

## Banchory Academy Parent Council Meeting

27 April 2023, 6:30 pm

**Attendees:** Sofi Izatts (Chair), Rebecca Glansbeek (Treasurer), Julia Fleming, Sarah Little, Ruth Hutchinson, Louise Considine, Fiona Melville, Judith Wight (Rector), Karen Alford

**Apologies:** Trish Amundrud (Secretary), Alison Smart, Sophie Logue McLeod, Scott Newey

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### Meeting Minutes

1. Welcome and Introductions, including apologies (see above)
2. Minutes of last meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023 - approval and matters arising
  - a. No concerns have been noted from parents regarding proposed changes to the curriculum.
3. Chair's report
  - a. Rag Bag collection: It has been arranged that any leftover clothing from the Scout Jumble Sale on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> April will be going to the two Banchory primary schools and the academy. It was suggested we also ask parents for donations to be brought in on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> May and they will be collected in the bins by front entrance. Sofi has arranged a collection from Rag Bag on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> May.  
**Action: Ruth to put message out for donations on school social media channels.**
  - b. Family Learning event on Teams: This was well received by parents. Sofi thanked the support of the school for running the event. Another event is to be arranged. Parents highlighted the challenges of not knowing what homework has been set for their children.
  - c. Drugs & Alcohol Information Evening – to be covered in later point.
4. Current balance of the BAPC bank account is £1852.20. We received £500 from Aberdeenshire Council in February and £500 has been donated to the school library.

It was suggested the BAPC donate some funds to help with extra-curricular activities and it would be helpful to let parents know what their fundraising efforts are going towards.

5. Rector's report  
Staffing

- Mrs Mel Knightwood is starting with us next week as our new teacher of Business Education, we are now fully staffed in the department.
- Mr Sylvester Onuoha was appointed to the Physics Department last term and is now with us covering Mrs Nicola Murray's Maternity Leave.
- We are currently advertising the permanent post for FH of Science.
- Mr Scott Leiper Acting Faculty Head Business, Enterprise and Computing was appointed on a permanent basis just before the Easter break.

#### General

- We have seen an increase in anti-social behaviour in the school predominately in years 1-3. We deal with each incident separately depending on the circumstances. Parents are involved with the process and outcomes vary again depending on the situation. I will be writing to parents about this and a few other issues I would like to bring to parent's attention.
- SQA examinations have started this week and will continue for the next 6 weeks.
- Activities Week – this is taking place the week of the 22<sup>nd</sup> May. We are delighted to offer it again.
- S6 Prom and Last Day – both events went really well and the pupil's behaviour was very good. We thoroughly enjoyed spending time at both events with them.
- School Uniform – we have seen a positive change with uniform which is pleasing to see. We have spoken about this at assembly and would like to thank parents for their support in this too. Our current uniform will remain the same for next session.
- Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> June we are holding our P7 parents' info evening, we are looking forward to welcoming our new families to the school.

A question about mobile phones being banned in school was raised and it was noted that the Rector didn't have the jurisdiction to enforce a school-wide ban. However, teachers in each lesson display a 'red' or 'green' sign whether mobile phones are allowed to be used for class work.

It was suggested that representatives of the Parent Council attend the P7 information evening on 8<sup>th</sup> June.

**Action: Sofi to coordinate attendance.**

#### 6. Update on Working Groups

The working groups are still to be formed and it's likely that parents who have previously volunteered will be asked to be involved from next session.

**Action: Judith to provide Sofi with a full list of the working groups, including any new ones so we can ensure parent representation.**

#### 7. Issues arising from parent community

Toilets: There were issues raised of intimidation in the toilets and there are only certain ones pupils feel safe to use. JW is aware of this and staff do regular rounds

of the toilets to split up social gatherings in the toilets. Some toilets have been vandalised and they had to be closed. The school chose to keep those open where there are CCTV cameras outside so that possible culprits could be caught. The issue of pupils vaping in the toilets was also raised. The school follows Aberdeenshire Council's policy on no smoking or vaping on site. School is confiscating vapes when found being used and pupils are disciplined.

School sports events: An issue was raised about an extracurricular sporting competition not being sufficiently advertised or communicated to parents and the school explained that sports events are communicated via the PE staff verbally and sign up sheets displayed in the department for different events. The events and results are also promoted via the PE department's Instagram page.

**Action: School to encourage new S1 parents to check Instagram @BanchoryAcademyPE for information**

8. Drug & Alcohol Information Evening – Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> May

Representatives from Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership and the Police will present from 7pm on 16<sup>th</sup> May in the Learning Plaza. They will set up some displays and there will then be time for questions and discussions towards the end of the evening.

The event is open to all Banchory Academy parents as well as those of P7s at our cluster primaries.

The AHCSPP is currently putting together a toolkit for teachers and one for parents and will share some of these resources on the night. Parents will be able to see what some of the drugs look like for information.

Our aim is that parents will learn more about how to talk to their children, where they can go for help, what the drugs situation is in Banchory, how the school and the local police deal with drug use.

There will be information for parents to take away on the night and available following the event.

**Action: Sofi to send information about the event to all P7 cluster primary schools and gauge numbers**

9. There will be a preloved school uniform exchange on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> July. Items wanted include those with logos/school branding including blazers, jumpers, ties and sports kit. There will be a collection in school from Monday 26<sup>th</sup> – Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> June.

**Actions:**

**Ruth to promote via school social media channels.**

**Louise and Rebecca to send a note out to parents asking for volunteers to help on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> June and Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> July**  
**Judith to contact S6 parents to ask for uniforms & study books**

10. Homework policy

When a child hasn't done their homework for a few lessons, the parent gets an email to say the homework isn't done. It was raised that the parent is then unsure what's expected of the parent and the child as there's no follow up.

Judith explained it was an alert that homework was not handed in.

If school is concerned and the pupil's guidance teacher has been alerted it may be followed up with the parent.

**Action: Judith to follow up and ask teachers to put an explanation of what the next steps are so parents are aware.**

It was raised that those studying for exams don't have skills to sit and learn on their own as they typically haven't had very much homework.

Judith explained that there is a Study Skills course for S5 and may introduce it for S4. She also stated that Prelims are staying as a benchmark of progress and practice for pupils to ensure they're revising and covering everything for their exams.

11. Thefts in school

It has been raised that there have been items of uniform going missing during PE, with some items taken and others 'moved' as a prank.

It was suggested that the ordinary lockers located just outside the PE changing rooms be made available to put clothes in during PE lessons to avoid expensive items disappearing. All valuables are handed into the teacher at the start of PE lessons. Each pupil has the option to purchase a locker but they're rarely used.

Judith noted that the school has been given exclusive use of the Sports Centre during day time with access to the hall and lockers for additional indoor activities.

12. School canteen

Concerns were raised around the zero sugar fizzy drinks being sold in the school canteen. Judith explained that Aberdeenshire Council Catering Services, who follow the Scottish Government Guidelines, decide what's on sale, not the school.

**Action: Julia to draft a letter from the Parent Council to the local MP and circulate for review.**

13. BAPC Secretary vacancy

Trish Amundrud is stepping down from her role of Secretary and the Parent Council wishes to say thank you for all her efforts in the role since last August.

Sarah Little has volunteered to take over the role of Secretary and it was agreed with immediate effect.

Alison Smart has now left the Parent Council and we wish to thank her for all of her years of support and in her previous role as Secretary.

**Action: Sarah to discuss a handover with Trish.**

14. AOB

a. Bank account

**Action: Alison Smart to be removed; Sarah Little and Sofi Izatt to be added. Rebecca to action.**

b. Website: A question was asked if someone from the BAPC can assist with updating the website as some of the information is out of date or missing. Judith confirmed that only school staff can update the website.

c. PTA: It was raised about possibly restarting the PTA and fundraising for the school post-Covid. We discussed organising a Welcome social event for new S1 (current P7) parents in September before the AGM, hosted by the S2 (current S1) parents.

**Action: Julia and Sarah to organise for Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> September**

d. Date of next meeting: Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> June at 6.30pm – social evening including a meal.

**Action: Julia to enquire at the Tor na Coille**