



## **Balerno High School Parent Council**

**Meeting In Person & Online**

**Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2022 6.30pm**

**Minutes**

### **Attendees**

**PC Members:** Alison Robertson (AR) (Chair); Nick Weir (NW); Adrienne Wilson (AW); Jen Reay (JR); Susan Kirby (SK); Nanda Groenewald (NG); Simon May (SM); Paula Ryan (PR);; Suhky Sahota (SS); **Gerhard** Griesel (GG) ;Neil McHaffie (NMc); Louise Wilson (LW)

**Staff Members:** Ros Ranger (RR); Shaun Ferguson (SF); Maree Anderson (MA)

**Senior Pupils:** Yu Chen (Head Pupil), Joshua Lamb (Head Pupil)

**Community Member:** Cllr Graham Bruce; Neil Gardiner Elizabeth Scotson (ES) (School Nurse);

**Parents:** Lara Gregson; **Tess** Dunlop, Mandy Irvine, Sonja Ranson, Catherine Browne (CB)

### **Apologies**

Karen Davidson, Angela Hogg, Trish Lumsden

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### **1. Introduction and Welcome**

AR gave a brief introduction and confirmed there has been an uptake on new members joining the PC; we now have a broader representation from all cluster schools. She also thanked retiring members Mandy Irvine and Elaine Macmaster for their service.

### **2. Senior Pupil Report**

Yu Chen and Josh Lamb (Head Pupils) gave an update on a few of the things the senior Pupil Team have been involved in:

#### **Health& Wellbeing Survey, highlighting points they noted:**

- 40% of BHS pupils who exercise regularly (10% above City average)
- BHS 20% above City average for being involved in a sport team
- BHS 15% lower than City average for pupils who spend 7+ Hrs on phone/device at weekends

- BHS 20% higher than City average for contraceptive use/practising safe sex
- They noted that we have a 10% higher than City average for cases of bullying being reported.

**Kiltwalk:** Senior pupils took part in the kilt walk and have raised £10.000 for CRY (Cardiac Risk in the Young). CRY is the school charity this year in memory of Christopher Cowe.

A new group called **Pupil Parliament** has plans to meet with other groups eg. Pupil Council. Rights Respecting School Committee etc

Head Pupils plan to focus on **Mental Health Awareness** this year: [betterhelp.com/](http://betterhelp.com/) "Wellbeing Ambassadors,

AR raised concern over PVG checks of those involved and also the responsibility of the duty of care on pupils.

SS suggested a two pronged approach separating Mental Health and Life Skills to lessen responsibility on pupils involved.

### 3. Head Teacher Report

RR gave a HT Report which is available separately.

In brief this consisted of an update on building works being completed (Insufficient funds to upgrade science labs, this is being chased); BBC Share My Story with JJ Chalmers visiting the school; The return of the School Academic Award Ceremony being held in school; and a Scottish Education consultation concerning the SQA being disbanded and inviting participation to have your say (closing 5<sup>th</sup> Dec) Please see separate report.

### 4. Finance Report

AR noted there was nothing to report.

### 5. Health & Wellbeing Survey

SF explained the HWB survey gives a School Wide and City Wide view. All pupils participated and extra questions for Senior Pupils. Topics covered were Routines, Mental Health, Wellbeing, Sexual Health, Drugs/Drink/Gambling etc

Results of this report will be available separately.

Many positives reported.

Concerns on screen time, bullying, contraceptive use and pupils using social media as a tool to escape negative feelings.

Plans to engage with Space & Broomhouse Hub to support young carers within school.

AR asked if survey included questions about vaping. It did not.

SS advised that many are not aware each vape can contain nicotine equivalent to 8 cigarettes.

SF confirmed there were concerns over vaping use within schools. RR stated she tries to monitor the toilets as much as she can but she does not have the time to do this daily. Toilets are where pupils are vaping and other students are feeling unable to use the bathroom due to these individuals.

Also concern over vaping on school buses. BHS has no authorisation over school buses. Parents with any concerns regarding the school buses are urged to contact the Council with their concerns.

JR suggested trying to use some public health posters around school/in toilets to try to educate pupils on the dangers of vaping. Suggested sharing on schools social media accounts to raise awareness among parents also.

SM suggested liaising with Currie High as they too have a vaping in school problem.

### 6. School Nurse – Elizabeth Scotson

ES introduced herself. She has been our school nurse for 4 years. She also covers DPPS, Ratho

Primary amongst others. She covers general HWB, Drug/Alcohol education, young carers, sexual health etc.

She plans to start a "Health Drop In Clinic" once a week at the school. This will be over Period 5, lunchtime and Period 6. She hopes to offer this via online bookings once all pupils have ipads.

It will be a controlled environment with Health Care Assistants and herself.

Parents are also invited to contact her should they wish to.

## **7. iPad Rollout Update**

MA advised 850 ipads handed out; 20 still to be collected.

Basic ipad skills presentation given to pupils in KAT time on Friday (7<sup>th</sup> Oct)

Plans to use Apple Classroom App. Training will be given to all staff. This allows staff to be a "Big Brother" in the classroom.

Currently planning a method for reporting damages to ipads (proposing this via a QR code)

Air Drop feature to be turned off after some pupils have been misusing this. Pupils can share work via OneDrive instead.

Parents can buy keyboard cases for their child if they wish. However original case must be returned with ipad when they leave the school. The school have invested in wired keyboards for pupils to use in school. These will be cleaned regularly.

## **8. AOB**

**TREES** – NW advised that BVT/Friends of Marchbank Park have 200 saplings they plan to plant at Marchbank Park and were asking for pupils to help over two session end Oct/early Nov.

Plan is to give the pupils some record of their contributions with a WhatThreeWords reference so they can watch it grow and a certificate.

SM advised there is currently no Eco Group as such at the school but teachers will try to get a group of interested pupils together.

JR raised concerns over the location of these trees. NW will liaise with JR over this.

**LEAPS** – SF explained this is a UCAS programme that supports pupils in a certain category to help them reach their potential. They must have potential to achieve 3 Highers and be in one of the following: young carers, certain postcodes, low income family, in receipt of free school meals, first in family to apply to university, etc. Pupils can self refer to if they are eligible. Mrs Thomson is responsible for UCAS. If pupils is Leaps eligible they will be assigned a mentor who will support/guide/help with applications/funding/course choices/personal statement etc.

**S3 INFO EVENING REQUEST** – AR raised that some parents who have their eldest child in S3 were asking for an information evening (covid generation).

S3 parent consultations on 23<sup>rd</sup> Nov and there will be an information presentation at the end of consultations.

**MOBILE PHONE USE IN SCHOOL** – AR raised a parents concern around mobile phone use in school.

This will be reviewed once all ipads are handed out. There will be a blanket policy of no phones out in class (unless needed for a medical device). Community Police Officer due to come into school and they will revisit advice on sharing photos without others knowledge/consent

**COURSE CHOICES** – SS raised some parents questioning personalisation of choices at the end of S2. RR responded that pupils have free choice but must still do social subjects course and science course but everything else the pupil selects.

Parents concerned that "every other school in Edinburgh" starts subjects in S3 but we do not.

RR replied that it is not every other school; it is "some schools". Scot Gov says we must provide a broad general education and the schools SS is referring to do get a comment that they are not

providing this when they get inspected. BHS provides this broad education and pupils can select the right subject at the start of S4 instead of doing 2 years of a science they do not like. RR feels we are doing the right thing for our pupils and exam results also indicate that there is no benefit of specialising Science and Social Subjects in S3. Also stated that now is not the time to review given Scottish Education is under full review

**STUDY SKILLS** – SS asked about Study Skills. SF responded Study Skills block runs for 6 weeks in the run up to prelims in S4. They learn 5 key revision techniques. There will also be a study skills weekend proposed.

**HOMEWORK** – SK asked about homework, MA advised pupils have “Teams” for each subject. And within that there are two channels – one for Announcements (Tests, trips etc) and one for Homework. MA is working on there being a standardised method across all faculties.

**PAST PAPERS** – NG asked how she can source answers for Past Papers. MA advised these are on the Scot Gov website. The past 5 years are held on the website.

**LOCKERS** - PTA raised funds for Lockers for S1-S3 pupils. RR advised she is obtaining keys for these so they have a key for pupil and a spare that the school hold. They hope to offer scheme for S4-S6 to pay to rent a locker and the funds it generate will go to buying more lockers for these year groups to have in future.

**Next Meeting:** Monday 7<sup>th</sup> November, 6.30pm

(Cara Prot and Ryan Charters attending to give presentation on Pathways)