

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Parent Voice Minutes</b> <b>Meeting held on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2019</b></p>
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**Present:**

Anila Shah, Clare Thake, Caroline Blondell, Cynthia Wood, Filiz Zaman, Fleur Hocking, Michelle Garvey, Gema and Yelda Ozelci, Geraldine Morley, Hayley Gelkoff, Hayley Sylvester, Helena Knight, Katy Veron, Kerrie Streetin, Jenny Norwood, Linda Cook, Marcella Lord, Marcela Orgel, Nancy Baker, Neena Freeman, Nitan Naran, Peter Bridgland, Renu and Sunnet Kapoor, Ryan Battles, Terry Knight, Simona Salomia, Sudeshna Khan and Suhail Lodhi.

**Present from the School:**

Mr Leonard

**Apologies**

Angela Rock, Bisi Owolabi, Corinne and Karl Haywood, Darren Lord, Donna Baker, Julie Pearce, Louisa Hooper, Ros Howe, Vanessa Poynter and Wai Wong.

Thank you to those parents who were able to attend the meeting. I'd like to apologise again to those parents who were unable to attend due to the movement of the meeting as a result of my illness.

Parents Voice is an important part of the school's consultation process and I really value the time parents give to meet with me.

**1. Review of questions Parents should ask at Parent Evenings**

Parents spent the first 10 minutes discussing the sorts of questions they would like to ask at the parent's evenings. These will be collated and distributed to parents before the next set of parent's evenings.

**2. Homework**

There was much discussion regarding homework including the amount set, setting it at weekends and extension homework. Mr Leonard noted that he has asked staff to ensure that homework is meaningful and either links to previous learning or what will be taught in the next lesson. He explained that the school is trying to set more knowledge recall based homework that parents can help with by testing at home. Mr Leonard explained that there is not a set amount of homework that should be given each week but it would be expected to be fairly regularly; the most important thing is that the homework has an impact on learning and is not for the sake of setting it.

**ACTIONS:**

- Mr Leonard will follow up with the Maths Department about the setting of homework, particularly for Year 8.
- Mr Leonard to investigate whether parameters can be put in place that stop the setting of homework at certain times ie. Sunday evening. If not, to ask staff not to do so.

- Mr Leonard to ensure there is extension work available to students who want to do more than expected – the deadline for this was given as the end of the academic year at the latest.
- Mr Leonard to look into why some teachers are setting homework for pupils they do not teach.

### **3. Marking of books**

Mr Leonard explained the school's policy on marking and the reasons parents may see less than they previously did. This is due to explicit instructions from the Government about teacher workload and reducing marking and feedback for staff as well as a desire to enable our staff to have a reasonable work life balance.

The school's policy is that an assessment should be carried out each half term or in subjects with less curriculum time when it is appropriate for their schemes of work. This assessment should be marked thoroughly and feedback provided to students (on blue paper). The students should then have a closing the loop task that shows they have understood the feedback and improved as a result. In between assessments staff should be taking the books in at regular intervals (depending on how often the subject is taught) and pink pen marking should take place focussing on presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar and any particular gaps in knowledge. Teachers are not required or expected to make comments during this marking process.

Homework will not always be marked by the teacher but staff will recognise where pupils have worked hard on their homework with house points. There may be green pen marking in books which is peer marking (students marking each other's work, or self-marking). Where pupils have tests following homework they will be required to re-sit them in their own time if they fail to get a reasonable mark based on their individual expectations.

### **4. Lost correspondence at the office**

There should never be a time when information is provided to the office and goes missing.

**ACTION:** Mr Leonard to ensure there are robust systems in place so that this does not occur in the future.

### **5. Trips**

Mr Leonard went through the trips and activities planned for this year. He explained that he was committed to providing pupils with many experiences during their time at school and that this was a target, particularly at KS3, for the school. He explained that teachers' good will was required to take trips during their time off in the school holidays and that there were always concerns about running trips during school time as it meant those left in school would have supply teachers.

**ACTION:** Mr Leonard to follow up to see if the English Shooting Stars sessions are running as they no longer appear on the extracurricular timetable.

### **6. The canteen and queuing system**

Mr Leonard explained that he did not agree with students that they were not eating because of the queuing system at the canteen. There has not been one occasion this year where it has not been possible for a student to get a hot meal (other than the closures during the power cut) and the queues are managed by senior staff. Students have an ordered system for lunch with Year 7 going in early, Year 11 going first but queuing separately and then a rotation of Year groups every day.

Mr Leonard accepted that the increase in student numbers had impacted in some way on the speed of the queues and noted that once the building work is finished we will have separate KS3 and KS4 snack shacks to take some of the load.

Mr Leonard also noted that parents can contact the school finance department to set limits for spend in the canteen.

**ACTION:** Mrs Pearce to report back to parents at the next meeting regarding her Governor visit to the canteen.

## **7. Parents purchasing books.**

Mr Leonard explained that all students have access to text books in school but the school spend thousands of pounds each year having to purchase new books because students do not return them at the end of their course or because they are ruined and are not able to be used. This is unsustainable and the school have investigated the practices of other schools. As a result we are not able to provide students with books to take home. We understand that this gives a financial burden to parents and we are able to support those who would be disadvantaged because they cannot afford to purchase books.

### **ACTIONS:**

- Mr Leonard to publicise the book return system in the newsletter so that we can better support students who cannot afford to purchase them.
- Mr Leonard to organise for parents to know which books their children will need in Year 9, prior to the end of Year 8 so that they can purchase what is required before lessons have commenced.
- Mr Leonard to follow up where the Science and History books are that have been ordered.

## **8. Process of addressing damaged property on school site by other pupils**

Mr Leonard agreed to adopt the practice that the school would ask if parents wanted us to pass their contact details to the parents of the pupil causing the damage in case they wanted to contact them directly.

## **9. Gaps in teaching**

Mr Leonard discussed the recruitment issues facing schools at the moment. He explained that there are only 3 times in a year that a school can recruit staff, September, Christmas and Easter and if they are short staffed in between these periods we have to get supply teachers in. This includes when a teacher goes onto maternity leave part way through the year.

Mr Leonard explained that he and his team work exceptionally hard to ensure the school is fully staffed with high quality teachers but there is a national shortage in subjects such as Science, Business, Geography and Languages and the schools proximity to London impacts upon our ability to recruit as schools in London are funded at a higher level than those outside and can therefore pay staff more.

There are a significant number of plans in place to develop staff over time, including the Yr.14 Gap Year Programme, and the school does its best to overstaff in core subjects to ensure provision is high.

## **10. Update on the Expansion**

Building work has commenced this week once again and the County Council have advised the school the English block will be completed before September and the Sports Hall will follow soon after. All other aspects of the building work are now complete including the dining room, technology, science, music and playground extensions. Mr Leonard will keep parents informed of progress.

A question was asked about noise during exams and Mr Leonard explained this should not be an issue as the major ground works have already been completed.

## **11. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will take place in the Spring Term on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> January.