

Balmalloch Parent Council Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday 1 September 2026, 6pm-8pm

Location: Balmalloch Primary School

Attendees

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

Balmalloch Primary Senior Staff: Ruth McCarthy (HT); John Paterson (JP)

NLC Education: Jill Woodward (JW)

NLC Councillor: Heather Brennan-McVey (HBM)

1. Welcome

Attendees were welcomed to the meeting. HT circulated the Head Teacher's Report in paper format at the start of the meeting. The report was noted and was not covered during the meeting.

The Parent Council raised a parent forum concern regarding empty soap in the toilets and availability of sanitary products. JP confirmed Miss Wright as the period champion and HT agreed to raise soap with Mr. T to check with cleaners and feedback.

2. YouTube and Digital Tools in Classrooms

The Parent Council raised questions received from parents about the use of YouTube and other digital tools in classrooms, including whether YouTube is used during free time and how screen time is managed during the school day. Questions were also raised about Dojo Island, including how it operates and how it compares with tools such as Study Ladder.

The school confirmed that it is reviewing digital tools in classrooms and will take forward an integrated approach. It was noted that learning should not become wholly device-based. Members agreed that regular review is important because the digital environment changes quickly.

HBM highlighted the value of proactive parent-forum engagement: parents would welcome clear information on which tools are used, how they are used and why. The Parent Council also asked whether permissions can be configured to limit inappropriate YouTube content, including Shorts. JP confirmed that the forthcoming Meet the Teacher event will include information on Study Ladder.

Actions: HT to communicate with parents about the digital tools used in school. School staff to maintain regular opportunities to review and share classroom digital tools. JP to include Study Ladder information at Meet the Teacher.

3. CCTV and Parent Access to School Grounds

The Parent Council revisited safety at the front entrance and sought assurance that the office does not open the door to unknown visitors. The school confirmed that there is a camera at the buzzer and that contractors are admitted through the buzzer system. Office staff should speak with all visitors, seek confirmation of identity and attend the door before opening it.

JW noted that Balmalloch is an older building and that NLC will not retrofit all older schools as a matter of course. HT can obtain costings for more secure doors; if this is not possible within available budget, it would need to be considered through the wider programme of works.

PC members asked that CCTV options be explored. HBM noted that views on CCTV may differ across the parent body and encouraged a focus on whether practical protocols and risk-assessment mechanisms are in place.

Discussion also covered the balance between open and closed access at the school gates, including accessibility, different arrival routes and the needs of pupils who may be at risk of leaving the grounds.

The school confirmed that the no-parents-in-the-playground arrangement applies before and after school. P1–P3 pupils at breakfast club are supervised indoors in the morning until bell; P4–P7 pupils are sent outside. HT confirmed there is supervision in the senior area in the morning; and pupils arriving by bus are supervised when they arrive. HT will observe how well access arrangements are being followed through September before deciding whether further communication is needed. The Parent Council offered to support any future communication.

Actions: School office protocols to be applied immediately. HT to obtain a price for secure-door improvements and to observe adherence to parent access arrangements through September.

4. Sports Day

The Parent Council raised a range of suggestions for Sports Day, particularly around accessibility, seating, buggy access, crowding and the inclusion of pupils with diverse abilities. Ideas included smaller sessions, infant/junior/senior groupings, a sports week, alternative activities for pupils who do not wish to participate, and PTA involvement. Use of the athletics grounds was discussed but not considered viable due to transport etc.

HT confirmed that Mrs Meechan meets regularly with Active Schools and will seek advice.

It was agreed that a working group should first consider good practice and what can realistically be taken forward before consultation with parents. The consultation may then consider timing, number of days, events, activities and volunteering.

Actions: A Sports Day Working Group will be established. The Parent Council will prepare a parent survey when consultation is ready to proceed.

5. Attendance and Parent Engagement

The Parent Council sought clarity on how it could support the school's attendance work and what information would be most useful. HT confirmed that attendance is good and is reviewed monthly, while the school continues to aim for the highest possible attendance.

Members discussed whether patterns of absence might indicate barriers, such as the cost of the school day or overstimulation around particular events. The Parent Council asked whether the data supports any such patterns. JP confirmed that teachers and the school investigate repeat absences and make contact where appropriate.

Action: HT to review attendance information for patterns or barriers that may assist future discussion with the Parent Council.

6. Transition

The Parent Council raised the need for clearer transition planning and communication, particularly before the last day in June. Members noted that transitions for new starts and leavers are well established, while processes for pupils moving between school year's could be strengthened. The discussion focused on the transition process rather than how classes are determined.

Members highlighted the importance of timely information to reduce children's anxiety, opportunities to spend time with a new class, clear expectations around any pupil-input processes, and consideration of GIRFME arrangements. JW noted that approaches vary across the authority and that pupils can meet their new class, though the new teacher may not always be known before the summer.

Communication methods were discussed, with email noted as challenging because of the mail-out software used. The Parent Council asked for more detail on the school's transition plans.

Action: HT to raise at the relevant cluster meeting how other schools communicate new classes and support pupils through transition, then report back to the Parent Council.

7. Additional Items

School Calendar: JP confirmed that the website calendar is up to date with information currently known and includes a caveat that dates may change. Parents should be reminded about the calendar at Meet the Teacher and other suitable opportunities.

Extension of Parent Council Meetings: It was agreed that Parent Council meetings will be extended to 1.5 hours.

School Shows: The possibility of an evening performance was discussed. This may be considered next year but is not possible this year. Possible Kilsyth Academy options were also raised, with JW noting potential conflicts with Future Fridays and prelim exams.

Walls and Doors: JW provided an update that the project is in the capital plan and is progressing through planning permissions and building warrants. Two schools have been approved for this work. Contractors and parent engagement will follow as the programme progresses. Larger projects are usually considered for school holidays, although delivery will depend on the final plan. An update will be provided at the next meeting.

Responses to Parental Emails: Examples were shared of delayed or missing responses to parental emails, and the impact this had on family anxiety during the summer. Members linked this to the wider discussion on transition and communication, noting that inconsistent communication can affect trust and engagement. JW confirmed that communication by the leadership team is a focus for the year and that a communication strategy is important in rebuilding trust.

PTA: Ideas included a Vinted Live event, uniform recycling during the final week of term or alongside Sports Day, P7 leavers' jumpers and sports kit. JP will advise the Parent Council what is needed in relation to sports kit.

8. AOB

The Palacerigg trip is available on iPay.

Members noted that the start-of-year email had been positive and well received by parents.

A further meeting may be needed to discuss the inspection report; this is to be confirmed.

The Parent Council budget was agreed for sports equipment.

It was also noted that KW's volunteering updates would be communicated separately due to time.

Action Register

Action	Responsible	Due Date
Check with Mr. T regarding soap in toilets	HT	Immediate
Communicate the digital tools used in school to parents	HT	This term
Include Study Ladder information at Meet the Teacher	JP	Meet the Teacher
Apply visitor-identification and door-opening protocols consistently	School office	Immediate
Obtain costings for secure-door improvements and explore CCTV options	HT	Next meeting
Observe parent access arrangements and decide after the September long weekend whether further communication is required	HT	October 2026
Establish a Sports Day Working Group	School / PC	This term
Prepare a parent survey when consultation is ready	PC	TBC
Review attendance information for patterns or barriers relevant to Parent Council discussion	HT	Next meeting
Seek cluster good practice on communicating new classes and supporting transition, then report back to PC	HT	Next meeting
Remind parents about the website calendar at Meet the Teacher and other opportunities	JP	Ongoing
Provide a Walls and Doors update	JW	Next meeting
Advise PC what is needed in relation to sports kit	JP	This term