

Parent Council Meeting

Tuesday 25th June 2013

6.00 p.m. ~ 7.00 p.m.

VENUE ~ Library

MINUTES

Present:

Mrs Hollyoak, Mrs Donnachie, Mrs Bavister, Mrs Gilbert, Mr Bennett, Mrs Agger, Mrs Hyland-Jeffrey, Mr Potter.

1. Apologies for absence:

Mrs Baxter, Mrs Welch, Mrs Whitwell

2. Literacy Booklet handed out and parents to feedback once they have had time to read it.

3. Presentation Evenings

Parents were very supportive of the evenings. Although parents said that the letter explained what and why students were being asked to attend, Mr Potter said the College will ensure in future that students understand that is the last chance to see peers and staff and the College will include this in the letter as well as the various categories being presented that night.

4. Parents' Evening

A parent, who was unable to attend, raised the following topic via email, which Mr Potter read to the Parent Council.

“Many parents want to know how their children are progressing through school with parents' evening being a key part and a great opportunity for parents to talk directly to teachers - however with the parents' evenings only being 1 evening with a small time frame it is in possible for the teachers to see all parents and also impossible for the children to book the appointments. Talking to many parents at the recent Year 8 evening, the average number of appointments children were able to get was 3 - this does not give a true representation of all subjects. Something needs to be done to enable us parents to see as many teachers as possible; it's our one chance to interact with child and teacher.”

Parents at the meeting said that they were able to see most of the staff they wanted to when they had been to parents' evenings and that staff would call home or email and arrange alternate times to meet if there are any issues. One idea was to have a note available with the prefects who give out the questionnaires so that parents could write down details for teachers they wanted to get in contact with.



5. Trial Lunchtime

A parent, who was unable to attend, raised the following topic which Mr Potter read to the Parent Council.

“I would like to ascertain whether the school has undergone its “trial period” in reference to lunchtime.

I know there was a lot of resistance when this started and I wondered whether this was now going to be the norm or whether we as parents were going to be advised of the findings, because I am not a great supporter mainly because:

- 1) most students will be eating their breakfast between 6.30 am and 7.00 am making it approximately 6 – 7 hours before dinner
- 2) I know that break time is at 11.00 am, but should we really be encouraging children to “eat between meals” especially with the hoo-hah about obesity!!
- 3) I know my daughter and most of her friends eat at least half their lunch at break time which then means they are left with little or nothing for lunch
- 4) I know you provide healthy snacks at school, but again, should we be encouraging these students to eat more!!
- 5) I have a real issue with eating like this as when my daughter and several friends of ours who have children say the same, that they are absolutely starving when they come home and hit the larder for snacks or expect their evening meal early and snack before bedtime.
- 6) I would also say as a school cook for Primary students, it is a huge difference eating at 12.00 pm for 5 years and then when they reach senior school, eating at 1.20 pm.”

Parents at the council said that their children liked it and that psychologically 1 hour left at end of day was very good. However, one parent felt her son was very tired initially due to the changeover. The Parent Council overwhelmingly felt that the new times are better ultimately.

There was a brief discussion for stretching the school lunch time and then it moved on to Free School Meals; is it enough to get a student a full meal if they have a snack at breaktime? This was open for debate as it depended largely on what the student chose to eat.

6. AOB

7. Behaviour and Attendance

Mr Potter highlighted that this year had again seen an improvement in attendance currently standing at 94.5%, but said there was still more to do as three parents had been taken to court by the Local Authority, all resulting in hefty fines with two more families set for court dates in July.

Mr Potter said behaviour had also seen an improvement with over 95,000 positive slips emailed out which is an increase of 50% on last year, together with a 31% drop in Red negative Behaviour Watch slips recorded resulting in only 54 external



exclusions this year in comparison to the benchmark figure of 108 external exclusions in 2010, well below the national average.

8. Uniform

Mr Potter explained that the College has been working hard to address the issue of uniform and that three years ago the Parent Council had looked at the possibility of introducing a 'College Labelled Skirt' to prevent any issues. Mr Potter said he had discussed the issue with students and that they had put forward their preferred choices and when he had spoken to parents they were very keen to be able to purchase the skirt from a school supplier.

Parents at the Council were happy that this had at last been resolved although the availability of a skirt of correct length for particularly thin and tall students was raised. Overall parents were happy that we will see students wearing a skirt with the SHSCC label on from September, it was suggested we look at doing a similar thing for trousers next.

A parent asked if there should be a dress code for staff to which Mr Potter replied that Mr Digby was indeed looking into this.

9. Duke of Edinburgh Award

The D of E was highly regarded by all parents but a concern was raised over the lack of clarity regarding the cost of the equipment/clothes etc. that the students would require to take part. They did say they didn't mind, but would like to have been made aware from the outset as they say they were told it would only cost £25 to register.

There was then a concern Gold Award Peru / International expeditions are going to be stopped in favour of UK. It was suggested by the parents that it would be nice if there was at least an option to go abroad for the Gold Award in future.

Finally, Bronze Award information was regarded as not very clear by some parents who said they would have preferred a letter with dates when the events were taking place so they could plan well in advance.

10. SMSC

Mr Potter raised the non-uniform day for Friday 5th July in aid of sponsoring a child for each year group if enough money was raised; this gained very positive feedback and was welcomed by the Council.

11. Prefects

Debate centred around whether there were too many associate titles which some felt may take away the idea of being 'special'; it was asked why the associates had not just been left as Prefects. Mr Potter explained what a wonderful year group it was and that with nearly a 100 prefects it was clearly difficult to choose. Mr Potter said it would be reviewed at the end of the year.

Meeting finished at 7:40 pm

