



Alderman White School

A member of The White Hills Park Trust

Parents' Forum

Wednesday 24th March 2021 via Zoom

Chair: Louise Wilson, Minutes: Kerry Morris

1. Feedback from previous meeting

There were no further comments to the points raised at the previous meeting as these have been mainly superseded with the return to on-site learning for all students and the Year 11's are now halfway through their March assessments.

2. Break and Lunchtime arrangements

a) Limited vegetarian menu at lunchtimes. Any plans to provide more vegetarian options? (*Smyia Ahmed*)

Mrs Holling explained that the 'meal of the day' re-started last week and she now has the 2-week menu which she will put onto the website.

With regards to vegetarian options, there is always a 'meal of the day' vegetarian alternative as well as both meat and vegetarian options for Pasta King, burger bar, wraps, jacket potato fillings and cold pasta pots.

It was suggested that vegan options may be more limited. Mrs Holling will review these options as well as other dietary requirements.

It was noted that Donna, the chef, is very accommodating.

b) Unhealthy snacks in school – waffle packet (409 calories & 25g of sugar) – nearly a quarter of children's daily allowance! Request these snacks are removed & replaced with healthier alternatives. (*Julie Todd*)

Mrs Holling commented that this has been discussed with the SLT and since September more convenience items have been added but she will look at reducing the frequency of these items on offer whilst looking at more healthy alternatives.

Donna has restarted her home baking from last week which offers healthier options.

Fruit and yoghurt are always available but a review of the waffles, pasties, croissants etc will take place.

c) Would the school consider having Newsround on instead of the news – students find it overwhelming & depressing! (*Smyia Ahmed*)

In the school hall, there is a screen which has BBC news scrolling on it during lunchtime. This is to provide the students with factual information as we recognise that articles that they see on social media are not always accurate. However, at the current time, some students and parents think that this is not appropriate and hence for the time being this will stop.

Instead, any current affairs will be addressed in tutor time, Citizenship or as part of the curriculum. The balance between discussing current affairs and having a total break during social time is important.

Any recommendations for other material that could be shown on the screen would be welcomed. A tour of the International Space Station, museum links etc were mentioned.

3. Equipment issues

- a) **So far, my daughter has not been asked to make use of her Chromebook in any of her lessons. Is it necessary to bring it to school every day – quite heavy? Are teachers waiting for the majority of students to receive their Chromebook before incorporating them in lessons? (Smyia Ahmed)**

It was noted that we are in a transition stage and teachers are getting used to having the Chromebook as an option. Each faculty has been assigned an IT guru who will be looking for opportunities to use the Chromebook. It is part of the longer-term strategy.

A couple of parents asked at what point would it be essential/desirable for the students to have their own Chromebook since they haven't yet bought one as they bought their children laptops during lockdown. Mrs Mellors commented that we need to see what value they bring and see if they demonstrate their worth, taking the learnings from remote learning and to see if we can apply these to the classroom. It is a personal preference at the moment and there will always be alternatives for those without. There will be opportunities to purchase in the future.

Once it becomes an expectation to own a Chromebook, this is likely to be rolled out with year groups who already have a high take up. Currently, including current orders, about 350 students have their own plus there are over 100 owned by the school. It was also noted that students need to write with a pen and not solely use the Chromebook or key skills will be lost.

A parent asked if touch typing could be offered.

It was agreed that this is a key skill and Mr Young will liaise with Mr Bateman to see if anything is currently offered as part of the curriculum then will report back.

- b) **When are lockers going to be reissued? (Louise Wilson)**

Year 10 and 11 have been offered lockers after Easter to coincide with them changing for PE. Once this has been assessed, rollout to other years will be considered. The problem is the location of lockers and trying to keep bubbles from mixing. As the students have only 3 or 4 different lessons each day, they shouldn't need to carry all of their books every day. Any instruments or food ingredients for Food Tech can be left in designated places.

4. Providing feedback

- a) **How can parents/students share the big & small things they have valued this year with online learning & recent transition into the classroom? Some unexpectedly good things from the recent changes that we would like to carry on with? What's the simplest way to inform teachers of the impact of their extraordinary work during the recent changes? (Jo Bramham)**

There is an email address that was set up for parents to email their thanks and this is still active and will be relaunched. Parents expressed their thanks both for some successful learning styles used as well as good pastoral care as anxiety levels seemed higher during this second return.

- b) **Feedback on the testing with parents hearing how impressed I was with the school's running of the testing program & how well the students handled themselves. It was honestly delightful to be part of the team and I would like to make sure that is fed back! (Joy Miller)**

Joy Miller, who was one of the volunteers involved in the testing, expressed her thanks to both the staff running the process – it was incredibly well organised and very efficient and also to the students/parents as the students were all really supportive of each other, acted maturely, took it seriously and were polite. This made the process run smoothly.

Mrs Rockley also thanked the team of volunteers and said what a great community effort it had been.

5. Plans for the Academic Year

Mrs Mellors shared the new proposed timetable which would be effective from the start of the Summer term.

Years 7&8 would start at 8.55am and leave at 3.10pm

Years 9-11 would start at 9am and leave at 3.15pm

Lunchtime would be extended by 10 minutes and break by 5 minutes. Lunches would still be split as this avoids long queues. It was asked as to whether this would continue post Covid. There are advantages to this as lunchtimes are more relaxed and it splits some of the double lessons up for Year 7 & 8s which can enhance learning. However, it does mean that staff have different lunch times and hence it's harder to get staff together. With growing pupil numbers, this may be a more long-term option.

It was questioned as to whether separating the older students from the younger ones may not be beneficial and whether a house system could be re-introduced. Mrs Mellors commented that during break and lunch times, most students stick within their own group circles. There are lots of other times when mixing of the years happens, such as the maths mentoring programme, when moving around the school as well as the enrichment programme.

6. AOB

- a) **Is it possible to swap who goes to lunch first between Year 7 and Year 8 so it is not always Yr 7?**
It was agreed that this could be considered.

- b) **There is a lot of anxiety about GCSEs with the current Year 10s. How is the school addressing this anxiety?**

If there are concerns with any individuals, then they should get in touch with the school to discuss. Generally, progress assessments will be carried out at the end of year 10. The results from these will be reviewed and interventions put into place where needed. It was noted that the longer-term achievement from the current Year 11s was in line with where they should be. It is the same situation for all Year 10s nationally and adjustments to specifications will be made.

School will start to look at where the students want to go post-school and support them with reaching that goal.

Mr Farnie mentioned that they are creating a mental health policy which includes where the students can access support if needed.

- c) **Wearing of face masks – when might this change?**

The wearing of face masks in classrooms is now mandatory due to the higher transmissibility of the virus. Although not ideal for communication, it is necessary at the moment to protect students and teachers. It was suggested that this may change once all adults (and hence teachers) have been vaccinated.

- d) **Lateral Flow Test email not received**

Mrs Rockley to investigate why some parents are still not receiving the reminder email with the results link. The link from any of the emails can be used to record the result.

- e) **Communication from Bramcote College with Alderman White heading**

Joy Miller informed that correspondence from BROMCOM from Bramcote College has an Alderman White heading.

Mrs Mellors thanked everyone for attending.