



Parent Forum Minutes

Wednesday 122nd May 2019 6:00 – 7.30pm

Attendees from school: James O'Connell (Principal), Rebecca Mullins (Vice Principal), Rob Willmott (Assistant Principal).

Parents: Approximately 25 parents attended from all Years 7-11.

The following is a list of the items discussed, a brief description of the discussion and a response from the school to points raised:

Item	Discussion	Feedback
Discussion 1: Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)	<p>New guidelines around the teaching of RSE come into place from September 2020. There was an outline of this guidance and a brief summary of our current coverage of topics around this area was provided. We currently deliver sessions around the whole area of PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic education) through a collapsed 'Enrichment Day' each term. Summary of parental points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family topics are perhaps for Year 7 – appropriate and to raise awareness of differences to create empathy concerning different family structures. • Some question about which sources of information are trustworthy and what will be used by the school to inform these programmes of learning? • General agreement that these topics are important and should be covered by the school. Strong view put forward that boys and girls need to be taught about consent and healthy relationships but the language and content should be also be positive and empowering – not frightening or negative about sexuality. • Consensus was that a more regular opportunity to return to these key, life issues would be beneficial. • Parents reported mixed feedback from their children on enrichment days – some good and some more negative; the suggestion was that some teachers more confident and comfortable with particular areas. Widely agreed that specialists to deliver sensitive topics and materials are preferable. 	<p>We are conducting an in-depth curriculum review over the 2019-20 academic year and intend to review our provision and delivery of PSHE. One likely development is that we will build a specialist team of teachers to teach PSHE (including RSE) and deliver this in regular, timetabled slots. We will share further feedback on this as we develop plans.</p>
Discussion 2: Safeguarding and social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health raised as a real concern amongst our young community. • On line safety and media awareness needs to be earlier in the curriculum since students are already using it, so as early as possible in the curriculum. • It is important to acknowledge that it is okay for children not to be part of an online group and to give them the tools and confidence to step back from it, or even not to have phones, or not use them for social media if they so choose. • It was felt that it was about giving children the confidence to use social media well – discussion that while the 	<p>We will review our teaching of online safety and uses of social media. As above, we agree that we need to put more time into this area within the curriculum.</p>

	<p>offence has not changed, the means by which dangerous situations might be presented to children has. So the risks of online use need to be well established within the mind and understanding of young people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was clear praise of the work that the Pastoral Coordinators do with students on many of these matters and parents felt that their children were well supported through difficulties with this approach and staffing. • General agreement that banning the use of phones within school was beneficial. 	
Discussion 3: School curriculum	<p>Clarification and explanation of different ideas about the structure of the school day were given in terms of what is possible. We outlined possible different models including running the options process a year later than currently (in Year 9), changing the times of the school day and lesson lengths, two week timetables, etc. We also discussed our broad curriculum but what else we might or should offer in terms of subjects?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some concern that students would not be able to get to school and make the most of morning sessions if models of an earlier school day were put into place. • 2x30 minutes breaks (rather than one of 20 mins and one of 40 mins as currently the case) received positive feedback overall. Some concern about whether clubs would be possible in a 30 minute session. • Music lessons: concern that they were not fully supported by staff. There was acknowledgement that parents and school need to ask the peripatetic teacher to change the timings of lessons, where necessary. • Some desire to see water safety (coastal area) given more focus through the curriculum. Once every couple of years is not sufficient. Financial, CPR, road and rail safety needs to be part of this also. • Taking options in Year 8 was discussed but there was understanding and general agreement that the rationale for students to make their options' choices in year 8 was of genuine benefit for motivation and focus for students' learning and progress. • There was an overriding/ strong agreement that breadth of curriculum and subject choice was a real strength of the school. Consensus that there need to be equal access to traditional academic, vocational and creative subjects. This also addresses real issues concerning the balance and mental health of young people. 	<p>We will review the times of days and structure of the timetable in next year's review.</p> <p>We will meet with the Music team and peripatetic teachers to review the process with private lessons.</p> <p>We are meeting with a member of the local community regarding the possibility of more water/sea safety lessons and we will look to build more lessons about personal finance, first aid and other practical, real-world learning into the curriculum.</p>
AOB:	<p>Use of unisex toilets: The state of them at times. This is affecting some students in terms of them not drinking as they wish to avoid using them. Requests for greater monitoring of them. Requests that teachers are more sensitive to genuine need to go to the toilets at times; for example when girls have periods.</p>	<p>We have had a spate of anti-social behaviours around the toilets. We have just caught some of the culprits and given them community service. Our toilet facilities have actually been much improved in recent years and parents did see and observe their decent quality at the end of the evening. We will keep</p>

	<p>Homework consistency was again mentioned.</p> <p>Frustrations with Academic Review Day were again mentioned.</p> <p>Parking: Could a drop-off bay be created on Exeter Road?</p>	<p>up heightened monitoring.</p> <p>We have been pushing this but need to do so harder and establish greater consistency.</p> <p>We will announce a new plan and shape for parents evenings next year very shortly.</p> <p>We are talking to the Town Council about road safety and conditions regularly and we will ask this.</p>
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