

Parental Forum Meeting **January 2014**

Agenda

1. Curriculum changes proposed for Year 9-11

Mr Major outlined changes proposed for the Population banding in Years 9-11. At the moment there are two unequal ability 'populations' and this will be changed to two equal ability populations from September 2014. This means that there will not be a Population A and a Population B but two equal population cohorts. Several subjects will still have setting on each side of the population.

The views expressed from the parents were unanimously positive with a few parents who expressed how the current population banding had a negative impact upon their son/daughter.

2. How can we improve communication between school and parents?

This was an issue that was raised by Ofsted and it was felt that it still needed to be improved. Consequently it was felt to be a good issue to raise at this forum. Parents were asked to highlight the areas for improvement in groups and then outlined the main points to everyone. The following comments were made by the different groups and have been collated. At this stage the comments were simply raised and there was not any input from the school about whether there were systems already in place that deal with the issue raised or perhaps potential solutions. This will follow at the next parental forum.

General - Snow – twitter.

Text alert for early closure/adverse weather.

Communication too structured – report, open evening. Solution: greater flexibility to meet teachers. Greater access to teachers (phone, email).

Email - More email communication with subject staff.

Greater use of email to raise concern.

Open lines of communication earlier.

Email teacher? Can we email teachers directly – appreciate would be hard to police.

Emails: for those with twins, write child's name or by year group.

Website - Update website regularly.

Compatible with Apple.

Bulletin on site for exams' times. Upper school assessments. Subject revising.

Update website more regularly – so you can look and access information readily and know that it is reliable information.

Curriculum - Starter pack for new parents including all key information.

FAQ for Year 7s prepared in advance.

Parent portal – access information about attendance/homework.

More information about the Sets and movement up and down. Solution: information on website (syllabus).

Curriculum – specific feedback from subjects so that parents can support students.

Reports

Bit too late in year.

Accurate information based on attendance.

Should be about progress not behaviour. Behaviour should be communicated about earlier.

No information on reports.

Very much reliant on pupils feeding back.

The parental Forum was then asked to focus on the problems of communication concerning extra-curricular activities. In particular, relating to sports activities.

How can we improve communication regarding extra-curricular activities with parents?

Trips

Text message to all – phone chain does not work all the time.

Mobile contact – staff line of communication. Pool phone.

Issue with safeguarding

Do we need 'approval' form for everything they do? Could we just do one 'catch all' per year?

Matches

Fixture list available.

Put details of matches clearly on website.

Text alert for cancellations/times for matches ending.

Earlier notice if event cancelled.

Office don't know answer to football/sports questions, ie, is training on? Is match home/away? Is match on? What time will they be back?

Late arrival back – no way of communicating (twitter?)

Details of what's on offer at beginning of term.

Clubs

Lists on website out of date.

Children don't know where to find list of what's available.

No communication of whether it runs or not – some via VLE. Timing.

Better communication for cancellation of extra-curricular activities.

We hear that other schools manage to be responsive.

Engage with school to encourage children to participate in extra-curricular activities.

Taster sessions for Year 7 – try a new activity.

After school club notifications should come by text. The person responsible for the club should send communication (would have to research how this is done in other schools.)

Staff don't feel need to let the parents know.

Can't always rely on child for communication re: extra-curricular – sports matches etc.

Somewhere to go if office is closed. Sports Hall reception?

What's the process for communicating a message to a child after school? Message system.

Children have no method of communicating.

Allow mobiles to some extent??

Mobile phones – should they be allowed? Severe penalty for inappropriate use?

Texting – happens in other schools – why not here.

Details of 'selective' clubs. How children are selected – DoE, Crest.

Other

Parents had not realised they wouldn't be notified if a child was not in school. Why isn't there an automatic call if a child hasn't arrived in school and there has been no parental call reporting absence?

Text if your child doesn't arrive at school.

No exam information – mocks, revision sessions.

No explanation of what happens if you take a particular subject and then what it means you can't take.

Academic Interviews – so process was started before Xmas and still not sorted. Not a quick enough closure.

Year 11 end of school assembly – early closure for rest of years.

Year 11 revision evenings extra sessions – spread out to avoid clashes – communication between departments.

Full time working parents need time and notice, there is a feeling that there are often daytime appointments which need a lot of notice.

Parent Pay – make it more accessible and for everything. Trips, uniforms.

Calendar – all day things set to midnight/8am – could times be correct?

Preview format of calendar – needs attention.

Q&A sessions at end of parental meetings – all parents would benefit. Follow up – responses to questions asked.

Praise/reward schemes – lost on middle ability children, or consistent children, postcards.

Making parents aware of incentives/awards.

Don't celebrate success.

Parents' Evenings

Parents' Evenings – mixed messages re: bringing child/uniform etc.

Don't come if you don't have a problem!? Can't get appointments if not a priority with some teachers. Did not feel invited. All parents who want to be seen should be seen not just those with issues.

Parent interviews held in open area/other parents able to hear.