



Balmuidy Primary School Parent Council Minutes
Tue 15th September 2026
6.30pm-8pm at Turnbull High School

Present: Stephanie Fowler (Chair), Sean Kelly (Vice Chair), Charlotte Grogan (Head Teacher), Carol Jarman (Depute Head Teacher), Christina Laybourn, Alison Barber, Rosalynn Murphy, Alison Poupart, Heather Glass (PTA Representative), Councillor Lynda Williamson, Edel Kenealy, Shiz Makita-Moore, Oliver Henrich (Secretary)

Apologies: Reverend Susan Anderson, Kat Robertson (Depute Head Teacher), Councillor Gordan Low

Agenda items:

- 1. Welcome and Apologies**
- 2. Head Teachers Report**
- 3. School Parking**
- 4. October Parents Night**
- 5. Homework**
- 6. Rugby**
- 7. P1 Communication**
- 8. AOB**

1. Welcome and Apologies

The meeting opened with introductions from attendees, particularly to welcome new members and class representatives. The Chair thanked members for volunteering to act as class representatives, noting that recruiting representatives can be challenging.

It was noted that representatives are still required for several classes, including P5B, P6B and both P7 classes. The next meeting was confirmed for 10th November.

Apologies were received from Reverend Susan Anderson and Councillor Gordon Low.

2. Head Teachers Report

The Head Teacher reported a positive start to the academic year. Staffing remains unchanged from that published before the summer break, with 14 classes continuing as planned. The school has benefited from the addition of newly qualified teachers, providing valuable extra staffing capacity. This additional resource is being used to support targeted groups of pupils, provide non-teaching opportunities for Depute Head Teachers, and further develop play-based learning in Primary 3 and new teaching approaches in Primary 4. Support staff have now transitioned to the PSA role structure, and recruitment is under way to replace a recently retired member of staff. The school roll has increased slightly to 343 pupils since the summer with several new pupils joining.

The School Improvement Plan has now been published online. Key priorities include improving literacy through more effective differentiation and continuing to develop highly effective teaching practice. The school aims to achieve a 1.5% improvement in literacy outcomes across the school. The school is also using Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to support a Primary 4 numeracy pilot project, invest in digital learning resources such as Bug Club and Sumdog, purchase additional intervention resources, and fund staffing support for targeted interventions. Baseline data has already been collected to measure the impact of the numeracy initiative.

The Head Teacher reported that standards and quality indicators remain positive, with the school self-evaluating as "good" across relevant quality measures. Most or almost all pupils are achieving expected levels in literacy and numeracy, although numeracy and writing remains an area of particular focus for improvement.

An extensive update was provided on the new school building. Construction remains on schedule for completion in February 2027, with handover to the council expected before Easter. Staff and pupils are anticipated to move into the new building after the Easter break. Early learning and childcare provision is expected to open in August 2027. Staff have already visited the site and can now clearly see the layout taking shape. Attention is beginning to shift towards planning the transition, including the significant task of reducing and organising resources before the move. Storage capacity in the new building will be considerably lower than in the current school, requiring a review of resources and equipment. There are currently no plans to increase pupil capacity or class sizes in the new building.

3. School Parking

Members discussed ongoing parking concerns around the school. Despite some improvements following the installation of temporary traffic lights, problems continue with vehicles blocking buses, obstructing roads and parking unsafely near the school. Residents continue to raise concerns with both the school and local councillors. The Head Teacher explained that the school can no longer act as a traffic management authority and that residents should contact the police directly when vehicles are parked illegally.

Particular concern was expressed about vehicles parking on zig-zag markings and pavements, creating safety risks for children, including those with additional support needs. Members discussed the possibility of police enforcement visits, although it was acknowledged that police resources are currently stretched. Recent anti-social behaviour issues elsewhere in the area have also diverted policing capacity.

An update was provided regarding the Traffic-Free Schools initiative. A request had been submitted over the summer, and the council has agreed to consider whether additional schools can be added to future phases of the programme. However, any expansion remains dependent on available resources and police enforcement capacity. Given the current constraints, no commitment can yet be made regarding Balmildy's inclusion. The Parent Council agreed it would be useful to gather parent views through a survey so that evidence is available should future opportunities arise. A questionnaire for distribution via Seesaw will be prepared.

4. October Parents Night

A question had been raised by parents regarding the timing of October Parents' Night, particularly because some families take holidays during the days leading into the October break. The Head Teacher explained that the current timing is deliberate as it provides enough time for children to settle into their new classes and allows teachers to provide meaningful feedback on progress. Moving the event earlier would significantly reduce the quality and usefulness of discussions.

Parents unable to attend are offered alternative appointments on the telephone. It was also clarified that the Friday following Parents' Night is not a holiday for staff and that holding the event immediately before the break is partly intended to support staff wellbeing after a particularly long working day. Members generally accepted the rationale for retaining the existing arrangements.

5. Homework

The Parent Council discussed concerns raised by some Primary 5 parents regarding the school's largely digital homework approach. Concerns centred on increased screen time, reduced opportunities for handwriting practice, challenges in monitoring progress, and access to devices at home.

The Head Teacher explained that homework is intended only as reinforcement of classroom learning and not as a vehicle for new learning. Current approaches focus on optional, game-based activities using platforms such as Sumdog and Bug Club. The school moved away from heavily marked written homework because completion rates were often low and the educational impact was limited. Homework remains optional, recognising that some families find it difficult to accommodate within their routines.

Parents who prefer written activities can request jotters and complete tasks on paper. While these will not be formally marked, teachers are willing to provide support and feedback where appropriate. Members also noted that digital resources can offer significant advantages, including personalisation of learning and improved accessibility for some children. It was suggested that communication about homework expectations could be made more consistent across classes, including clearer explanations during "Meet the Teacher" events and through homework information leaflets.

6. Rugby

The Council discussed the current Primary 4 rugby programme. Feedback from parents indicated mixed experiences: some children are thoroughly enjoying the sessions, while others are finding outdoor participation difficult during poor weather conditions.

The Head Teacher explained that the rugby coaching forms part of the statutory requirement for two hours of physical education each week. The programme is delivered free of charge by an experienced coach, and due to limitations in gym hall space, outdoor provision remains necessary. Members discussed whether children could opt out or whether sessions could be moved later in the day to reduce the risk of pupils starting lessons wet. However, it was explained that changing times would be difficult due to the coach's availability and broader curriculum requirements.

Although acknowledging some challenges, the general view was that the educational and sporting benefits outweigh the negatives. Members also welcomed the possibility of exploring similar opportunities with other sports organisations in future. The move to the new school, with larger indoor spaces, may create more flexibility for delivery of such programmes.

7. P1 Communication

Discussion focused on the volume of information and number of digital systems that new parents must navigate. Parents reported some confusion around Parentsportal, GLOW, Bug Club, Sumdog and meal booking systems, with various logins, QR codes and access routes proving difficult to understand. Some parents also experienced technical issues when accessing Parents' Night booking systems.

The Head Teacher acknowledged these difficulties and explained that Parentsportal is increasingly becoming the main administrative platform throughout East Dunbartonshire and into secondary school. The school is also attempting to reduce paper communications in line with council expectations. However, members recognised that new parents can easily feel overwhelmed by the number of systems introduced at the start of the school year.

Possible improvements discussed included providing clearer summary guidance, producing simple handouts, creating online support materials and making better use of Seesaw to communicate explanations directly to parents. While technical issues may not always be within the school's control, the school agreed to review how introductory information is presented to improve parental understanding and ease of access.

8. AOB

No substantial additional business was raised. The Chair thanked everyone for attending and encouraged members to help recruit additional class representatives. It was emphasised that broader representation helps ensure the Parent Council reflects a wider range of parent experiences and concerns. Members who were not already on the mailing list were invited to provide contact details so they could receive future agendas and updates. The next meeting will take place on 10th November.

Date of next meeting: 10th November 2026