

BANCHORY ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL MEETING

10 November 2022, 6:30 pm

Attendees: Judith Wight, Sofi, Trish Amundrud, Alison Smart, Louise Considine, Rebecca Glansbeek, Marion Fyfe, Ruth Hutchinson, Jane and Alan Bennett

Online Attendees: none

Apologies: Sophie Logue McLeod, Julia Anderson/Fleming, and Catriona Beverly

A. STANDING ITEMS

1. Welcome and Introductions, including apologies
2. Minutes of last meeting held on 15th September 2022 (not available)
3. Chair's report
4. Rector's report
5. Working Groups – update from school on 2022 plans
6. BAPC updates e.g. Constitution, Financial

B. ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS ARISING FROM PARENT FORUM

7. Mental health and gender dysphoria
 8. Information evening
 9. Theft in school
 10. Potential for residential trip for S4s
 11. PC means of communication
 12. Support for Ukrainians
 13. Scottish Government consultation on the future of the SQA
 14. AOB
 15. Date for next meeting
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MEETING MINUTES:

ITEM 7: UPDATE ON MENTAL HEALTH IN THE SCHOOL: ELEANOR MCILRAITH

- Working group is available as well, see later item on agenda.

General Support for Mental Health and Wellbeing:

- Is support for all pupils.
- S3 classes focus on discreet materials for anxiety and self harm, resilience, exam stress, friends, managing exam stress, looking to the future.
- Peer listeners (S5/S6) working with mostly S1s
- Teachers have been trained as Mental health first aiders.
- Ran stress busting workshops in the run up to the exams last year
- Is also a QR code available in multiple locations so that they can scan to ask for extra help or info.

TARGETED SUPPORT

- 132 pupils are receiving targeted support – 1:1 support for areas such as anxiety, self harm, family issues, bereavement and loss, resilience, self-esteem, self-confidence, low mood etc
- In addition to guidance teachers work the school has a pupil support worker that sees 15 pupils a week and a trainee counsellor who sees 8 pupils a week.

- LIAM – “Let’s introduce anxiety management” programme for 8 weeks (Tier 2 intervention) looks at strategies for managing (anxiety), see school website: [Support in School – Banchory Academy Health and Wellbeing \(glowscotland.org.uk\)](https://www.glowscotland.org.uk/support-in-school-banchory-academy-health-and-wellbeing)
- A second course BBA “Brief behavioural activation” – led/supported by CAMHS for low mood and depression (8 weeks) is also being run.
- Both courses are delivered by teachers who have been trained and supported by CAMHS. They are based around cognitive behaviour approaches.

GENDER DYSPHORIA

- Often by the time the student comes to the staff, they have been questioning their gender for a while, and the school is there to listen and understand how they are feeling.
 - It takes a lot of courage to approach anyone.
 - All students are individuals with individual needs and so the approach and support offered will vary.
 - The media can give the impression of large numbers of young people who are experiencing gender dysphoria. In reality we have only has a small number questioning and only a very small number who want to change their gender identity and/or their name with the school.
 - Some young people tend to change their names with their friends but not with school and teachers – they may resort back in time.
 - Give the pupils space and listen. Job is to support and listen, not to direct.
 - School doesn’t tend to use the term gender dysphoria or attach labels of any sort - our role is not to diagnose. If a pupil uses it then that is different but we are listening and being directed by them, rather than suggesting a route of action.
 - Staff philosophy is to involve the parents –school feels that gives the best outcome. Staff will always encourage and if difficulties arise will consult with colleagues for advice.
- Question from parents – when is the transgender concept introduced in school? Is it S1? Yes, or even in primary. Material tends to be well received.
- This is the link to RSHP which is a national resources for the teaching of Relationships, Sex, Health and Parenting. <https://rshp.scot/> PSE in the Academy would usually focus on the teaching of levels 3, 4 and senior phase, although sometimes material at the earlier levels will be covered. Lessons are always adapted to the needs of the class.

Reminder – health and wellbeing support on the school website is available for families. This is early days and there are plans to develop it further. [Banchory Academy Health and Wellbeing – Helping yourself to a happier, healthier you \(glowscotland.org.uk\)](https://www.glowscotland.org.uk/support-in-school-banchory-academy-health-and-wellbeing)

MAIN MEETING AGENDA:

1. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**, including apologies (see attendees list above)
2. **MINUTES** of last meeting held on 15th September 2022 were not yet circulated and will be pushed to the next meeting for approvals.
3. **CHAIR’S REPORT**
Attended meeting Christine McLennan (liaison with parent councils and schools) that introduced the survey that will be discussed later in the agenda.

- Reminder that we would need PVGs to work with the pupils.
- It was noted that fundraising may be more difficult to do with cost of living and parent councils should not be too aggressive. As such, parent council funding from government (normally reserved for parent council admin etc), can be used more flexibly if required.

4. RECTOR'S REPORT

Staffing

- Michelle Skellern DHT has been appointed to the post of work stream lead for equality investments for the Northern Alliance. This post is a 23 month secondment. Michelle will start this in January. Interviews for her replacement are taking place next week.
- Dr Matt Skellern who is currently acting at DHT at Gordon Schools Huntly has been appointed on a permanent basis at DHT at Alford Academy.
- We currently have some long term absences within our staff. The school is doing what it can to cover these.

School Address

- The school address has changed from Schoolhill to Raemoir Road, the postcode is now AB31 5UJ. The school phone number remains the same.

Christmas Concert

- We are delighted to welcome back our Christmas concert after a number of years. This will take place on Monday 19th of December at 7pm and will be held in the East Church. Further information will be provided nearer the time.

Improvement Plan 2022-2023

Banchory Academy's Improvement Plan priorities for this year are as follows.

Leadership of Change

- Developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to Banchory Academy and its community.
- Further embed PPR policy and training

2.2 Curriculum

- Design a curricular proposal for Banchory Academy. Consultation with all key stakeholders inc staff, pupils and parents.
- Embedding key skills across the BGE.

2.3 Learning Teaching and Assessment

- Roll out of local authority learning teaching and assessment policy.
- Continued focus on feedback (LTA working group)

2.5 Family Learning

- Engaging families in learning. New working group.

3.1 – ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion;

- Focus on data as part of the SHINE agenda. SHINE's aim is to help transform HWB outcomes for our young people through high quality, school-based health improvement research and data-driven innovation.
- Launch of Banchory Academy anti bullying policy.

3.2 – raising attainment and achievement

- Focus on attainment in literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.

- Continue to raise pupil's achievements at Banchory Academy - celebration of achievement All these areas are reviewed 3 times a year and where necessary carried forward to the following year. This is discussed with our Quality Improvement Officer and a final report is submitted as part of our Standards and Quality Report.

Sporting Update

We have a number of pupils participating in different sporting events at the moment.

Football – various year groups are currently participating in cup games in Aberdeenshire.

Skiing- a squad of pupils qualified for the finals of the Scottish Schools Dual slalom at Braehead yesterday.

Swimming – Scottish Schools Swimming competition took place today in Aberdeen. We had 20 pupils participating in this.

Pupil Participation Forum

We have 2 pupils that are part of the Aberdeenshire Schools Forum. They look at and consider topics relevant to young people in the local authority and develop and contribute to documentation about these. The voice of the young person is very important.

Remembrance Service

This is taking place tomorrow at 11am. A small group of pupils have put together a film that will be shown to the whole school before a one minute silence at 11am. Our school pipers will then play outside in various areas around the school.

5. WORKING GROUPS – UPDATE FROM SCHOOL ON 2022 PLANS

In the past have had parent representation on these – five groups looking for parents:

1. Health and Wellbeing HWB
2. Developing the Young Workforce DYW
3. Learning, Teaching, and Assessment - LTA
4. Promoting positive relationships PPR
5. Curriculum structure

Request for parent council to ask for volunteers (over the next three weeks) in parent forums and ask for emails from interested parents to be passed to the school. Note meetings are during the school day, at lunch, 1:00-1:40, and the day of the week may vary.

Question re DYW group and business input – yes, some local business partners do join that group.

6. BAPC UPDATES E.G. CONSTITUTION, FINANCIAL

- Constitution: Note there is no time limit for calling a parent council meeting. For the parent council to be present we need to have a non-member present. This requirement may be met by a staff member – could be clarified.
- Financial: £1475.87 in bank account, £73 in from uniform exchange with £134 to come out for uniforms for Ukrainians. £425 (ish) coming from Tempest photographs.

Books for students in classes/library

- School library is missing books and this could be an area the PC could support. This includes study books. Mrs Lizzie Bird, School Librarian to be asked to attend the next meeting to discuss the work of the library and to discuss ways the parent council could help.
- School books for classes (i.e. novels for English) – are provided for kids who need them.
- Previously – book exchange (study books) was run by Parent Council.

B. ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS ARISING FROM PARENT FORUM

7. MENTAL HEALTH AND GENDER DYSPHORIA (ABOVE)

8. INFORMATION EVENING: DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

- Parent Council looking to run an information evening for the Parent Forum
- Suggested speakers include community police, NHS/health support, and an Aberdeen drugs charity. Suggested that youth workers would also be useful.
- Date suggested to be March (lighter nights, suitable time for the school).
- Judith noted the school is happy to host and contribute a school speaker.

ACTION: Suggested organising separate meeting just for this. Sofi and Ruth willing to come in.

9. THEFT IN SCHOOL

- Issue raised by some parents to parent council.
- School noted that pupils often have a lot of valuable items, and that theft happens as kids are also leaving their bags and possessions unattended.
- PE – school has a clear policy that all valuables should be left in the valuables box. If the pupils chose not to do this, it is very difficult for the school to prevent theft
- School does catch thieves, help students to find their stolen items, and will involve the police as appropriate.
- Issue with cash – that's what has been going missing lately.

10. POTENTIAL FOR RESIDENTIAL TRIP FOR S4s

- School unfortunately can't support this. Issue is staffing, even a one-day activity means they do not have the staff for the other years. Judith noted this is unfortunate but cannot be helped.
- Parents noted that the S4s are the year group that will have not ever had an activities week and that it's our current S3-S5s who, like all of Scotland, missed out on the most school in 2021.
- TA asked about options like the Battlefields trip for this year group. This is not an option this year but will be looked at again. It involves the National year groups.

- Ski trip – possibly to look at this for S1-S6s rather than just S1-3. This will be looked at next session.
- It was noted the cost of living may make residential trips unaffordable for some kids.

11. PC MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

- Ruth Hutchinson – has started looking at this and reinvented the facebook page.
- Sofi noted we can use it to highlight small things (like the health and wellbeing page on the website).
- Noted that attachments are not accessible on expressions (all parents report this). Expressions can be used to message the school for when kids are sick.

ACTION: Ruth will pull together a quick summary for social media (Trish to send through meeting minutes).

12. SUPPORT FOR UKRAINIANS

- Students arriving needed help with school uniforms. This was provided via the funds from the uniform exchange and from the boxes of clothes from the uniform exchange.
- School has 8 young people. Rotary have done a lot to support these families and the school and community is now more aware of what other support is available.

13. SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE OF THE SQA

- SQA consultations are ongoing. Due to time this was not discussed further but a separate parent group to respond was suggested.

ACTION: Will be sent out via group call.

14. AOB

- Marion passed on a thank you from Jean Henretty at Number 1 cafe – thanks to the school for the close cooperation and the supermarket collection.
- School has had roughly 70 young people for toast club. Not aimed solely at families on free school meals, anyone is welcome to come along
- School thanks the supermarkets and Number 1 café for the support to provide the food.
- Q re prelim timetable – should be provided well before Christmas. Starts mid-week of the second week back.
- Q re enforcing Uniform policy - School cannot enforce the uniform (no state school can enforce this in Scotland) but compliance is high. School has changed the uniform based on feedback from the students and smart-casual wear at work. Hoodies are house hoodies only.

15. DATE FOR NEXT MEETING (JANUARY 19TH)

- Suggested school speaker – Librarian