

Parent Council

Meeting Date: November 25, 2025, 06:00 pm via Teams

Attendees: Nigel Rooke (Chair) Lesley Davidson (Interim Head teacher), Libby Bradford (Deputy Head Teacher), Mhairi Sermanni, Katie Edwards, Fraser Gallacher, Kerry Simpson, Deniz Uster-Harrup, Emma Alkirwi

Apologies: Kirsty McEwen (now stood down), Andrew Mawston, Sravan Vadaga, Janet Paterson, Rebecca Houston

Notes

Volunteer and PVG Compliance

- The school is actively addressing the need for **at least 50 PVG-checked parent volunteers** to support upcoming events and trips, aiming to ensure sufficient coverage and flexibility given the school's size of **over 300 children**
- **36 parents have applied** for PVG checks so far, with **9 completed** and a typical reply time of about **12 days**, but the number is rising as more emails are processed.
- The current process involves multiple steps through Volunteer Scotland and Disclosure Scotland, which Nigel Rooke reflected was cumbersome but necessary to comply with regulations.
- Jill Patterson and the school have organized **four drop-in sessions** for PVG checks, next one will be during the Scottish assembly morning, and are exploring options for additional drop-in sessions at the Nativity.
- Parent Council members can independently verify IDs, but clarification is needed on how to properly capture and forward data; Kerry will circulate the ID verification form to the Parent Council for consistency.
- There is a strong consensus on the necessity to communicate clearly to parents that **without enough PVG volunteers, certain school activities will not proceed**
- Kerry asked the school to issue a message that insufficient volunteers could halt events, emphasizing that the same parents cannot volunteer repeatedly.
- Lesley agreed to consider additional group calls or emails reinforcing this reality to encourage more parents to engage.

Parent Engagement and Brian's Behavioural Support Sessions

- Brian's sessions on behaviour and anti-bullying have been positively received, but parents requested **more notice for sessions** and additional opportunities to cover topics not fully addressed in the initial hour-long meetings

- Katie Edwards highlighted feedback from forums indicating parents missed sessions due to short notice, and there is interest in exploring how behaviour is managed post-identification, including restorative practices.
- Lesley Davidson will consult Brian about expanding sessions and potentially circulating a parent questionnaire to identify priority topics.
- Emma Alkirwi proposed using **Teams webinars in the evening** to increase accessibility, allowing parents to join remotely and ask questions via chat, which could ease attendance challenges.
- Nigel suggested keeping this topic on future meeting agendas to track how Brian's expertise is integrated into school practices as the program evolves.
- Brian's approach includes classroom role-plays to help children understand behavioural impacts and confidence-building for those affected by negative behaviour, which Katie and Emma valued highly.
- Lesley confirmed this is early days, with Brian working directly with children and parents individually, supported by planned questionnaires for both groups.
- The school emphasizes that challenging behaviour often stems from dysregulation, not intent to harm, and they address incidents firmly with children and parents while seeking to understand triggers to prevent recurrence.

School Events and Calendar Planning

- The school is preparing for **the Scottish assembly, Nativity, Christmas parties, and a new carol singing event** planned for the last week of term, inviting parents and carers to join.
- The carol singing will pair senior and younger pupils in an informal setting outside the main entrance from **2:45 to 3:00 PM**, focusing on festive songs.
- Organizing the traditional end-of-term church service depends heavily on having enough PVG-checked volunteers to walk children safely; without this, attendance at the service may be cancelled.
- Nigel, Lesley, and the PTA coordinated efforts to facilitate PVG checks ahead of key events on **December 9th (St. Mary's Church P5 visit)** and **December 19th (whole school visit to St. David's)**.
- To improve parent planning, Lesley agreed to share **a provisional full-year calendar from January to June 2026**, including dates for key events, acknowledging some may change due to weather or staffing
- This effort responds directly to parent concerns about **late communication of events**, which has caused frustration and difficulty in scheduling.
- Parents must still read newsletters and emails, but more advance notice is expected to help working families better manage commitments.

Targeted Learning Support and Attainment Focus

- Targeted intervention groups for children needing additional support in literacy and numeracy are **fully operational** following assessments, involving teaching and support staff with positive early feedback

- These groups focus on spelling, phonics, reading comprehension, writing, and keyboard skills, with a more flexible staffing model this year allowing more children to be pulled out for focused sessions.
- Libby Bradford and Lesley emphasized that this targeted support is a longstanding practice, enhanced this year by expanded staff availability.
- The goal is to raise attainment and close learning gaps with consistent monitoring and timely interventions.

Parent Council and Early Years Centre Integration

- The Parent Council will invite **one or two representatives from the Early Years Centre (EYC)** to join meetings, reflecting evolving community needs and the shared curriculum framework for ages 3 to 18
- Lesley will reach out to EYC parents to recruit volunteers, aiming to balance representation given many families have children in both settings.
- Nigel acknowledged the need to update the Parent Council constitution to formally include the EYC.
- Members agreed to trial this integration with a longer meeting format of **90 minutes**, managing agenda topics carefully to include issues relevant to both primary and early years.
- Early years representation is viewed as valuable for facilitating transitions and sharing information, though some caution was expressed about meeting time pressures.

Behaviour Management and School Culture

- Lesley reported that behaviour issues have **drastically reduced**, and the school atmosphere is calm and positive, with children engaged and staff highly committed
- Lesley described this as the best staff team she has worked with, emphasizing strong leadership and a supportive environment.
- Parents raised ongoing concerns about how challenging behaviour is managed, especially from families whose children have been affected.
- Lesley explained that dysregulated behaviour often results from underlying conditions like autism or ADHD, not intentional harm, and the school addresses incidents firmly with children and parents.
- The school uses assemblies led by children to raise awareness about such conditions, promoting empathy and understanding across the community.
- Restorative conversations are part of the approach, but full behaviour management strategies are evolving with Brian's involvement and will be discussed in future meetings.
- Katie praised the role-play techniques Brian uses to help children understand the impact of their words and actions.

Meeting Schedule and Logistics

- The Parent Council agreed to hold **three meetings next year: January 20th, March 17th, and May 26th**
- The January meeting will be held remotely via Teams; decisions on March and May formats will be made closer to the dates.
- The May meeting is timed to allow Lesley to share detailed school improvement priorities and updates on head teacher arrangements.
- Nigel noted that in-person meetings may incur venue costs, which have been covered by parent council budget but would reduce donations to the school.
- Members expressed openness to continuing virtual meetings when appropriate to reduce costs and increase accessibility.

Action items

Lesley Davidson

- Communicate to Brian parents' feedback on session coverage and request input on topics for future sessions; consider parent questionnaire for interest areas
- Check with Jill Patterson the process for PVG volunteer ID verification outside drop-in sessions and potential remote coordination; update Parent Council accordingly
- Continue efforts to recruit minimum 50 PVG-checked parent volunteers to support school events; coordinate additional drop-in sessions as needed
- Arrange outreach to Early Years Centre parents to find representatives willing to join Parent Council; invite and incorporate them into meetings
- Prepare and circulate provisional calendar dates for school events covering January to the end of the academic year, starting January 2026
- Provide updates on school improvement plans and staff developments, including Mrs. Donoghue's return, at the May 26 meeting

Kerry

- Circulate the spreadsheet snapshot and instructions for PVG ID checks to Parent Council members to facilitate volunteer processing

Nigel Rooke

- Verbally and through Parent Council channels emphasize to all parents the critical need for PVG checked volunteers or some events will be cancelled
- Circulate agreed meeting dates with initial January calendar and coordinate meeting formats (online or in-person) based on daylight and availability