

All Saints RC School, York Parents Forum Meeting 11 July 2016

Feedback and outcomes from previous meeting (14 March 2016):

Parents Consultation

The ongoing challenges of hosting parent consultations in the school were discussed.

Outcome: Mr Klays reported that at recent consultations, teachers were given lists of parents and allocated time slots. The upper-site school hall was also used however, there were reported difficulties expressed by both staff and parents such as noise levels, space and lack of privacy. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) recognise the challenges and continue to seek to improve the experience.

Year 10 Parents Consultation

At the previous meetings in December 2015 and March 2016 parents suggested an earlier parents evening for Year 10 students because students from the Steiner School arrive, students start their GCSE course work and preparation, most students will sit a GCSE, and they undertake work experience.

Outcome: This will now take place a month earlier in April. However, parents with any particular concerns are welcome to contact the school at any time.

Year 10 Work Experience

Parents had reported that it had been challenging for their children to arrange work experience for several reasons but it was suggested an earlier parents' information event in the Summer term could be useful. Currently, parents have a meeting in October about work experience which generally takes place for a fortnight in February. Suggestions were also made to advertise this on the school website so that parents and children are aware that this is an activity they will do in Year 10 with a reminder put in the newsletter.

Outcome: Mr Scriven advised the forum the information meeting for parents will be held slightly earlier in September but he will suggest to Mrs Bilton a letter is given to all Year 9 children in the summer term to inform them of the work experience they will do in Year 10. Mr Scriven reported that he had considered stopping 'work experience' but many students had written to him expressing what a positive useful experience it had been and describing the many benefits.

Changes to the A level and GCSE Course and Examination

The official DfE guidance documentation about the changes to GCSE's and A levels are on the website. However, it is acknowledged by both staff and parents that it is very lengthy and complex to understand.

Outcomes: Ms Bickley continues to work on revising the official guidance document from the DfE to make it more 'user friendly' and this is will be on the school website in due course.

School Handbook

At a previous meeting parents whose children came into the school post Year 7 suggested a handbook would have been useful.

Outcome: A handbook is being devised for children coming to the school post Year 7.

Toilet Issues

Recently, it has been found that some children are congregating in the toilets sometimes during lesson times, being 'silly' and therefore there has been damage done to some of the cubicles.

Outcomes: Mr Scriven explained that toilets will be kept locked during class times and children will be encouraged to use them only at break times. However, there is a key at reception for children who need to use them during lesson time. They will continue to be monitored.

Award Ceremony

At previous forums, concerns were raised about the disproportionate allocation of awards given to girls and some children gaining several awards and departmental prizes.

Outcomes: Mr Scriven explained that there had been lots of discussions in recent months about the awards ceremony amongst the SLT, pastoral team, teaching staff, governors etc. They feel that they are now "moving along the right lines" and will have a plan forward in due course.

Rewards and Sanctions

Parents had reported that their children had been prevented from going on the ATL trip due to having time off school for genuine illness despite high ATL and attainment scores.

Outcome: Mr Flanagan sent an e-mail outlining the Pastoral Team's position regarding this matter.

In summary, he explained that the pastoral teams in school annually review the ATL trip criteria which was derived from consultations with both students and staff. Students throughout the term are then monitored for their eligibility for the trip based on their learning behaviours and school attendance. Attendance is included because of the relationship between attendance, attainment and progress. However, all trips will include some children who have not met the criteria such as being absent though illness, but have worked exceptionally hard and shown improvements in their score from the previous term. The school recognise that not all children will be able to attend the ATL trips and there will be some who will be disappointed to have missed out though illness/surgery because of the impact upon their attendance scores. Mr Flanagan explained that because of the high numbers of children who are eligible for the trips demonstrates that the current criteria is "robust" and "realistic".

New points for Discussions:

Homework

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) is carrying out a comprehensive review about homework and have appointed a new member of staff to assist with this matter. The parent forum were each asked to outline and give their opinion about homework. These are an overview of the some of the wide ranging views and experiences.

One parent explained that her child had been given less than one-third of the homework that her older child had been given in that same year. This was also supported by another parent who had a similar experience and felt that there had been a “dip” in the amount of homework given to his son in comparison to his other child when she was in that year.

Another parent felt that there had been inconsistencies in homework given to her child. She also felt that sometimes it hadn't been marked and returned within a reasonable 'time scale' so that her child could learn from any feedback. This was also the experience shared by some other parents. One parent described that sometimes the homework given didn't appear to have much relevance to what was being studied in class and therefore questioned its benefit.

Several parents felt that their children 'had enough' homework because they felt it was important for their children to have time to do other things such as sport, music, time for friends/family, down time etc. Some parents felt that homework was very important to longer term success and some subjects such as maths, languages etc. especially benefit from regular practice. Although several parents informed the forum that they didn't always agree with homework they could appreciate the benefits in Year 10, 11, 12 and 13 when homework is relevant to preparing for statutory exams.

Another parent discussed that perhaps there maybe an imbalance in homework distribution with children in the 'lower sets' not given as much to do as those students in the 'higher sets'.

One of the parents gave an example of when her child was given homework to do with a structured consistent approach so that the children knew what weekday homework in that subject would be allocated and when it was expected in. She felt that worked very well as it provided a regular routine.

Outcome: Further talks will take place regarding homework. There is a new teaching and learning assistant head joining the school in September and one of their roles is to review the schools approach to homework however, any feedback from parents regarding this matter would be most welcome.

Homework Support

One parent described the value of how homework support had positively impacted upon her child. but there appeared to be a discrepancy about which children could access this support. Some parents thought that it was accessible to all children but one parent reported that when she tried to access it for her child she was told that it was only for children who had been sent to homework support.

As with all matters discussed, the school welcome any feedback from parents regarding this and these can be sent on the parent forum e-mail found on the school website or by letter via the school office.

If you have any further comments/suggestions on any of the above, or on any other aspect of school life, then please do email us on our dedicated email address:
parentforum@allsaints.york.sch.uk

Thank you

The Parents' Forum Team
All Saints School, York