

Blackhall Primary School Parent Council

30th November 2022

Minutes

Present

Julia Pearson	P1 rep	Colin Chisholm	Treasurer
Kate Walker	P2 rep	Jane Browning	Secretary
Emily Orr	P3 rep	Michael Duncan	Chair
Sine Munro	P4 rep	Kirsty Martin	Head Teacher
Nyssa Pinkerton	P5 rep	Gail Middlemass	Depute Head Teacher
Linda Rennie	P6 rep	<i>Vacant</i>	ASN rep
Ian Cameron	P7 rep and Vice Chair	<i>Apologies</i>	PSA rep

Welcome and Apologies

- Apologies were noted from Jill McIntyre and Cllr Jule Bandel.

1. Minutes of previous meeting

Minutes of the meeting on the 14th September were agreed as an accurate reflection of the meeting. No amendments required.

1.1 Matters arising from minutes

ASN representative for Parent Council to be found.	ASN representative still being sought. Any member of the parent body interested can discussed with Chair. Action: still open
Volunteer to join the finance committee to let the school know	Sine Munro has volunteered. Colin Chisholm has offered to be a deputy. It was noted that perhaps this should be part of the Treasurers remit. First meeting is 5 th December. Action: closed
School to contact ParentPay to find out more about the glitches and to see if pre-programmed reminder emails can be sent automatically.	No further update. Noted that the reminder to parent body about booking lunches before school broke up for Oct holidays was welcome. Action: closed
Volunteer for the playground working group.	Colin Chisholm has volunteered. Action: closed
Mrs Martin will check with Mr McCutcheon on where the key is for the noticeboard outside the school and how this can be used.	Post meeting update. Key is available in school office if anyone has anything they would like to add to the noticeboard. Action: closed
Andrew Gardner going to be adding ASN resources to the website	Action: closed

2. Head Teacher Report

The presentation is included as an attachment to the minutes. The following points provide additional information to the slides.

Slide 3

Some additional funding has been identified to support the recruitment of a Pupil Support Officer for one day per week. The Pupil Support Vacancy is being covered by two members of staff, but officially sits as a vacancy.

Slide 4

Student teachers are returning to schools, with Blackhall hosting students in January in primary 5. As part of the community links, multifaith groups have been coming to school and there has been great engagement by the children.

Slide 5

Attendance overall is very good. If attendance drops below 85%, that is when concerns are raised around learners having enough time to learn.

If you are requesting a pupil to have more than a 2-week absence, the school must send the request to the authority to approve.

Slide 6

School are considering the use of Twitter and are keen to get feedback from parents and teachers about its use and purpose. A short life group will be formed to take this forward.

A reminder to parents that all email communication should be sent through the admin team. If emails are sent directly to teaching staff, there is a higher chance that they could be missed. There is not an audit trail.

Slide 7

Attainment figures need to be submitted in Nov, Mar, and May for each year group. The Nov and Mar data are predictions, and especially in the younger years they should be viewed with a degree of caution given the short period of time they have at school so far this year.

Slide 8

A small group of parents are likely to be asked to help shape the 'school reports for pupils.'

The Chair thanked Mrs Martin for an excellent report.

A question was raised about 'pace and challenge' and what that meant in practice. It was explained that is about ensuring that all learners are being challenged. Often easy to identify the high achievers and the those requiring additional support, but everyone needs to have learning tailored to them. Teachers are being encouraged to – stop, look, reflect – when observing children learning.

The multifaith sessions were commended and a question asked about Scripture Union and are they coming back to take part in school life. They are joining P6 shortly and lunchtime sessions are likely to start shortly.

Mrs Martin was asked what proportion of the budget is discretionary in that the head has full options on how to spend it. A precise percentage is not known, but most of the budget is assigned to specific areas for example absence cover. Once nearing end of the year, if it has an underspend, there is flexibility to use it in other areas.

The recent strike action was discussed and whether there was anything further known. Mrs Martin noted that it is not possible to ask staff if the intent to strike. They do want this to potentially divide staff. It was noted that 100% of staff are members of EIS. The next planned strike action date is 10th

Jan – staff are ensuring that no activities are planned for that date would adversely impact students e.g. no day trips.

It was noted that there had been positive feedback about the recent parent consultations in the big hall. It was much easier to see round the classrooms. Further consideration needs to be given to those with hearing issues, as the hall was noisy.

3. Update on permanent Head Teacher vacancy

As noted at the last meeting the Parent Council is part of the recruitment process, a role usually undertaken by the Chair. It is now understood that there are 2 spaces for PC members. Michael Duncan and Jane Browning have undertaken the training required for this and recruitment is expected to start in January. It was noted that this is a confidential process and that Mrs Martin as acting Headteacher would need to apply like anyone else that was interested in the role.

4. Updates from year reps on any issues raised with the school

The chair noted that it would be useful for year reps to share any information that they have discussed with school, that may be relevant or of interest to the rest of the PC.

P5 have raised the issue of using teams and One Note for homework, when there is more than one child in the house needing to use the one device. It was noted that the school may be able to support families with some additional iPads. A communication will be sent out from school about this.

P5 noted that concern had been raised about travelling to swimming lessons on public buses and that this required walking to main roads and that it meant a 1-hour swim lesson took up the whole morning. It was acknowledged that this has divided opinion. The council are encouraging public transport now that all children are eligible for free bus passes.

More notice, or rather specific timings, for planned activities that involve parents has been asked for. For example, the winter walk around and the p5 celebration of learning that are coming up. It would allow parents that are working to plan in a timely way.

5. Finance

School and PSA are subsidising the whole school trip to the Pantomime. PC have also been asked to provide financial support. PC received a mixed amount each year – this can be carried over each year. There are sufficient funds to be able to support this request. PC agreed to support up to £2000. It was noted that this would mean the same amount of support would not be available next year.

Everyone agreed that the whole school trip is an excellent idea. 8 coaches have been booked to take the children to Dunfermline.

6. Discussion on school website and twitter

As noted in the head teacher update, a short group are to be formed to inform the discussion. Emily and Linda volunteered to be involved. Feedback from year groups to be provided to them.

- Are parents and carers aware that they are there?
- How well are they used?

- Could they be improved to make them better?

7. Any other business

The Chair noted that, if possible, could members please let him know in advance if you have anything you want included on AOCB.

It was noted that the national discussion on education closes on the 5th December, the last consultation was 20years ago and that is what led to the Curriculum for Excellence.

A member asked about the implications of the new rules around age deferral for starting school. Now any child not age 5 at the start of term can request deferral. This will have an impact on classes as will potentially lead to the possibility of 18months age difference in the same class.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 22 February 2023 – in person at the school.