



## Balerno HS Parent Council

6.30pm, Monday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2023  
Minutes

### Attendees:

#### Parent Council Members

Alison Robertson - Chair, Lara Gregson, Simon Marr, Nick Weir, Jen Reay, Susan Kirby, Karen Davidson

#### Senior Management team:

Ros Ranger – Head Teacher  
Maree Anderson (MA) - Deputy Head Teacher  
Shaun Ferguson (SF)- Deputy Head Teacher  
Cara Prot – Deputy Head Teacher

#### Teachers:

Monique McIntosh (MM)

#### Apologies

Trish Lumsden, Marion Milne, Emma Mowatt, Nanda Gronewald

#### Head Teacher Report

See separate report.

#### Senior Pupil Report

We were joined by Ella, Euan, Merry and Reah

The Senior Pupil Team have been busy, they have been involved with:

- A visit from teachers from Hong Kong, touring school and answering their questions.
- Wider Achievement Evening
- Reintroducing the house points system
- How good is my school questionnaire.
- Arranging a Christmas Fair
- Arranging a study book swap, lots of books are being received and will be available to borrow from the LRC.

#### Faculty Presentation – ‘The Bridge’ Monique McIntosh

MM gave a very interesting presentation on The Bridge:

- The bridge is supporting 60 students now across s1-s3. The main reason for access would be pupils not being able to access mainstream education. The Bridge works with these pupils to get them back in to class.
- There is a therapy dog that comes in once a week
- Doing transition work with the primaries currently to support them coming to the school next year
- Transitions currently being planned for pupils moving out of Bridge at end of S3



- Funding from cycling Scotland to buy bikes, helmets etc, looking to introduce swimming as well
- S4 onwards are looked after by the hub – greater focus on qualifications and study. S4 can go onto be mentors and help younger ones coming through
- Bridge is wellbeing focused, with some attention to learning

Question - Bridge is at capacity, is there any other space that can be used?

Ans: Always on the lookout for more space, but there is nothing available at the moment. Capacity of the school is at it's limit – running at 87%. We have had people out from the council to review. Roll will be at 900 next year and council have set the capacity at 930, so we are pretty much near the top.

Question – what help is needed?

Ans – volunteers needed to help with groups e.g. running a cycling group or leading a workshop. Staffing is a constraint.

Bike storage is needed for the new bikes.

Question – Do you expect the demand for the Bridge to increase further – it's at 6% of the roll at the moment?

Ans – recent increase was due to the expansion of the remit from s1-s2 to s1-s3. However, general view is that demand is on the rise.

## **Toilet issues**

AR stated that this was not intended to be a long discussion as we have been round in this circle many times but she did want to clarify the general feeling among parents that had been in touch about the toilets:

The Parent Council would like to highlight/request the following:

- There is a general feeling that parents concerns are being brought up at Parent Council time and time again and are being listened to but instead of being acknowledged they are being countered and sometimes discounted.
- It is clear that vaping is an issue in every school but we would like clarification that all pupils caught vaping are being disciplined appropriately and parents/carers are being contacted. We would also like to see parents/carers being contacted if pupils are involved in nuisance behaviour hanging around in the toilets. We realise that this is a large task but feel that it would be hugely beneficial if parents knew their pupils were involved in nuisance behaviour.
- Again, we acknowledge that vaping is a huge issue that will take a lot of resources but when it is affecting the hundreds of children who don't take part in this behaviour we feel that everything should be done to try and eradicate it from the toilets. Even if this means other things have to be put on hold/reduced to ensure there are enough resources to manage the toilets.
- Some teachers still consistently will not let pupils out to the toilet. We would like all staff to be reminded that allowing toilet breaks is not optional (unless specifically highlighted on the register or wherever it is noted) and that pupils should be let out.



Senior Management Team responded:

The Senior Management Team replied by saying they were really sorry if parents feel that we are not acting on the issues. They are spending a lot of time in the toilets but can't police the boy's toilets because there are urinals.

Toilets are only locked at specific times, 12-12.30pm (boys) and 12.30 – 1pm (girls) , for cleaning.

Vaping alarms are not possible to use as they need connected to WiFi, no other school in the city has these.

It's extremely difficult to catch people vaping in toilet but when it happens parents are always contacted.

Very difficult situation to manage and never before have the senior staff felt as vulnerable going into toilets

It a lot of cases pupils are getting their vapes from family members

Police have been made aware of shops who are selling vapes locally

Question – why is QR code being used?

Ans – if going to toilet write name on paper at front of class, but now a QR code is used, so that if something is happening in the toilet such as graffiti then the register can be used to investigate. Only people who have access to list is the senior team. Some people are going to the toilet 40 x per week. Only looking at people who are going to the toilet more frequently than would be expected.

Question – is it working? Flagging up patterns?

Ans – yes it is working, harder if it is on paper

Question – has GDPR been considered?

Ans – yes, data is deleted every week

## **Reporting**

Feedback received from parents about the S4 reports was that they were very general, especially English reports, that were all the same stock comments copied and pasted into children's reports.

The use of general pronouns also was seen as a way of making stock comments easier just to copy. Every young person should be referred to with the correct pronouns.

MA said that the feedback had been taken to the CL meeting on Wednesday.

## **AOB**

PTA are struggling for numbers, no volunteers attended the AGM. It could be in the very near future that we have to consider whether the PTA can function without being merged as part of the Parent Council.

**Next meeting Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024 on Teams.**