

Parents' Forum

Wednesday 9th June 2021 via Zoom

Chair: Helen Hanslow, Minutes: Kerry Morris

1. Feedback from previous meeting

- i) **Vegan food** – vegan cheese is now being purchased which means that there is now a vast choice of food for vegans including Meal of the Day, paninis, jacket potatoes and pasta.
- ii) **Snacks** – the removal of unhealthy snacks, such as waffles and pasties, is an ongoing piece of work but although these have not been removed completely, the frequency that they are offered has been vastly reduced. More fruit, yoghurt and cereal bars have been ordered. Other healthy snack ideas are welcomed. Fresh fruit pots will be sold over the summer.
- iii) A parent gave positive feedback on the Meal of the Day during the last half term especially now that her daughter has realised that she can have a yoghurt instead of the pudding option.
It was also noted that dietary information is available. Food is available to eat in or take out. Some Year 11 students are bringing in their own containers to cut down on disposable trays.
Now that the full 3-week menu is running, this will be put onto the website.
- iv) **News** – this is no longer being shown due to discussions at the last meeting but it was noted that very few students are now staying in the dining room. Some students have commented that they like being able to catch up with the news during this time.
- v) **Chromebooks** – A parent noted that some teachers are letting the students know in advance if Chromebooks are required for a lesson, so they are not carrying them unnecessarily.
During the rest of this half term, there will be a focus on curriculum development and how IT can be incorporated into it.
The plan is to embed practices with staff, share and develop the culture around the use of Chromebooks and use learnings from other schools.
- vi) **Lockers** – Students can have a locker this half term if required. Otherwise, lockers will be re-issued in September. New keys have been delivered so every locker has 2 keys again, in case one gets lost.
A parent asked about availability of lockers in the short-term as her son has a broken arm. There are plenty of available lockers. Mrs Mellors noted that assessment of the need for support of carrying equipment should be carried out in such situations.
A parent also commented that he hadn't received the deposit back from his key return. Mrs Holling to check.

Thank you email address – Mrs Holling to send an email out to parents stating the email address which is: *thanks@aldermanwhite.school*
- vii) **Mental Health policy** – A mental health policy has been written and sent to the governors for approval. There has also been an increase in school counsellor hours and practical points on managing stress and anxiety are to be rolled out between now and September.

Some students have given feedback but this should be widened to ensure that all students have had an opportunity to give their views. It was noted that it needs to be flexible and bespoke as some will need individual help as 'one size doesn't fit all'.

Two staff members have attended a course on managing mental health in schools to gain training on putting practices in place. There will be an online referral system which is anonymous and the aim is to open up as many avenues as possible to allow students to talk.

- viii) **Bramcote 6th Form College linked to AW** – From September onwards, if approved, Bramcote 6th Form College will officially move to the Bramcote College school number and hence admin issues should no longer occur.

2. Uniform

Allowing student' the choice of a self-tied tie or clip-on. (Roy Serevena)

Roy explained that he believed that being able to tie a proper tie is a core life skill and having the choice of this over a clip-on tie should be offered.

Mrs Holling explained that the clip-on tie was brought in both for health & safety issues as well as giving the ties uniformity (same length and same knot size)

There are a small number of real ties for SEND students as well as the senior student ties.

Mrs Mellors noted that when the uniform changed from polo shirts, it may have been too much of a change to introduce the proper ties at that point but now may be an appropriate time to consider it.

SLT to consider the move but strict expectations would need to be in place.

Another parent commented that she totally disagreed and students from other schools who have proper ties, often look scruffy as the ties are all different and believes the AW students look far smarter due to the uniformity.

3. Exams

When are the Y9 end of year exams & will they be guided about what they are expected to revise? (Sally Mellor)

A plan is being made this week but at the moment they will probably take place during the w/c 12th July. Exams will be in core areas – Maths, English and Science.

This is to give the students the experience of exams without them being overly intense.

Guidance will be given to them on i) how to revise, ii) what to revise and iii) how to prepare.

For year 7 & 8, there is no summer exam programme but they will continue with their ongoing assessments and will carry on being assessed each term.

4. Options

When do Y9 students find out whether they have their option choices?

(Sally Mellor)

Assume you have got your options unless you have already been approached to discuss changes.

All but 7 students managed to get all of their option choices. A number of late changes have been sent in this year and hence there is a slight delay whilst these changes are being sorted.

5. AOB

- i) **Homework** - A parent remarked that at the end of the lesson their child didn't have enough time to write their homework in their planner properly. Also, Google Classroom isn't that user friendly for parents.
Mrs Mellors commented that the 'My Child at School' app will include homework tasks and assessment information in the near future.

- ii) **Sustainability in the dining room** – a parent discussed plastic bottled drinks in the dining room from both a sustainability and sugar content viewpoint and asked if there would be uproar if students were only allowed water.
It was also noted that crisps are available for purchase every day which are unhealthy as well as lots of thrown away packets.
Mrs Holling commented that Donna does look at the sugar content of the drinks and is working with suppliers to ensure that there are lower sugar options. There is plain water and fruit cartons on sale and as the drinks are bought in, there is a certain amount of packaging involved. Crisps will only be offered on certain days. Work on this area is ongoing.
It was also noted that if different options were not made available then students may buy drinks on the way to school or bring them from home and hence end up with a more, unhealthy option.
Drinks bought at the canteen are only allowed to be drunk at social time and not during lessons.
Sally Mellor, as a child dietitian, said that she was happy to offer advice or act as a sounding board on this subject.
It was noted that most primary schools only offer water but as the children at secondary are older and more independent they probably want to make their own decisions.

- iii) **Sensitivity over grades/test results** – A parent raised the issue of some teachers reading out test scores in front of the class. It was agreed that although a bit of friendly competition may be good for students, test and assessment results should be communicated in a sensitive and discrete manner. The same goes for target grades at the beginning of each term. The target grades are reviewed. It was agreed that the sensitivity issue will be addressed.

- iv) **Lack of funds for lunch** – It was asked as to whether a child could still receive a lunch if their account didn't have sufficient funds on it.
A child can still have a lunch and should either go to base or speak to a member of the SLT. This is then flagged and the parent contacted to rectify the situation.

- v) **Homework variability** – homework for years 7-9 was suspended during home schooling and there seems to be different approaches from different teachers now that teaching is back in school. A more consistent approach needs to be re-established.

Next meeting: Wednesday 14th July.

Mrs Mellors thanked everyone for attending.