

Parent Forum Meeting

Monday 9th November 2020

MINUTES

Present: Mrs H F Jeys (HJ), Mrs A Goddard (APG), four senior school parents.

1. Introductions

HJ introduced the members of staff present and their roles and areas of responsibility within the School.

2. Matters arising from the meeting held on 26th November 2019.

During the last meeting, it was agreed that APG would speak with Mr Rose, our Well Being Co-ordinator about developing age appropriate sessions to cover all the secondary school content listed in the new Relationships and Sex Education guidance. APG was also due to start work on developing a RSE policy for MHSG and to consult parents on its development. Unfortunately, lockdown has delayed all of these actions and the deadline for the implementation of the policy has been extended to September 2021 although the programme is ready to begin. It was agreed during the discussion that APG would send out a copy of the policy and guidelines approximately a week before the next meeting and that parents could offer questions in advance of the meeting so that these could be addressed by APG. APG noted that although we might think that our pupils know a lot in this area, they were not as emotionally aware as one might think. Hence the importance of this area of the school curriculum.

Action: APG to gather together the policy and guidance so that these can be issued to parents in advance of the next parent forum meeting.

During the last meeting, the issue of the environment had been discussed and what the School was doing in this area. HJ commented that the students themselves had asked for us to approach this area once again, in an effort almost to re-address the narrative away from COVID-19. Mrs Wilkes was now in charge of the Eco-Society and was in discussion with the pupils, in their year groups, about issues such as recycling etc. We also had a member of our Governing Body who was overseeing the ongoing sustainability of the building itself. Both of these were ongoing projects.

3. Ventilation

The issue of ventilation within school was discussed. HJ outlined the issue. It was clear from the research that effective ventilation was one of the most important strategies in reducing the likelihood of transmitting COVID-19. However, this became more difficult as the weather became colder. There were various ways in which we were addressing this issue:

- (i) The heating was being put on earlier in the morning and was staying on for longer during the day.

- (ii) We have advised our pupils to wear layers and, if needed, to wear coats in lessons.
- (iii) We have investigated the use of HEPA and CO2 filters in school; the first to filter the air and the second to indicate if a room is not sufficiently ventilated (if windows need closing). However, the first necessitates us closing windows which, not only appears counter-intuitive but we do not feel is a sufficiently effective alternative at the moment. The CO2 metres also indicate that the rooms are insufficiently ventilated and is therefore a reactive response to the issue. However, these issues continue to be explored and may be an alternative that we have to consider if the weather becomes very cold.
- (iv) Staff have been advised that even if windows are not fully open – this still enables the air to be circulated effectively.
- (v) If windows have to be partially closed, we can ask students to wear masks in the lesson. This is not a preferred alternative because of the impact of this on communication. However, it does offer us the ability to reduce potential toxins in the air if it becomes too cold to keep windows open.

There was a discussion and suggestion that if the weather became too cold for students to concentrate, that we should consider closing the School and teaching remotely. Other clothing layers were also discussed such as the wearing of scarves, gloves and body-warmers. All of these were acceptable; we had to take a pragmatic stance towards school uniform in this current climate.

Action:

HJ to continue to monitor this issue in school alongside the Bursar and Estates Team.

4. E-Safety

There was a discussion around the use of social media by some students who were, perhaps, using or accessing social media younger than the rules stipulated. APG outlined the School's approach to e-safety and that students were reminded that the 'phone they used belonged to their parents – not to them. Students were encouraged to abide by the expectations of their parents – all of which would have different attitudes towards the use of social media etc. However, there was also the acknowledgement that it was very difficult, indeed, to monitor students' use of 'phones and what they did and did not see. However, the School encouraged parents to have an open, transparent relationship with their daughters on this issue and, if concerned, to contact the School which would do everything possible to support everyone involved.

5. Fees and concern about the cost of COVID-19

There was a concern raised by a parent that with the concession made on fees last year, the loss of income due to not raising fees this year and the increased costs associated with COVID-19 (e.g. heating, marquees etc.), that the School were putting issues on hold that were important to the School community. There was a discussion about whether parents could be informed about future planning and what, if anything, parents could do to support the School. Could we engage parents in this way to provide them with the opportunity to provide further financial support? It was a source of sadness for parents to hear that



things might be being 'put off' by the School because of financial losses caused by COVID-19 but also an understanding why this might be the case. There was also the associated concern that fees would increase dramatically next year. HJ reassured parents that the School was very mindful, indeed, of the cost of fees but also acknowledged that COVID-19 was a cause of financial concern to us, just like it is to everyone around the country. HJ said that she would discuss this concern with the governing body so that they were aware.

Action: HJ to discuss concerns about financial issues with Governors.

Meeting closed 8:10 pm.

HJ 11th November 2020