



Balerno HS Parent Council Online Meeting – Monday 12 October, 6.30pm

Minutes

Attendees

PC Members

Andrea Brewster (AB) (Chair), Alastair McLellan (AM) (VC), Jessica Bryce (JB), Fiona McDougall (FM), Alison Robertson (AR), Adrienne Wilson (AW), Mandy Irvine (MI), Christine Paterson (CP), Patricia Lumsden (PL), Paula Ryan (PR), Elaine MacMaster (EM), Adele Higham (AH)

Parents

John Henderson, Saafia Rahman, Diyanna Swingler, Yolande Montero, Simon May, Joseph Nortey

Pupils

Charlotte Railton - Head Girl

Ben Henderson, Michelle Berra de San Cristobal, Archie Buchan, Matthew Laidlaw - Deputes

Co-opted Community Member

Marion Milne (MM)

School Staff

Neil McCallum (NM) Head Teacher

Ros Ranger (RR) Depute Head Teacher

Apologies

Nick Weir, Adrienne Wilson, Nanda Groenewald, Scott Gibbons - Head boy

1. Introduction and welcome

2. Headteacher report

Staffing Update

New Staff

Malcolm Godsman Music Starting Monday 26th October.

Staff Departed

Nil



Events and News update

Climbing Success

Louise Flockhart, S5, Louise had a good day at the British Climbing Cup in September. She qualified for finals and finished 4th. On this occasion Louise was a bit disappointed not to make the podium, however, she took lots of positives away from the event and continues to go from strength to strength.

The competition was broadcast on BBC Sport web channel and on YouTube. You can see her final climb of the day at 1h46m25s at the following link.

<https://youtu.be/E4yym-YmHmQ>

Refugee Collection

Following the appeal on behalf of one of our S2 pupils, we had an incredible response for toiletries to send to the refugee charity. This was all done under covid_19 guidelines and Hannah in S2 had to inventory the collection before sending on to the charity.

Cerebral Palsy – Wear Green day

Pupils and staff entered in to the spirit of the day on Friday 9th October, wearing something green and donating for the cerebral palsy charity. We managed to raise £320 which is excellent in the current circumstances.

S1 Parents Welcome meeting

Again, due to the current restrictions we are not able to host this event in the usual manner. We are currently producing a video link to be shared with all parents and carers in S1. This will contain all the information that we would normally share at this event, including how to support your young person at home with literacy and numeracy. Mrs Coffey has now shared information with the primary schools in relation this event.

3. Senior Pupil report

Charlotte is responsible for the Learning and teaching group. Learning and Assessment policy is currently only for teachers so they are trying to write a version for pupils so that pupils can understand it easily. This should be ready over the next 2 weeks.

Scott is responsible for the Pupil Council. There has been little progress due to Covid restrictions. They are electing Reps from each tutor group to represent pupil's views at Pupil Council Meetings.

Michelle heads up the Health and Wellbeing committee. There are 5 of them and they each have a project to work on. The Shine a Light project based in the LRC offers support with pupils with mental health issues. Men's mental health and suicide prevention will be a topic they are covering. They also want to eradicate masculine toxic stereotypes.

They want to create an awareness- based calendar for different days throughout the year.

They are writing a newsletter to inform pupils.



They want to improve Health and Wellbeing in young people and will seek to achieve the UNICEF rights respecting school award for Balerno High School.

Ben's area is inclusion. They raised awareness of cerebral palsy on Friday 9th October. They will be having a black history month in October to raise awareness and will have presentations and show relevant movies. They aim to make teachers more aware of using suitable pronouns when addressing pupils. They wish to have a pupil voice box, where pupils can raise concerns or make suggestions.

Archie is responsible for Learner Participation and is planning to conduct a survey on Teams to gather feedback.

AB recognises that this Senior Group seem to be working really quickly and are very organised despite being limited with Covid restrictions and their efforts are very much appreciated..

4. AGM

All the committee members introduced themselves and we welcomed Paula Ryan as a Parent Council Member. AB reminded members that her daughter is in the senior phase of the school and that she is keen to seek someone to take over as Chairperson.

5. Finance update

£1355.55 in the bank as of 29th September. We should receive the Council grant in October so we may have some money at the next meeting to buy a bench or whatever is needed.

6. Non Covid related matters

- Follow up question from parent present at last meeting about inclusion – how does the school promote anti- racism, anti- bullying and equality generally?
This is included in PSE and RMPS
All staff will engage with 3 hours of mandatory CLPL, undertaking training provided by Edinburgh Council.
Mrs L Coffey (Depute HT) is the Equalities Lead for the school
- Update on building works
NM has had a pre-start meeting with the builders and work is due to start on 12th October. The works are due for completion 11th February 2022. Proposed work for the next weeks includes:
Friday 16th October
Far side of swimming pool car park will be closed for preparation works for installation of units and contractors' compound
October break
Scaffolding installed around the remainder of the building
Roofing work starts above CDT / Science
Electrical and Mechanical survey
PE – Swimming pool changing rooms started
Hoarding installed around the workers compound

Week beg 2nd November



Classroom upgrades begin. (This will include flooring, roofing and décor and will involve decanting from rooms for a period of time).

- Pupils smoking / vaping during school day. This seems to be a problem within the school and the surrounding areas. NM says they did a smoke free initiative in 2019 with smoke free ambassadors. May do this again. It is against Council policy for anyone, pupil/teacher/workmen to smoke in Council property. This is part of the PSE program and information will be put on the website again. Normally he has one teacher from the Leadership team patrolling the village during lunch-time but they are short due to Covid as teachers have to patrol all the different areas at each break and lunchtime. They are going to revamp the PSE program to include vaping. Charlotte says they will include vaping in their groups. She wonders if perhaps pupils do not realise that vaping is a serious health risk and that they need to be made aware. Michelle will try to educate pupils more about vaping and how dangerous it is.

More information about the Smoke Free School initiative is below

<https://www.ashscotland.org.uk/what-we-do/children-young-people-and-tobacco/tobacco-free-schools/>

7. Covid related matters

Learning and Teaching

- Parental consultations, school reports
P7 open evenings will be virtual this year.
There will be no face to face parent consultations until at least Term 4. RR working with the booking system to try to get it in place for an S3 parent's evening 12th November to be conducted via audio calls. RR collating reporting calendar for the whole school which will be on school website.
RR said that tracking reports will be given to S4, 5 and 6 this week. S3 will receive their next week. S1 and 2 will receive theirs after the October holiday.
All pupils to get a second report.
- Update on reinstating practical classes
Initial guidance was that some practical classes could do more after October break so for HFT, BHS are slightly ahead. NM says it is frustrating for teachers and pupils and we are keen to move forward as quickly as possible to bring back more practical work as long as it can be done in a safe manner and in line with Scottish government and Edinburgh Council guidance. CDT and science are currently doing work using virtual demonstrations using the school's digital technology.
- Digital learning in school / supporting home learning
Local Authority (LA) are trying to create a balance. Learning grids have been created and they are also using national support sites like Scholar and webinars. Isla McKnight who



has been added to the school's staff as the extra teacher, is looking at the online learning and supporting young people who need help with their learning post lockdown.

RR says that the learning grids are for every 2 weeks. Isolating pupils can choose 3 tasks per day which allows pupils some personalisation and choice and can do other work as well.

An order was placed at Easter for an additional 30 laptops to help predominantly pupils with additional needs and senior phase pupils, but they have never arrived. NM still trying to find out why these have been delayed. This is not just an issue for BHS, other schools are also facing this problem. BHS has 30 Ipads and 5 laptops as an interim from LA which will not impact on BHS getting the 30 laptops. These can be used to support home learning for isolating children if required. He says staff are working really hard to support our young people.

BHS has completed a Digital Audit for LA and NM believes we need a device for every pupil in S4, 5 and 6.

AB notes that the wifi issue in schools is widespread across the city and the LA needs to address it, particularly now when some learning/homework is online.

- PE

AB notes that it is far from ideal for pupils to be outdoors having PE in wet weather without being able to change clothes. NM acknowledges that sometimes PE teachers take kids outside in dry weather and the rain can come on suddenly, this being Scotland. The latest advice was that pupils were to be allowed to have indoor PE from 5th October but this wasn't permitted with the rises in cases in the country. NM says there should be another update on Thursday 15th October. The PE faculty are very aware of the situation. The small gym has been converted into a classroom for PE staff to use in wet weather. Adrienne Wilson had a meeting re using the gyms after school hours and the advice is that clubs will be able to use the gym halls from 2nd November. We would assume that pupils may be allowed to have indoor gym from this date as well as it would be totally illogical to allow the general public to use the halls in the evening but not allow pupils. Adrienne Wilson also advises that her club have been told there will be no changing facilities allowed so this may be the same for the pupils.

SQA, exams & the senior phase

- Timeline for SQA guidance about curriculum and exam plans for May 2021
Nat 5's have been cancelled and a huge document is on the SQA website. RR has trawled through this document so see what it means for each subject. RR has also been looking at this to determine the changes to Highers and Advanced Highers but no definite answers yet. She will be consulting with Curriculum Leaders and Teachers.
For Nat 5's pupils will be required to submit 3-4 pieces of work. The SQA have not yet given guidance for standardised pieces of work but RR should know more by end of October. AH says that informing pupils and parents in advance about maths assessments has been very helpful and parents would appreciate this for all subjects. NM will try to reinforce this idea with teachers.

Health and safety related matters



- Updates on:
 - Face coverings in school
NM has had great feedback from the manager at the lower Scotmid from the responsible behaviour shown by BHS pupils.
The top Scotmid wants pupils to be aware that if they are not buying anything they shouldn't come in the shop.
We now have 2 entrances into the school, one for juniors and one for seniors.
Most pupils wear masks but some occasionally forget.
Pupils who get the 44 bus to school have been reminded that they need to wear face masks. Bus drivers have been giving positive feedback about BHS pupils.
 - Break and lunch arrangements (especially wet weather arrangements)
The school are trying to keep the year groups in bubbles which isn't ideal but is necessary to limit the amount of children who may need to self-isolate.
 - Access to lockers
There is currently no access to lockers as they are situated on the one way system round the school and they cannot have kids congregating here creating a traffic jam of children.
 - Public health vaccinations programme
Parents received this email on Friday 9th October. They will be done in February and June 2021.
 - Road safety outside Balerno HS before and after school day
NM in contact with the works manager for the roadworks outside the school. MM and NM to check if the temporary bus stop is to be kept in case the roadworks come back nearer the school or if it can be taken away and the normal bus stop used again.

Extra curricular

- Any updates from Active Schools or Edinburgh Leisure?
Active Schools co-ordinators are being used in schools in the LA where it is believed children didn't have as many opportunities during lockdown.
- Organised sports (school teams and other organisations using the school facilities)
The issue with sports is that schools are trying to keep the pupils in their year group bubbles. Further guidance from LA should be coming out.
- School lets out of hours
As stated above it is believed this will resume from 9th November.

Next Parent Council meeting – Monday 23rd November, 6.30pm