



Balerno HS Parent Council Online Meeting – Monday 6th September 2021, 6.30pm

Minutes

Attendees

PC Members

Alison Robertson (AR) Chair), Mandy Irvine (MI), Paula Ryan (PR), Nick Weir (NW), Adrienne Wilson (AW), Louise Wilson (LW)

Staff Member

Simon May (SM)

Community Member

Marion Milne (MM)

School Staff

Ros Ranger (RR) Acting Head Teacher

Maree Anderson (MA) Depute Head Teacher

Shaun Ferguson (SF) Depute Head Teacher

Cara Prot (CP) Acting Depute Head Teacher

Apologies

Karen Davidson, Nanda Groenewald, Angela Hogg, Trish Lumsden, Elaine MacMaster, Neil McHaffie, Marion Milne

Parents

Tess Dunlop, Vicki Wallace, Jen Reay, Jyothi Devara, Uma Laks, Francine Love, Mariann Hart, Sukhy Sahota, Gareth Davies, Susan Hall.

1. Introduction and welcome

2. AGM

AR provided an overview of the role of the Parent Council (PC) and stated some of the areas where the PC has become involved over the last year. See separate report.

PC membership: AR had previously confirmed with TL that she was happy to continue as treasurer and other PC members were happy to continue. Andrea Brewster has left the Parent Council as her eldest child has left school, Alastair MacLennan left the PC after the May meeting and Mandy Irvine has said she will also be leaving the PC.

AR also stated that the PC are keen to see some additional members, particularly from Ratho.

Finances

AR confirmed the income and expenditure for the year as follows:

Opening bank account balance: £1,355.04

Donation to school: (£1,200)

Income from Edinburgh Council: £878.48

Bank interest: £0.94

Expenses: £ Nil

Closing balance: £1,034.46

Staff Representative

Simon May is happy to continue being staff representative.

3. Head teacher report

RR gave a head teacher report which is available separately.

Part of this report stated that building works had almost been completed. NW asked about what work had been done in the Science classrooms as these have been highlighted numerous times previously as in need of extensive renovation. Nothing further that rewiring has happened so it was agreed that feedback would be sought from the science teachers and the PC would pursue the matter with the council.

4. Senior Pupils Report

Depute Senior Pupils Katherine Allan and Arran Blair gave us a presentation on the ideas of the Senior Pupil Team this academic year. The plans they have at the moment are:

- Fundraise for Cardiac Risk in the Young, a group will be doing the Edinburgh Kiltwalk.
- Focus on mental health of pupils by creating safe spaces where pupils can come to talk to senior pupils or staff about any issues.
- Find a place other than the Riverside for the S6. It was noted that this would be difficult as there is no free space in the school.

5. SQA Results Update

RR presented the very good SQA results the pupils received. Pass results were up or the same as 2019 (the last comparable year) which was excellent given the disruption these pupils have experienced at such an important stage of their education. The PC acknowledged the hard work of the pupils and the staff to achieve such good result. Special thanks was given to all staff who had given up time in the Easter holidays to run revision sessions which pupils found so useful.

6. Bullying Policy –Shaun Ferguson

See separate presentation.

After the presentation there was a discussion on protected characteristics. There were discussions on how the school deal with the ingrained low level sexism and racism that seems to exist in every school community. SF advised that these things were addressed in PSE and in the past they had external agencies in. There was though from parents that this may not be working.

There was a question about if the school still split PE into girls and boys and how non binary / agender children could be included. SM told us that boy / girl split no longer happened and pupils could choose a group based on activity. CP also let us know that there was work going on to 'ungender' the curriculum in appropriate areas.

7. Empowered Learning – Maree Anderson

The PC were shown a video on the Empowered Learning project, this is to be sent to parents and carers before the roll out.

MA let us know that the iPads were to be distributed the week beginning the 26th September and that information sessions were to be held on teams before then and full information and contracts

would be sent home for pupils and parents/carers to sign. If there is a refusal to sign there will be an alternative in classes for those pupils.

8. AOB and Questions

- Coursing – CP gave an overview of how coursing works in school and will give a full report at a later PC meeting. It was noted that the current way of doing course choice was the recommendation by the Scottish Government (not specialising in Science or Social Science until S4). This give pupils a chance to pick up a subject more easily in S5 or 6 that they did not do in S4.
- Parents Consultation – The parental survey on parents consultations was 50/50 in person / teams so it has been decided to hold the parents consultations in person. There will also be progress reports at multiple times per year and one of these will include comments from the teachers.
- Vaping – It was noted that this is an ongoing issue in all schools across the area and we are no different. SF let us know what the school policy was on dealing with pupils found vaping, that is:
 - They are removed from social time for a week
 - If found vaping again they are excluded.
- Toilets – RR let us know that all staff had been notified that if a pupil asks to go to the toilet they should be (one at a time) and if staff thought this was happening too often then a wellbeing concern would be raised.
- Buses – There appear to be seating issues on some of the busses with children sitting on the floor. This should not be happening and parents/carers were urged to contact the appropriate council to raise this issue urgently as the school has no control over the busses.

Next Parent Council meeting – Monday 3rd October, 6.30pm