



Minutes of Meeting of Balerno High School Parent Council 08 May 2017 at Balerno High School at 6.30pm

PC members

Andrea Brewster (AB) (Chair), Sanjay Kallat (SK) (Deputy Chair), Jessica Bryce (JB), Tony Foster (TF), Marion Milne (MM), Mike Humphries (MH), Peter Reekie (PR), Paula Miller (PM), Christine Paterson (CP)

School staff

Neil McCallum (NM) (Head Teacher, BHS), Michelle May (MM) (PTC English, Media & Drama, BHS)

Senior pupils

N/A

Public

Mandy Irvine (Parent)

Apologies

Ricky Henderson

Introduction and Welcome

1. The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed attendees.

Minutes and Matters arising

2. No changes requested to last meeting's minutes; proposed by Peter Reekie, seconded by Mike Humphries.

Headteacher report

3. Mr McCallum gave his report:

Staffing Update

Music Vacancy - Jan Brownhill joined after Easter to fill the vacancy until the summer; permanent post advertised and has received 24 applicants.

Support for Learning - Jennifer MacDonald joined after Easter.

Upcoming Events (with additional Key Dates)

8th May – First day of new timetables for new S2, S3 and S4 pupils

22nd May – Holiday

2nd June – New S5 / S6 pupils return, for an assembly / S6 induction respectively; new timetables will be handed out.

- 3rd June** – Old S6 year group's Leavers Prom
- 6th June** – Senior Phase Parents Information Evening
- 12th June** – Wider Achievements Awards Evening
- 15th June** – P7 Transition Parents Information Evening
- 20th- 22nd June** – P7 Transition days
- 26th/27th June** – House Championships
- 29th June** – Challenge Day
- 30th June** – End of Term (12 noon)
- 16th August** – Start of 2017/2018 school year

Edinburgh Leisure

The handover of management of school sports facilities' [excluding 2G astro] out-of-hours use to Edinburgh Leisure is still to be finalized. It was due to start on 22nd February. School use of facilities will remain unaffected.

Building work

Started 8th May, will be organized to avoid disruptions to exams.

Finances

BHS is in a healthy position and looking to carry forward £20K. The plan is to invest this in improving facilities and resources for departments.

Pupil Equity Funding

BHS will receive £19,200 for the 2017/18 year based on current year's S1-S3 uptake of free school meals, each uptake representing an allocation of £1,200. This funding is for initiatives that will help close the poverty related attainment gap for S1-S3 pupils. The focus will be on Literacy, Numeracy, Health and Wellbeing. The funding is not tied to particular pupils but can be used to reach a wider group. Funding will be re-calculated each year and available for 4 years. There will be consultation with staff, parents and the wider school community seeking feedback to decide how the funding will be spent.

SQA

Exams started on 2nd May with no significant issues other than a new, snug design of SQA CD sleeve that has led to scratching of CDs required for Music exams. This is a widespread problem not confined to BHS.

See also point 7 below.

ParentPay

Use of the existing City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) parent payment method WisePay will cease at the end of May. Any outstanding WisePay credit balances after this date should be repayable to parents. CEC has chosen ParentPay as the new replacement. After careful business consideration BHS will not introduce ParentPay before the summer but will be obliged to in the new school year. Due to the lag in adopting ParentPay this means BHS will not have an automated payment system, or the email / text facilities currently provided by WisePay, for the duration of June. Alternative processes will be in place.

Two points of note are that ParentPay holds pupil fingerprint data for its cashless catering facility and charges a 1.275% plus VAT (making 1.53%) fee for payments going

through the system other than school meals, regardless of whether the payment is electronic or cash.

Parent Council expressed significant concern over both points and the fact that CEC consider this an acceptable solution. NM advised he and other Edinburgh Head Teachers have already expressed concerns to CEC and NM has requested all relevant information, also FAQs from Portobello HS who have started using ParentPay. PR will write to express Parent Council concerns to CEC.

Achievement

Art - Amy Moore (then S3, now S4) has had her Edinburgh Festival Fringe poster shortlisted and it will be displayed alongside winning posters, regional winners and the Creative Stars Award at Dynamic Earth from 6th June – 8th August.

Media and Modern Studies - Around 50 pupils were involved in this year's BBC School Report in March. Pupils researched and produced news bulletins which were then shared on the BHS web site and linked to the BBC News website. BHS was one of four Edinburgh schools to participate.

Timetables

New S6 timetables will include double periods which should allow pupils to undertake practical work more easily. Higher courses will be allocated an additional 6th period per week.

Updates on News and Events

Curriculum Review

Will take place next school year, there will be consultation with the BHS community.

Catchment Review

The review is in progress. Currie Primary is at capacity so there is a possibility that the division between Balerno and Currie catchments may move to the Balerno boundary sign on Lanark Road West.

Head Boy / Head Girl report

4. Will resume next school year after new Head Boy and Head Girl are appointed.

Other reports

5. 5.1 Balerno Community Council Rep (MM)

No news.

5.2 CCwP / other relevant meetings

Next South West Locality Group (SWLG) meeting is Monday 29th May 18:30-20:30, Wester Hailes Community Centre.

Dates for upcoming meetings available on CEC web site, plus minutes of past meetings:

Next Consultative Committee with Parents (CCwP) meeting is 15th June 18:30-20:30, European Room at the City Chambers.

Next Education, Children and Families Committee meeting 20th June 18:30-20:30 at the City Chambers.

5.3 PTA Report

The PTA have donated a further £700. This will go into the BHS excursion fund.

AB will contact PTA to invite a representative to Parent Council meetings.

5.4 Primary School reports

AB will re-establish contact with the feeder Primary Schools.

5.5 Local Councillors

AB will contact new councillors to invite to Parent Council meetings.

Transition

6. 6.1 135 P7 pupils are due to enter S1 in August. This is 10 more pupils than last year's intake. An increase of 15 pupils equates to one additional teacher for BHS.

6.2 Blazer fitting dates will be publicized.

6.3 SK suggested Parent Council presence at and publicising the 500 Club at the forthcoming P7 Transition parents evening.

Update on changes to assessments for SQA courses

7. NM confirmed that modifications to the assessment of National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses are now available on the SQA web site. Generally, the formal course will no longer include end-of-unit assessments (though BHS teachers will still continue with their own internal assessments), and the majority of exams will be lengthened. These modifications will be rolled out one course per year from the 2017/18 school year onwards in the order: National 5, Higher, Advanced Higher; meaning that the new S4 pupils will be assessed in the modified way for all these courses.

Grade D for **modified** courses will be extended from a notional 45–49% to a notional 40–49%. National 5 to Advanced Higher courses will continue to be graded A to D or 'no award'. See SQA web site for full details.

PC Meeting dates 2017/2018

8. 8.1 AB proposed 6 meetings per year roughly every 6 weeks. The intention is to hold one meeting in Kirknewton PS and one in Ratho PS. Start time to remain 6:30pm. AB to check CCwP meeting dates.

8.2 Early September meeting will include the Parent Council AGM.

8.3 Late October meeting to include a focus on PSE, PSP, Health and Wellbeing as these are areas that new parents may not be familiar with.

Parent Council AGM

9. 9.1 Brief discussion as to most attractive format for new parents – mini AGM followed by interesting topic or vice versa. NM confirmed refreshments can be provided by the Riverside Café - will be paid for by Parent Council.

9.2 SK and TF considered the merits of tying in with a school event.

9.3 MI suggested publishing an agenda to attract new parents.

Ideas forthcoming were: exam results, curriculum review, reflection a year on from Head Teacher appointment parent consultation (you said / we did) - to encourage parents to be involved in processes at BHS.

9.4 AB to review constitution particularly with respect to numbers required.

School Calendar / key dates for 2017/18 session

10. 10.1 TF asked if the web site calendar will give key dates. NM confirmed it will and that extra curricular activities will also be included.

10.2 SK suggested a blog or page for the new Head Boy and Head Girl.

Parental engagement

11. 11.1 PC presence at parents' nights - AB will attend P7 Transition parents evening. NM to provide further Parents Evening dates.

11.2 Website / social media -

PC communication: JB has access to BHS web site and can update with Parent Council communications. TF has access to BHS Parent Forum fb and Balerno PC Twitter accounts but felt updates about school news should come from the school. NM explained the strict guidelines regarding Head Teachers' use of social media. MH will pass PC gmail account and archive copy of old school web site to AB.

School communication: sits with NM. NM hopes to maintain a blog.

Banking arrangements

12. PR is changing over signatories as detailed in minutes of the March meeting. Peter Reekie, Christine Paterson and Andrea Brewster will be the new signatories.

AOCB

13. 13.1 Parent Council expressed thanks to outgoing member Mike Humphries who has attended every meeting since joining 6 years ago.

13.2 SK expressed thanks to NM for resolving a Biology course issue.

13.3 SK commented on the possible difficulty for S4s finding work experience as many employers will only offer to those aged 16 or over. He asked whether work experience in the S4 year could be for those leaving at the end of S4, with other pupils having theirs in S5.

13.4 MI asked if a pupil could have more work experience after S4 and NM confirmed this should be possible if it supported the child's career preference.

13.5 MI asked if there will be bi-level classes next year. NM confirmed this is expected to be the case for some Nat 5 / Higher or Higher / Advanced Higher classes. NM explained that this was due to the low uptake of certain courses meaning there were not enough pupils for a single-level class. BHS has no other options available to them other than either disallow pupils their course choices or accommodate them in this way.

Date / time of next meeting

14. Next meeting (including AGM) will be 6:30pm on 11th September 2017, in the LRC, Balerno High School