

Balmuildy Parent Council Guidelines
Getting the most from our Parent Council



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The **Parent Council (PC)** is a group of parents/carers/guardians drawn from the **Parent Forum** (the collective name for every parent, carer or guardian at a school) to represent the parents/carers/guardians of children at Balmuirdy Primary School.

The *Constitution of Balmuirdy Primary School Council* describes how **PC** members are selected and how the **PC** operates within Balmuirdy Primary School. Key **PC** documentation and the names of Balmuirdy **PC** office bearers are available on the **PC** area in the school website: <http://www.balmuirdy.e-dunbarton.sch.uk/parents-info/parent-council/> or can be obtained from the school office.

Parent Councils help parents/carers/guardians to become more actively and effectively involved in their children's learning. They were established under the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 in recognition of the important role that parents/carers/guardians can play, both in their own children's learning, and in the life of a school.

The main objectives of Balmuirdy PS **Parent Council** are:

1. - To identify and represent the views of parents/carers/guardians (known as the **Parent Forum**) on the education provided by the school and other matters affecting the education and welfare of the pupils.
2. - To work in partnership with the school to create a welcoming environment which is inclusive for all parents/carers/guardians (known as the **Parent Forum**) and pupils.
3. - To develop and engage in activities which support the education and welfare of the pupils of Balmuirdy Primary School.
4. - To promote partnership between the school, its pupils, their parents/carers/guardians and the wider community.

Parent Councils: The Basics

Detailed information on establishing and running a Parent Council can be accessed here:

- What is the Parent Council?: <https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/getting-involved/parent-councils/about-parent-councils/>
- What is the role of the parent forum and the Parent Council? (education.gov.scot): <https://education.gov.scot/media/qd5o2i5v/parent-council-resource-role-2.pdf>
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a) **Communicating with the Parent Forum**

Our Aim: To have an engaged, informed, and enabled **Parent Forum** (the collective name for every parent, carer or guardian at a school).

The **Parent Council (PC)** aims to keep the **Parent Forum** up to date on

- The purpose of the **Parent Council (PC)**,
- **PC** meeting dates,
- the outputs of **PC** meetings (minutes)
- how to engage with the **PC** to improve the ability of the wider **Parent Forum** to influence decision making aligned to Balmuirdy Primary School's priorities.

b) **PC communication channels:**

- **Website:** Balmuirdy **Parent Council (PC)** has an area on the Balmuirdy Primary School website where key **PC** information can be accessed: <http://www.balmuirdy.e-dunbarton.sch.uk/parents-info/parent-council/>
- **Email:** The **Parent Council** can be contacted via email balmuirdy_pc@outlook.com
- **Facebook:** The **Parent Council (PC)** private Facebook group provides updates and group members can contact the **PC** directly: <https://facebook.com/groups/balmuirdypc/>
- **The school office** provides key updates on **PC** meeting dates and staff there can also direct your queries to the **PC**.
- **Questionnaires:** From time to time the **PC** will seek the views of as many members of the **Parent Forum**. This may be done via online questionnaire.
- **Parent Council meetings:** Meetings are our key communication methods. As per the Constitution of Balmuirdy Primary School **Parent Council (PC)**, meetings of the **PC** shall be open to the public, unless the **PC** is discussing an issue which it considers should be dealt with in a confidential basis. In such instances, only members of the **PC**, the head teacher, or their representative, can attend. The **PC** will make this clear when communicating information about forthcoming meetings.

c) **Setting Ground Rules and Working Together**

Meetings will be most effective if everyone understands what is expected and agree to work together.

Everyone's contribution is important – do not try to monopolise the discussion - the role of Parent Council members is to support the group, allow everyone a 'voice' and work as a team. Parent Council members have a responsibility to respect, and listen to, each other's point of view – even if different from one's own. Try not to let it 'get personal'.

1. - Meeting dates will be set in advance and a reminder will be sent out two weeks prior to the meeting.
2. - Parent Council members can propose agenda items up to two weeks prior to the meeting date; after this date proposed agenda items will be rolled over to the next meeting.
3. - Ensure meetings start time – inform the Chair if you cannot attend.
4. - Stick to the agenda.
5. - During the meeting each agenda item will have a specific amount of time allocated– this allows for constructive discussion and decisions.
6. - Action points will be clearly recorded in the minutes along with a note of who has agreed to undertake the action. Progress will be checked on action points agreed at previous meetings.
7. - Minutes to be put up on the notice board, uploaded to the school website and notification of this is to be circulated to the wider school.

d) Key Documentation

Balmuilty **Parent Council** creates, maintains and/or refers to the following documents:

- *Balmuilty Parent Council Guidelines* (this document)
- *Constitution of Balmuilty Primary School Parent Council* (describes how **PC** members are selected and how the **PC** operates within Balmuilty Primary School)
- *Parent Council Meeting Minutes*
- *Balmuilty Parent Council Annual Report*

These documents are available on the parent council section of the school website (<http://www.balmuilty.e-dunbarton.sch.uk/parents-info/parent-council/>) or can be requested from the school office.

Parent Council Business

Each school community is unique and there is a wide range of educational issues on which parents/carers/guardians may wish to contribute their views. Examples of areas in which parent views can be sought and suggested as appropriate **Parent Council** business include:

- **How the school communicates with the Parent Forum (parents/carers/guardians):** The **Parent Council** has an important role in improving links between all parents/carers/guardians and the school, making sure that:
 - parents/carers/guardians get all the information they need and;
 - the school staff gets feedback on parents/carers/guardians' views.

Communicating with the **Parent Forum** and with the whole school community is a key area of the **Parent Council's** work. It is crucial that the **Parent Council** can effectively represent parental views and also keep them informed and involved in what it is doing.

- **Supporting the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence:** The **Parent Council** can support the delivery of Curriculum for Excellence by tapping into parents/carers/guardians' skills, experiences and expertise to enhance children's learning and school experiences. The **Parent Council** also has a key role to play in helping parents/carers/guardians get the right information to support their child's learning and choices.
- **Contributing to formulating the school's priorities for improvement:** i.e. the development of the School Improvement Plan.
- **Contributing to the revision of existing school policies and introduction of new policies.** This may include **Parent Council** members being consulted about the full range of school policies. For example, among others, in relation to uniform, the school's homework policy, the school ethos, and positive behaviour.

- **Action Planning:** Each academic year a **Parent Council** action plan will be developed alongside parents/carers/guardians and the school Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to establish clear areas in which parents/carers/guardians can work in partnership with the school. This may include collaborative actions with the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) where applicable. A copy of the **PC** Action Plan is available upon request.

What Balmuilty PC is not

The focus of Parent Councils is on general issues. Individual issues and cases are not within the remit of the **Parent Council**. This is for reasons of confidentiality. The **Parent Council** can direct parents/carers/guardians to seek support/guidance on individual concerns with the school's Senior Leadership Team. The **Parent Council** may find it useful to establish a range of local authority or school contacts to whom they can refer parents/carers/guardians on to for expert assistance and support.

Useful web-links

<http://www.balmuilty.e-dunbarton.sch.uk/parents-info/parent-council/> Balmuilty **Parent Council** has an area on the Balmuilty Primary School website where key **PC** information can be accessed

www.educationscotland.gov.uk. **Education Scotland** is the national body responsible for supporting quality and improvement in learning and teaching.

www.engageforeducation.org. **Engage for Education** is a platform for Scotland's education community (which very much includes parents/carers/guardians) to engage directly with the Scottish Government.

www.enquire.org.uk. **Enquire** is the Scottish advice service for additional support for learning. It publishes a guide for parents/carers/guardians on additional support for learning and a series of factsheets.

www.parentforumscotland.org. **The National Parent Forum for Scotland** (NPFS) is the representative body for Parent Councils in Scotland, working with key partners such as Education Scotland, local authorities, the Scottish Government.

www.scotland.gov.uk/Parents. The **Scottish Government** website provides information on a range of educational issues of interest to parents/carers/guardians.

www.sptc.info. The **Scottish Parent Teacher Council** is a national organization for parents/carers/guardians' groups in Scottish schools offering help and advice to parents/carers/guardians and providing a range of leaflets, reports and resources.