

## Parents' Forum

### Wednesday 14th July 2021 via Zoom

Chair: Helen Hanslow, Minutes: Kerry Morris

#### 1. Feedback from previous meeting

- i) **Canteen** – the SLT will have a review of the issues raised in early September, both in terms of the offer, sustainability and plastic use. One proposal that will be considered is to only offer water in the canteen. Also, healthier breaktime options will be discussed. Two external offers of help with this have been received by nutritionists who will be consulted.  
It has also been recognised as a teaching opportunity as younger students need to learn planning and budgeting of their lunch funds so this life skill could be incorporated.
- ii) **Chromebooks update** – just over half of the students now own a chromebook and there are still funds left to subsidise the new Year 7's as well as any parent who didn't take up the offer to date. Take up was 60% in year 8 & 54% in year 7. These need to supplement teaching rather than replace the old methods. At the moment, it is difficult as not all students in a class have one. Lockers will be available from September which should assist having to carry too much all day. It will be rolled out to the new Year 7's in September and will be an integral part of learning in Years 7, 8 & 9. Children in Year 10 & 11 can use them if they wish to. Exercise books will still be used but resources can be saved on printing etc.
- iii) **Mental Health Policy** – this is going for consultation with a wide range of stakeholders including parents, students etc in the Autumn term. The governors have seen a skeleton policy.
- iv) **Uniform** – a proper tie is still under consideration. This will be put onto the SLT agenda for next week. After the last discussion, parents have differing views and supply would also need to be considered.
- v) **Exams** – the Year 9 exams are now underway.  
There has been some confusion over whether Year 7 and 8 will be sitting 'exams'. Mrs Mellors confirmed that the usual termly assessments in all subjects would be happening but that the students have raised stress levels once these are called 'exams'. Only once in Year 9 are the more formal exams carried out, usually in more formal conditions.
- vi) **Grade discretion** – teachers have been reminded that privacy of results is good practice as students may be sensitive.  
Mrs Rockley asked parents to let her know if they experience this again in future.

## 2. Homework

A parent with a child in year 8 commented that their child doesn't receive any homework and whilst this was agreed as the right process when the children were all home schooling, he still hasn't received any and therefore isn't developing healthy homework habits and also he isn't hitting his target grades so is missing the opportunity to close this gap. A routine of doing small amounts of homework regularly is needed.

Another parent said their child (year 8) has less homework than in year 7 but does get regular maths and science homework as well as finishing work not completed in class.

Mrs Mellors commented that consistency of homework being set was on the priority list as well as the presentation of written work and in September there would be a focus on this. There is a homework policy which is adequate but need to ensure that the policy is being implemented.

Mrs Rockley also explained that earlier in the year, the transfer of paper between students and teachers was minimised due to Covid and this has contributed to the decline in consistency. She agreed that little and often is the best idea.

Mrs Holling had, in the past, made a list of useful websites that could be used for homework if students/parents wanted extra resources. She will redistribute the list.

Another parent asked as to whether homework needs to be done by the child individually or is it acceptable for them to sit together and work through it to make sure the child understands the topic and enhances their learning. It had been suggested to her that some homework was assessed and hence she shouldn't have been facilitating. But without that help, the child would not have been able to do it on her own.

It was agreed that every child is different and assessments should mainly be done in the classroom. Gradually reducing support is usually beneficial but if the child needs the support to gain the knowledge and for the homework to be beneficial then it is best for that child to work together.

## 3. AOB

i) **Diversity day** – are badges being given out?

There will be no badges. The day is supposed to be informative and factual. The school is conscious that children of certain faiths/beliefs may find it difficult.

ii) **Parents' evening** – a parent noted that they had only had a parents' evening with the tutor in both year 7 and year 8 and hence as their child starts year 9, they have not had the opportunity to have a face to face conversation with any of the subject teachers.

Mrs Mellors confirmed that normal parents' evenings were due to return next year. They are in the process of buying software so this can be done remotely if it can't be held face to face.

iii) **Newsletter** – a parent asked if the newsletter could be published on Microsoft Sway instead of in pdf to make it easier to read on a mobile phone.

This is to be discussed with the Trust.

- iv) **Progress reports** – a parent asked if more information could be given on progress reports where the child has received a ‘requires improvement’. Without knowing the issue, it’s difficult to remediate.

It was agreed that if a child receives a ‘requires improvement’ or concern that this should really have already been flagged by the teacher. In this situation, the parent/child should contact the tutor to ask for further information.

The 3 columns of the report were also explained – target, predicted & current.

Mrs Mellors thanked everyone for attending.