g., tray collection, monitoring younger pupils).

HT confirmed that pupils are supervised by adults and that tray collection operates on a rota system.

PC shared examples raised by families regarding tone of communication and younger pupils feeling rushed during lunch.

Discussion focused on strengthening mentoring, leadership development, and ensuring clear routes for addressing concerns.

JW suggested linking with the Academy to support development of pupil leadership pathways.

HBM suggested exploring recognition opportunities such as the High 5 Award.

### *Decisions*

Leadership roles to be reviewed to strengthen mentoring, support and recognition.

### *Actions*

- HT to review pupil leadership structures and recognition opportunities.

## **3. Parent Council Budget**

### *Discussion Summary*

PC queried whether there is a designated Parent Council budget.

HT confirmed there is an annual allocation, historically used for administrative costs and related expenditure.

JW explained Devolved School Management (DSM) arrangements, confirming there is a specific line for Parent Council activity. If unused, funds may be vired to other areas. JW also noted availability of new finance support personnel for schools.

### *Decisions*

Chair to clarify current allocation and usage.

#### *Actions*

- CS to follow up with HT regarding Parent Council budget allocation and processes.
- JW to provide support if required.

### **4. Staff Cover and Communication**

#### *Discussion Summary*

PC raised concerns regarding delays in communication to parents during periods of staff absence (e.g., P5 and previous P1 examples).

HT explained that schools must internally cover the first 15 days of absence before supply processes are engaged.

PC emphasised that the concern relates to communication rather than cover arrangements and requested earlier updates to families to support children with routine changes.

JW recommended issuing communication after five days, following the self-certification period.

PC also noted consideration of class composition and individual class needs when arranging internal cover.

#### *Decisions*

Communication approach during staff absence to be reviewed.

#### *Actions*

- HT to review communication timelines regarding staff absence, with consideration of issuing updates after five days where appropriate.

### **5. December Planning and Consistency**

#### *Discussion Summary*

PC acknowledged the intensity of the December period for families this session and requested clearer communication earlier in November where routines may change.

All acknowledged that this year's calendar, including a full week prior to Christmas, created additional pressures.

### *Decisions*

Earlier communication regarding December changes to be considered in future planning.

## **6. Attendance Certificates**

### *Discussion Summary*

PC queried the rationale for attendance certificates and whether alternative approaches may be more appropriate.

HT clarified that improving attendance is a priority and that the school is also focusing on targeted support for pupils with lower attendance.

JW confirmed that certificates are school-generated rather than mandated by NLC policy and emphasised the importance of understanding the narrative behind absence rather than focusing solely on percentages.

GG reinforced the importance of supportive engagement with families to understand barriers to attendance.

PC noted concerns from the wider parent forum regarding accuracy and timing of certificate distribution.

### *Decisions*

Further discussion required regarding attendance recognition approach.

### *Actions*

- HT and GG to consider a separate session to review attendance approaches and parental engagement.

## **7. Homework and Parent Working Groups**

### *Discussion Summary*

JP provided an update on the Homework Working Group. A draft policy has been developed. Lorraine is leading Positive Behaviour developments, and JP is overseeing reporting.

JP reported that the first session was positive and constructive.

#### *Actions*

- Lorraine to issue a survey to attendees of the Homework Working Group.

## **8. NLC Parental Engagement Support**

### *Discussion Summary*

GG outlined her cluster role and strategic remit for parental engagement. She proposed a short-term working group (3–4 meetings) to complement the school's existing strategy and develop a strong parental engagement profile.

The group would aim for 10–15 members, representing a cross-section of year groups and including Parent Council and wider parent forum representation.

JP confirmed initial planning work has begun, aligned to the NLC strategy.

### *Decisions*

Working group to be established.

### *Actions*

- PC to provide names of volunteers by end of next week.
- GG to share the NLC Parental Engagement Strategy with JP for circulation to PC.
- PC to lead communications to the wider parent body in partnership with senior staff.

## **9. AOB**

### *Discussion Summary*

PC requested removal of Parent Council member contact details from the HT report, noting that a dedicated PC mailbox should be used.

KW confirmed she is the contact for the Volunteer Initiative.

#### *Actions*

- JP to remove Parent Council email addresses and phone numbers from future HT reports.
- KW and JP to progress the Volunteer Initiative arrangements.

Meeting Close

7:20pm

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Head Lice	Issue reminder communication	JP	Feb-26
Outdoor Access	Review adverse weather procedures	HT / PC	Before Winter 2026
Pre-9am Supervision	Consult ASN staff re adjusted hours	HT	Feb-26
Road Safety	Remind parents re High School parking	PC	Feb-26
Road Safety	Explore fundraising for signage	PC / PTA	TBC
Parent Council Budget	Clarify allocation and processes	CS	Feb-26
Staff Cover Communication	Review communication timeline	HT	Feb-26
Homework Working Group	Issue attendee survey	Lorraine	Feb-26
Parental Engagement Group	Provide volunteer names	PC	End next week
Parental Engagement Group	Share NLC strategy with PC	GG / JP	Feb-26
HT Report	Remove PC contact details	JP	Immediate
Volunteer Initiative	Progress arrangements	KW / JP	TBC