

Buckstone Primary School Parent Council

## Minutes

Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> of November

6.30pm-8.00pm, Staff Room

Parent Council Member Attendees: Brian Chalmers (Chair), Jamie Deas, Fiona Brien, Hilary Brown, Morven Langley, Helen Szoor-McElhinney, Elaine Tuohy, Louise Logan, Michelle Abell

Co-opted Member Attendees: Mrs Conlin, Christine Campbell, Anne Houliston

Other Attendees: Wing Lee, Laraine Johnson, Louise McLeod, Jeanie Hill

Apologies: Anna Hind, Nicole Johnston, Lisa Sykes, Fiona Damen, Emma Forson, Sue-Ella Holmes, Morag Place, Suzanne Murray, Caroline Morrison

Minutes: Elaine Tuohy

Brian asked that Mrs Conlin pass on the condolences to Mrs Imrie, following her recent loss.

Also, he welcomed Elaine Tuohy as the new Parent Council Clerk to replace Christine Stewart

### **1.Approval of Previous Minutes:**

The minutes of the Parent Council Meeting from the 25<sup>th</sup> of September 2018 were approved.

### **2. Mrs Conlin Update:**

Mrs Conlin provided a summary of the feedback that was received from parents at the recent Parent Focus Group discussion around communication:

#### **What are we doing well?**

- Homelink – enough but not too much
- Weekly round up email acts as a reminder
- Termly class newsletters
- The office and staff team are general very friendly and approachable
- Drop In – led by the children
- Would never hesitate to contact the school if there was an issue
- Weekly class blogs although these can a hit or miss depending on the class teacher. Tend to be better in P1-P3 rather than P4-P7.
- Different days are offered for different activities
- Parental Calendar – advance notice.

#### **What do we need to improve?**

- Reduce the volume of emails

**In what other ways could we communicate more effectively with parents and carers?**

**The 7Cs of Good Communication**

- Completeness
- Concreteness
- Courtesy
- Correctness
- Consideration
- Conciseness

You Said....	We Did...
<p><b><u>Email communication</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the number of emails</li> <li>• One email with all the details</li> <li>• Lose Buckstone PS at the start of emails</li> <li>• Number the school doors</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Email Communication</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adding deadlines for letters etc on the Friday email</li> <li>• All information on email, paper copy, office workload</li> <li>• Buckstone vs Boroughmuir – having BPS or BHS at the start of emails?</li> <li>• Made, need laminated, ten doors</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Sharing learning at home</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers to include more links to resources</li> <li>• Making a difference out of date</li> <li>• Blogs to be more explanatory</li> <li>• Do not know ‘how’ our children are learning</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Sharing learning at home</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching staff discussion – good blog, sharing ideas</li> <li>• Removed</li> <li>• Blogs to include more examples for parents</li> <li>• As above and including resource links and ideas</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Parents’ Nights</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 points raised such as consistency, more time, communication about difficulties, timing, levels information, assessment</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Parents’ Nights</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 points to be addressed for next Parents’ Night</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Support for Learning</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication about support required</li> <li>• Additional follow up activities</li> <li>• Different groups available</li> <li>• Generic email address for privacy</li> </ul> <p>7 parents attended the meeting</p>	<p><b><u>Support for Learning</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New permission letters giving more information</li> <li>• Communication at end about progress</li> <li>• SFL meeting for parents in January</li> </ul>

2 emailed response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generic email address – looking into this</li> </ul>
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### **3. Councillor Update:**

Councillor Scott Arthur sent his apologies, therefore no update at this meeting.

### **4. Improving Road Safety around School:**

No update from Edinburgh Council on the proposal to have a zebra crossing in Buckstone Lea or Loan East.

### **5. Diversity and Inclusion:**

Helen advised that she has almost finished the initial draft of the Parent Council policy. The initial draft will be submitted for initial review by Staff and Parent Council members in January before it is shared with the wider audience.

The next stage will be to reach out to the parent body for feedback on how the Parent Council could be even more effective. It was discussed that due to the high number of parent participants there may be a cost associated with using Survey Monkey, Helen advised she would look into potential costs and work with Mrs Conlin on whether there is a possibility to submit to parents using the school's Survey Monkey account.

The dates of future parent councils will be reviewed to schedule the meeting on alternate days, possibly a Wednesday and Thursday to give parents with outstanding commitments the opportunity to attend. Consideration will be given to Boroughmuir Parent Council meetings to ensure that these do not clash.

### **6. Communications and Homework – Update:**

Mrs Conlin raised that there is a significant overhead for office staff in sending reminders to parents for Parent Pay and chasing for permission forms. Hilary Brown suggested that the school should send a communication to parents quantifying the effort office staff spend in sending additional communications to parents and to explain the implications of GDPR on the school.

GDPR - Mrs Conlin also highlighted to the Parent Council that there had been a GDPR breach recently, the school however quickly discovered the breach and followed procedure by ensuring that this was reported in a timely manner.

The school building improvement works are ongoing, there now have been 10 new doors fitted in the corridor. The upper hall will be painted during the Christmas break.

Class Blogs - The class blogs are in the process of being reviewed by staff to ensure consistency in the detail of these. There has been feedback from parents that some blogs are more helpful and informative than others. Staff working together to discuss 'What would a good blog look like?'

Support for Learning - A consultation was held with some parents to discuss Support for Learning. This was an interactive session with parent and the feedback from parents is that they would like to see:

- More communication.

- To illustrate to parents what is involved.
- Parents would like to know how their children are progressing.

Homework – a survey has been sent to parents to review the current homework policy and Mrs Conlin encourages all parents to take part, the plan is to then create a focus group to review and discuss the approach to homework going forward. The session will be held before the Christmas break and a communication will be sent to all parents.

#### **Parent Council and Facebook page:**

The Parent Council Facebook page has been created and it was agreed the Class Reps would have Admin access and to monitor posts which are inappropriate, of a personal nature or not related to the school. The rules of the page are clear and only relevant posts will be allowed. Only parents who have children in school will be permitted access to the page.

The Friends of Buckstone Primary page was discussed as this page was originally set up to remind parents of upcoming events and local issues. As time has progressed however, this has deviated from the original purpose and some of the posts are not appropriate and are not associated with the school. It was agreed that given there are a number of other local Facebook pages that the Friends of Buckstone Primary page will be closed. Fiona and Jamie both have admin rights and will give notice to members of the closure.

#### **8. Ukulele Classes**

The Ukulele classes will start after the Christmas break. There will be 2 sessions, P3-5 session will take place straight after school on a Wednesday from 3.20-3.50 and the P6-7 session will start at 3.55 -4.25. Parent Council will purchase Ukuleles to be used during the lessons. The costs of the classes are still to be agreed however likely to be around £2 per class.

#### **Fundraising**

Brian advised that the Parent Council is currently in good health financially. It was agreed that the Parent Council will pay for the blinds in the new hall and also the renovation in the top area.

Hilary asked if the Parent Council could spend some money to enhance school life. It was discussed that the Parent Council could perhaps provide funding to refresh books, perhaps provide a bike for Bikeability, a fund for Broomlee and Lagganlia or better equipment for baking.

It was agreed that the Parent Council will make a pledge to spend some of the money on things that the teachers think would help to make the school better.

It was agreed that there needs to be better communication around what money that has been raised in events has been spent on and also to outline what the hopes for money raised in future events will go towards.

Sports Kit – Mrs Conlin said she used the ‘Developing the young workforce’ approach to select the P7 children who will be working on the sports kit.

Choir – Mrs Conlin advised that Melissa has selected a new keyboard and the Parent Council have agreed to provide funding for this.

#### **AOB:**

Nursery Climbing Frame – Mrs Conlin advised that this needed to be replaced. There has been parental engagement meetings for fund raising ideas to help nursery.

Library – Mrs Conlin advised that the library is currently housed in the top area. The old library is to become a nurture area.