



Parents' Forum

Thursday 26th September 2019 from 4.30pm

Attendees: Jacqui Scott (Principal), Mark Tong (Assistant Principal), Tracy Humphris (minutes). Parents: GF, RP, and LS.

Apologies: KS, AB, LT

Minutes of the last meeting – Agreed.

Matters arising:

- Staffing a safe environment/room for vulnerable students to access between 8am and 8.30am. JS said that the football pitch is now staffed early in the morning and students are supervised there. JS to speak to the SENDCo, who was to provide her with a plan on how to provide a quiet room for some more vulnerable students in the SRB at this time.
- Transition has now been increased to two days in school for next year.
- All teaching staff contacts are now available to parents via the website.
- JS has fed back to the DT Food Dept about timings for cookery.
- The Head of Art has acknowledged that topics require her to get the students to work on specific skills during lessons, which in some way can reduce the students' enjoyment in the subject, but this cannot be helped.

Reporting System

MRT reported that we are doing some work on reporting and consulting with stakeholders (students, parents, teachers and Academy Council members). He welcomed the chance for the Parents' Forum to give their opinions. The school will be reporting to parents 3 times during the academic year. They will be reporting data only. There is no written report. The Praising Stars reports with a teacher's professional judgement on their levels. For Years 7, 8 and 9 the judgement will be whether the teacher thinks they are going to be below, on or above their target by the end of the school year. Targets are indicated by the colour coding for which there is a key on the report. Targets for Years 7 and 8 are set using the KS2 SATs results; for GCSE we use FFT data (Fischer Family Trust data).

The 4 point grading system for effort was discussed. The parents felt that there should be 5 grades with "Average" coming between "Good" and "NI". JS said it is too easy to default to this grade and it makes it seem that the child's effort is acceptable whereas nothing less than "Good" is actually acceptable.

Parents felt some students are wrongly given "NI" when actually they only fall short in a specific way. The descriptor for NI sounds so much worse than for a child who sometimes is too chatty in class for example, but has no other faults. Parents said we should be more explicit when giving grades which are below "Good". JS said she would ask staff to contact home for any student for whom they are giving less than "Good" for the effort grade, in order to communicate the reasons why the child's effort requires improvement. That way, an "NI" grade will not come as a surprise to a parent who has thought that all is well (for example they have not had any negative behaviour points).

The parents suggested that for the first Year 7 report, just effort grades should be given. MRT said they need to confirm the target data. The parents said the school have done better in terms of the timing of the sending of the reports and please to keep this up. It is not good to receive the report just at the start of a school holiday and not be able to contact the school to discuss any concerns.

The parents said the "1M, 1D, 2P" etc grading system for some subjects is confusing. MRT said we have no power to change this as this is the grading system that the awarding bodies use for certain qualifications.

MRT left the meeting at this point.

Frequently Asked Questions

The school wish to provide parents with a link which answers FAQs. JS asked the parents for ideas on what to include.

- Finding out about sporting events/matches – shared on Twitter, details on the website.
- Uniform – new blazers – do we have to buy the one with the new logo or will a hand-me-down be sufficient?
- Uniform – Can old PE kit be worn or will my child get into trouble for wearing the old kit?

Uniform

The parents were pleased to hear that the uniform provision is going out to tender again (after a long time of being exclusively placed with NK Sports). Hopefully there will be cost savings as a result.

A parent said she felt the wearing of "tube" skirts should be stopped (as per the policy). JS to investigate and report back.

It was agreed that the school should investigate the possibility of setting up a 2nd hand uniform shop and be more proactive in offering families the chance of buying clothes. It was felt this was a more environmentally-friendly option too.

Reading Programme

JS asked the parents for their child's opinion on the Reading Programme. JS reported that in school it was felt generally that the Year 7s love it, the Year 8s don't mind it but the Year 9s and 10s are taking longer to get used to it. The parents agreed to ask their children what their view was on the programme.

Any Other Business

- Homework – JS asked for the parents' view on the homework system this year. TH read out the email from KS. It was felt that the dates are still not being made absolutely clear by the teachers (in terms of when the homework is due in). Occasionally, for one reason or another, a teacher changes the date due in also. There appears to be issues with DT not marking homework (for 3 weeks in one case). One new teacher has gathered in the homework rather than marked it in class which has meant that the students got a week behind. JS to feed this back with the message, "Please do not deviate".

Date of next meeting – Thursday 21st November 2019 starting at 4.30pm.