

Alderman White School

Parent forum via Zoom Wednesday 29 June 2022

Chair: Helen Hanslow

Minutes: Jo Bramham

1. Feedback from last meeting

Timetabling Year 10-11: 5 groups moving up to 6 groups resolving one of the timetabling issues; combined and triple Science currently being taught at the same time. Some regroupings planned for English, Maths and Science. Parents to be updated shortly.

Trips: starting to look at German exchange partnership; mindful of the impact of the cost-of-living rises.

Homework: feedback at the last meeting from parents suggest that the levels about right. At the start of next school year, new google classrooms will be created (except for Y10s).

Planners: need to be discussed at SLT; useful for younger students, approaches needed for supporting consistent use. Also, exploring the possibility of using online calendar for older students.

School admissions: 'bulge' for this school year and possibly next year. All schools in the area (including AWS) have contributed to supporting the increased numbers and enabling students to attend local schools.

2. Uniform

Some parents have raised concerns about blazers in hotter weather. Mrs Hollings has already followed up on the initial query. Communication of messages to students will focus on clear boundaries and guidelines to help all students. There is a range of different internal experience of temperature. Adjustments may be needed for SEND students. The aim is to provide consistency and flexibility. The expectation is that students travel to and from school in full school uniform. If too hot students, can take their blazer off (but not replace with another item of clothing). During very warm weather, there has been a communication about not wearing a blazer and it is planned that these updates will continue as and when needed.

From September, statutory changes mean that an annual review of cost of uniform is needed. There is now one branded item for PE kit – PE top (cheapest item). Students can now wear a black fleece for PE and a black jumper for uniform but no sweatshirts. There are plans to review the uniform with uniform providers in October/November to enable providers to be clear on choices. AWS is setting up a good system for second-hand uniform; where to get it, regular sale times and fund-raising for PTA. Also, exploring the possibility of sew-on badges. However, the blazer trim is an issue at the moment and it is difficult to provide an alternative. There may be cheaper options but considerations will be needed for the whole of WHP trust (Bramcote College). If changes were to be made to uniform, there would be a period of phasing the changes. Currently, preparing guidance about new ankle boots for uniform (photos etc). The introduction of shorts has been popular. Jewellery taking time to review with students. Currently, no smart watches. Mrs Hollings is to consult about jewellery (parents and students). AWS webpages about uniform are to be updated.

A parent commented that it was helpful to open-up conversations about uniform and expressed their thanks for making the recent changes to uniform. They recommended that the guidance about jewellery stays the same.

3. Exams

Mrs Mellors commented that advance notification is helpful for families and dates are communicated on the school calendar but may not have been picked up. This year, exam dates were communicated at May half-term.

Mr Young commented that the exam window could be communicated again after the start of the year. The intention is not to create too much pressure but another reminder may be helpful nearer the time. The year 11 individual and group assessments are mapped out. Also, the prom dates and the KS4 parents' evening planned. It has been more difficult this year. Next year should be easier to plan for.

A parent commented that it is helpful to have an overview meeting at the start of the year i.e. this is what is going to happen, this is what this academic year looks like for your student. Particularly helpful to know about trips coming up so that you can plan.

4. Gender-neutral toilets

Some students have identified gender neutral as important. Mrs Mellors outlined the changes that are being made to buildings; internal doors (fire safety), roofs and building facia. The construction work will continue over the summer. There are currently four sets of working toilets and with the increase in student numbers it will be important to bring the Humanities building toilets back into use (work planned for October half-term). Students would like toilets to be enhanced. The intention is to invest in toilet facilities; possibly to re-model some toilets with new layouts (shared sinks). The new Humanities toilets will provide more capacity and then there is the possibility to plan for other work. Some toilet layouts – including the New Block - mean that new layouts are more difficult and these are at the early stage of planning. The intention is to provide facilities for all. New signs/frames are planned for signs (safeguarding). Currently, there is access to gender-neutral toilets near reception.

Mr Farnie commented that there has been input from students about toilet facilities; students are helping to drive the changes. There is recognition that toilet facilities are an important part of the students' experience of school.

5. Communications home

A parent commented that it can be confusing to have letters for parents with children in different years. Titles of communications are to be reviewed (to include the year group) – KS to follow up. A parent requested that Trip letters which include a note to get in touch if more information include the email address of the teacher coordinating the trip.

6. AoB

Question: Could 'blocks' be offered to simplify choices on specialisms?

There was some discussion about the pros and cons of offering blocks which could simplify the choices for students not able to be timetabled with their first choice and who find that they wish to change their reserve choice. Mrs Mellors highlighted that this would restrict the choices for others. It

was felt that the current timetabling accommodates best support for all. Some parents provided feedback that timetable clashes were handled well and with good support from Mr Hallam.

Question: What plans are there for Activities day?

It was identified that some year groups may have been missed out. An alternative plan with more information is to follow.

Question: When are the Y7 reports due out?

A parent commented that sometimes no notification comes through about reports being published and that the report had been expected but had not been available on the date shown on the school calendar.

Mrs Mellors commented that dates for reports may be viewed with the aim of offering a Friday date in future and not a mid-week date. Also, there the text and communication will be reviewed to ensure that a message is received by Parents to review the report. The usual schedule is one report per year and the others are data reports. As the report is not sent out in hardcopy and the written comments can be difficult to review on a phone, parents could request to borrow a Chromebook from school if viewing the report is difficult.

Question: When is payment due for the Alton Towers trip?

It was suggested that the pay system might be made available the day before a future trip to ensure that the payment is made when booking (payment through My Child at School app). There was some uncertainty about the allocation of places for the Alton Towers trip – KS to follow up.

Question: Are keyboard skills offered?

To be raised with Mr Batemen; part of KS3 (Yr7/8/9) curriculum? Review what resources may be applicable to those who need to increase speed of typing. Explore if any resources could be included in the Y7 induction pack.

Mrs Mellors thanked everyone for attending.