

# BELMONT ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL

Minute of Meeting  
Wed 28 January 2026 at 6.30pm  
School Library



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## IN ATTENDANCE

**Parents:** Susan Bell (Chairperson), Josephine Docherty (Secretary), Aynsley Lawrence, Karen Donn, Lewis Hedge, Lyssa McCartney, Michelle Gass, Niall Finnie and Rachel Jesson.

**Staff:** Kevin Boyd (Head Teacher), Valerie Gibson (Depute Head Teacher), Lynsey Pollock (Principal Teacher – Modern Studies & History) and Ian Watson (Principal Teacher – Guidance).

**Pupils:** Saskia & Hope.

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### 1. Welcome & Apologies

Chair, Susan Bell, welcomed everyone to the meeting and intimated apologies on behalf of Parent Members - Emma Brown, David Codling, Dawn McMillan, Gail Aitken, Heather Knox, John Malakoty, Jonathan Hagen, Lisa Thomson, Lucinda Ferguson-Hunter, Melanie Baird; plus Depute Head, Graeme McLean.

### 2. Minutes of Last Meeting (26 Nov 2025)

The Minute of the last meeting held on Wed 26 Nov 2025 was approved by Michelle Gass and seconded by Aynsley Lawrence, as a true record of that meeting.

### 3. Matters Arising

- a) **Recycle Scheme for Sports Clothing and Footwear** – parents and pupils to consider establishing a system for recycling sports clothing and footwear that pupils have outgrown but which remains in good condition, so that these items can be made available to other pupils who may benefit from them.  
**ACTION: All Members**
- b) **MS Teams Training for Parents** - Mr Boyd agreed to explore what training may be available.  
**ACTION: K Boyd**
- c) **Accounts** – Last year's accounts had not yet been audited. Susan Bell to follow up with David Bulloch.  
**ACTION: S Bell**
- d) **Clothing Bank** – Susan Bell currently has 50 bags of clothes for donating to the clothing bank, Rachel Jesson agreed to ask Doonfoot Primary how they had organised clothing bank collections. (Post Meeting Note – Rachel has been unable to obtain the contact details for the Bags to School initiative).  
**ACTION: S Bell**
- e) **Pop-up Charity Shop, Maybole** – Susan will check to see if the pop-up shop is available in Maybole for 8<sup>th</sup> May or 15<sup>th</sup> May and will confirm at next meeting.  
**ACTION: S Bell**
- f) **Belmont's Got Talent** – no progress made with this, to date – liaise with Mr McLean at next meeting.  
**ACTION: G McLean**

### 4. School Captain's Update

The School Captains, Hope and Saskia, provided an update on recent pupil events and activities. They reported that the S5/6 and S3/4 Christmas Dances were well attended and lots of socialising and dancing enjoyed by those in attendance, while the planned S1/2 dance was cancelled due to low interest.

They highlighted the announcement of Belmont Academy's 2025/2026 Pupil Leadership Team, and shared positive feedback on the annual Christmas Concert, which they described as "a night of amazing music and singing," noting the high level of talent among pupils and staff.

# BELMONT ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL

Minute of Meeting

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School Library



The captains also attended a pantomime trip to Glasgow organised by Miss MacMillian from the Music Department. S1 pupils and senior Music pupils took part, and the captains were invited as thanks for their contribution to the Christmas Concert. The group also enjoyed some shopping time at Silverburn beforehand.

An update was provided on the recent Rewards Afternoon, where pupils with 80 or more merits were able to choose from a range of activities including a cinema trip, inflatables, disco, Christmas crafts, pottery, and computer games.

The captains noted upcoming Parents' Evenings, with S4 scheduled for 27 January and S5/6 on 17 February. Members of the Leadership Team will support these events by signing in parents and carers and directing them to appointments.

They also shared details of the forthcoming S6 Burns Supper, planned for Thursday 29 January, which is expected to be an enjoyable evening featuring food, music, poetry, dancing, and singing.

Finally, the Captains reported early discussions around Prom fundraising, likely to take place around Valentine's Day. Ideas include face painting and a bake sale. The cost of Prom tickets is still being finalised, and the team is considering whether to book a band or a DJ.

## 5. Principal Teacher Physics (Ross McMahon)

The Principal Teacher of Physics provided a comprehensive update on departmental activity, covering staffing, learning and teaching, assessment, and pupil experience. The department emphasises its core values of Respect, Responsibility and Ambition, which underpin all aspects of its work.

The staffing structure was outlined, noting that Mr Ross McMahon (PT) has 25 years of teaching experience at Belmont Academy, including 18 years as Principal Teacher of Physics, and brings additional expertise as an SQA Marker and Verifier. He is supported by Mr Cameron Chape and Mr Matteo Demelas, both experienced teachers with SQA marking experience and relevant industrial backgrounds.

The PT gave an overview of what Physics is, describing it as "natural philosophy" and "the branch of science that studies matter, energy, forces, space and time." The presentation highlighted that Physics uses "observation, experimentation and reasoning" to answer fundamental questions about the universe, and that the technological outcomes of this knowledge "continue to revolutionise, enrich and extend our lives."

A summary of the course pathways was provided, covering BGE Physics in S1–S3 and the full Senior Phase offering of National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher Physics. The department also outlined the progression routes into university and college courses, apprenticeships, and STEM careers.

The PT described the wide range of skills developed through studying Physics, including critical thinking, experimental design, teamwork, communication, numeracy, data handling and IT skills.

A detailed overview of the learning environment was shared. Staff aim to create a friendly, supportive and well-resourced setting, with consistent routines, clear expectations, and an emphasis on inclusion. Pupils have access to learning materials, equipment and ASN supports such as the "Self-Help Shelf." Simple classroom rules were highlighted, including "Put phones in the box," "Be respectful," and "Don't be afraid of making mistakes."

The PT explained the structure of lessons, including routines at the start of each class, the use of learning intentions and success criteria, and a variety of teaching approaches. Learning is made active and engaging through experiments, demonstrations, group work, outdoor learning, and problem-solving tasks. Plenaries such as exit passes are used to consolidate learning.

The department provides extensive pupil materials, including summary notes, worked example booklets, homework sheets, revision quizzes, and topic check tests. Digital versions are also available on Teams, along with additional resources such as key definitions, learning outcomes with RAG tracking, past paper questions, mind maps, and study planners.

The PT outlined approaches to differentiation, including scaffolding, cooperative learning techniques, and differentiation by outcome and pacing. Modelling is used extensively, particularly in numerical problem-solving and practical work, to demonstrate safe and successful methods.

# BELMONT ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL

Minute of Meeting

Wed 28 January 2026 at 6.30pm

School Library



The department makes strong use of ICT, including OneNote, Teams, visualisers, and digital tools such as Achieve, Plickers, Quizlet and Blooket to support learning, revision and feedback.

Careers information and meta-skills are now embedded at the start and end of topics, with examples drawn from areas such as radiography, electronic engineering, meteorology, oceanography and seismology.

The PT provided an overview of assessment and feedback, including formative approaches (homework, quizzes, questioning, exit passes, past paper bursts) and summative assessments (class tests and prelims). Feedback is given through homework scores, prelim results, learning conversations, tracking reports, and parents' evenings.

A significant focus was placed on the department's Deep-Dive Tracking System, developed to provide pupils and parents with detailed, individualised feedback. Every mark from class tests and prelims is entered question-by-question, allowing analysis across SQA question types (K1–K3 and S1–S7). This enables staff to identify strengths, target areas for improvement, and support pupils in setting meaningful learning goals. The PT shared anonymised examples illustrating how the system guides revision strategies and supports progress towards target grades.

The update concluded by reaffirming the department's commitment to high-quality teaching, strong pupil support, and continuous improvement.

## 6. Pastoral Update (Ian Watson)

Mr Watson provided an update to the Parent Council, beginning with reflections from the recent Auschwitz educational experience. He said that pupils who participated had offered thoughtful and mature reflections on the visit, highlighting the emotional impact and the importance of remembering the lessons of the Holocaust.

He also provided an update on S5 pastoral work, including the recent input from Stewart Handling, whose 13-year-old daughter died when a friend gave her ecstasy pills. Mr Handling's presentation had focused on safeguarding, decision-making and the risks associated with substance use. The session aimed to support young people in understanding the consequences of unsafe choices and the importance of looking out for one another.

Mr Watson highlighted three key messages shared with pupils:

1. "Don't take substances, you don't know what is in them."
2. If others become unwell due to alcohol or drugs, pupils should seek help immediately and contact a responsible adult.
3. Selling drugs may appear to offer short-term financial gain but ultimately leads to "destruction, devastation and pain" for both the individual and others.

He concluded by reaffirming the school's ongoing commitment to pupil wellbeing, safety and responsible decision-making.

Michelle Gass suggested a potential speaker for the school to consider – Tanya Tennant. Ms Tennant delivers sessions for teachers, parents, pupils, and peer groups as required. She is autistic and has ADHD, and is frequently engaged by Southcraig School. Michelle recently heard her speak during a visit and found her presentation highly impactful. It was proposed that the school explore whether her input might be beneficial, particularly in supporting Belmont's significant proportion of pupils with additional support needs (approximately 40%).

**For Consideration: I Watson**

## 7. Treasurer's Report (Heather Knox)

No Treasurer's report was available, as Heather had sent her apologies. The Parent Council was advised that the new Virgin Money bank account, set up by the previous Treasurer, David Bulloch, remains inaccessible due to ongoing password and login issues. No funds have yet been transferred from the existing Royal Bank of Scotland account, which the Chair, Susan Bell, continues to access. Susan agreed to liaise with both David Bulloch and Heather Knox, and an update on the bank account position will be provided at the next meeting.

**ACTION: S Bell**

# BELMONT ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL

Minute of Meeting

Wed 28 January 2026 at 6.30pm

School Library



## 8. Head Teacher's Update (Kevin Boyd)

Mr Kevin Boyd provided an update on staffing, assessment activity and ongoing school developments. He confirmed that the school has recently appointed Emma Dalgleish as Principal Teacher of Biology. Recruitment is now underway to fill the permanent Biology teacher post she previously held. Mr Boyd noted that the vacancy attracted 31 applicants, with 10 candidates invited to teach a lesson and meet with him, ahead of final interviews scheduled for 5 February.

He also reported that an advert for a permanent Mathematics teacher was published the previous day, with interviews planned for 13 February. This post is for an August start and forms part of the school's annual staffing review. Overall, Mr Boyd stated that the school's staffing position remains "fairly settled for this time of year."

Mr Boyd updated the Parent Council on the Senior Phase Assessment Programme. National 5 assessments were completed before the Christmas break, and Higher and Advanced Higher assessments concluded the previous Thursday. He expressed his thanks to Mrs McCaig (DHT), Mrs Slider (PT Pupil Support), Mrs Cunningham (Chief Invigilator), the invigilation team, and all staff involved in ensuring the smooth running of the assessment diet. He also commended the young people for approaching their assessments with "the correct attitude, spirit, and determination."

He then highlighted ongoing work in relation to the Rights Respecting Schools (RRS) initiative, noting that this had been discussed at the previous meeting. He invited Miss Gibson (DHT) to provide a further update and gather feedback from the Parent Council.

Ms Valerie Gibson provided an update on Belmont Academy's progress toward achieving the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Silver Award. She explained that the school continues to promote the core RRS ethos of being "Kind, Positive, Yourself," which is now increasingly visible across the school environment.

Ms Gibson reported that a dedicated Rights Respecting Schools Steering Group has been established to lead and coordinate the school's work in this area. Recent initiatives include the Christmas Toy Campaign for the Salvation Army, which encouraged pupils to support local families and demonstrated the school's commitment to compassion and community engagement. The Steering Group has also been leading pupil focus groups on pupil-led learning, ensuring that young people have a meaningful voice in shaping their learning experiences.

She highlighted that the school is actively recognising and rewarding pupils who display behaviours aligned with the RRS ethos, reinforcing positive conduct and celebrating pupils who model kindness, respect and responsibility. Ms Gibson also shared examples of the school's new RRS-themed door signs, designed to promote visibility of the values throughout the building.

To support the next stage of the school's RRS journey, Ms Gibson invited Parent Council members to contribute ideas to help design the new Rights Respecting School Charter. She emphasised that parental input is valued and will help ensure the Charter reflects the shared values and aspirations of the whole school community.

Finally, Mr Boyd introduced the school's developing Curriculum Rationale, explaining that Mrs Flanagan (DHT) and Miss Pollock (PT Social Subjects) have been leading this work. Miss Pollock would present the draft rationale and seek views from the Parent Council as part of the school's wider consultation.

Ms Lynsey Pollock presented an overview of Belmont Academy's developing Curriculum Rationale, outlining the purpose, vision and principles guiding the school's approach to curriculum design. She began by explaining that the rationale is grounded in the understanding that education is evolving, and while qualifications remain important, equal emphasis must now be placed on skills development, diverse pathways and pupil wellbeing. She noted that curricular provision must be reviewed "deliberately and strategically," ensuring coherence rather than reactive change, and that a well-designed curriculum should enable every young person to succeed in ways that reflect their strengths and aspirations.

Ms Pollock reaffirmed the school's vision that "Belmont Academy is a nurturing learning environment where every young person is inspired to reach their potential." She highlighted the core values of Ambition, Respect and Responsibility, describing how these values shape expectations, relationships and learning experiences across the school. Ambition encourages pupils to aim high and embrace challenge; Respect

# BELMONT ACADEMY PARENT COUNCIL

Minute of Meeting

Wed 28 January 2026 at 6.30pm

School Library



underpins a culture of dignity and inclusion; and Responsibility supports young people to take ownership of their learning and actions.

She then outlined what Belmont Academy means by “curriculum,” emphasising that it extends far beyond subjects and examinations. The curriculum encompasses a broad range of subjects and qualifications, the development of meta-skills such as critical thinking, creativity and collaboration, and a wide variety of wider experiences, including leadership opportunities, mentoring, electives and enrichment activities. Ms Pollock also highlighted the importance of support and personalised pathways, ensuring that all learners can flourish regardless of their needs or starting points.

The Parent Council was introduced to the school’s new Curriculum Rationale Framework, described as an interactive visual guide that brings together the school’s vision, values and curricular components. This resource illustrates how each element connects to create meaningful, coherent learning experiences for every young person.

Ms Pollock concluded by inviting feedback from parents and carers, noting that their insights are invaluable as the school continues to refine and develop its curriculum rationale. She encouraged parents to share what resonates with them, how the school can better support learners, and any questions or suggestions they may have. Agreed to carry forward to next month’s PC Meeting for further discussion.

**ACTION: J Docherty**

## 9. Any Other Business

- a) Young Musician Event (26 Feb) – volunteers were sought to deliver hospitality at this event – Josephine and Susan put their names forward. **ACTION: S Bell & J Docherty**
- b) Chairperson – Susan reminded Members that she will be stepping down as PC Chairperson at the end of this school year, when her child leaves Belmont Academy. Members were asked to consider taking on the role, and Susan confirmed she would provide a full handover in advance.

**ACTION: All Members**

## 10. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Parent Council will take place on **Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> Feb 2026** at **6.30pm** in the **School Library (1<sup>st</sup> floor)** within Belmont Academy.