



PARENT FORUM

Southborough C of E Primary School

02.11.2017 – 2.00 pm

MINUTES OF MEETING

Present:

Suzy Messent
Emma Charlwood
Danielle Piper
Anthony Piper
Mina Lawrence
Emma Savage (ES)

Rebecca Hunter
Kerry Gregory
Kate Murphy
Becky King
Hannah Johnson (HJ)
Kay Dooley (KD)

<u>Item</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Discussion</u>
1. Welcome		All members were welcomed. We discussed our Terms of Reference and adapted them slightly to be added to the school's website.
2. Items Raised	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Lunches	<p>It was raised that portion sizes are too small. Following information from Independent Catering (IC) it was explained the government have guidelines that are to be followed in relation to nutrition and portion sizes. However, as children progress through the school portion sizes increase.</p> <p>In addition to the standard main course with a choice of 2 vegetables, children are offered a fresh piece of bread, unlimited use of the extensive salad bar followed by dessert. As an alternative to the main dessert options include jelly, yoghurt, fruit and cheese and biscuits.</p> <p>Plus, Ketchup is back (portions monitored)!</p>

<u>Item</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Discussion</u>
		<p>In June 2017 the contract for catering was up for renewal. Five companies applied however IC's presentation surpassed all other options.</p> <p>It was pointed out that while IC applied for the new contract additional negotiations took place which included brand new hot counters financed by IC.</p> <p>IC confirmed they are happy to attend our meetings if we feel it necessary. They are also working with the School Council. They have also suggested they would be prepared to do the BBQ at the school fair with suitable notice.</p> <p>An extra member of staff has been recruited to assist with our increasing number of children and this should relieve the workload of the other team members. It is estimated that 300 lunches are served each day.</p> <p>It was explained there is a close working relationship between the school and IC.</p> <p>It was encouraged if there is any feedback to please inform our school office as this can be raised and resolved/adapted as necessary.</p> <p>It was mentioned that if a child is to be late for school please ensure the office is aware of the child's lunch order as they can process this. Orders for lunch take place at the start of the day.</p> <p>If a child is to arrive at school after 10.30 am this would usually mean the option for lunch would be pasta but if you can call/email/send a note to the office prior to the 10.30 am cut off stating the child's choice (eg red option, green option etc) the office can process the order on the child's behalf to ensure they get what they would like.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff turnover 	<p>It was explained there are no issues with staff turnover and our school is consistent with other schools in the area.</p> <p>Our school is an attractive opportunity due to the CPD scheme (this relates to professional development). Many members of staff have gained valuable skills and promotions since being at our school.</p>

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		<p>It was discussed that teaching is very rewarding however there are huge pressures involved from a teaching perspective, along with the demands of the government/local authority/curriculum and parents themselves and that's why nationally some teachers are leaving the profession.</p> <p>It was reported the school is very committed to staff well-being as well as training to reduce some of the pressures. For example -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On weeks where there are extra commitments required from staff, ie parent consultations there are no staff meetings, staff are offered a free hot lunch on the days of consultations and no marking is expected. • It was confirmed that, as far as practicable, staff are allocated time for preparation for class within the school day to eliminate them having to do vast amounts of work late into the evening. • In addition, every week there is a well-being Wednesday briefing. Regarding the questions whether there are now less TAs in school, the school has re-organised staffing to ensure children with similar needs are grouped for support and early intervention is prioritised e.g. Junior based TAs taking RWI groups. Basically, this enables a better deployment of staff to assist with various interventions. It was explained that as a school they are keen to ensure early interventions to best support each child and make earlier developments meaning less support needed for further up the school. <p>It was confirmed that the school currently has a staff team now of over 80 members plus sports, music teachers, canteen staff etc.</p> <p><u>PARENT VOLUNTEERS</u></p> <p>It was reiterated that any form of extra assistance from parents, grandparents, neighbours, friends, etc is invaluable to our school so every child maximises their potential and further learning opportunities can be planned.</p> <p>It was requested if you can offer any time each week please liaise with the office.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heating query in summer 	<p>It was confirmed we have an old heating system of approximately 50 years in Infant/Junior building.</p>

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		<p>It is operated via a thermostat and has a summer mode option. The radiators are extremely large, so they take some time to heat up and subsequently some time to cool down.</p> <p>It was explained the school is very keen to ensure cost-cutting occurs however with the fluctuating weather conditions in the spring and summer months it is very difficult to predict whether heating is required or not on some days.</p> <p>It was explained the new Keys Building has underfloor heating. As the building is heavily insulated this can sometimes mean the building is very warm, especially on the top level so often windows will be opened to ensure fresh air circulates. The system is run on a 24-hour process so again predicting weather is sometimes tricky, but it is an extremely efficient and environmentally friendly.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular info from class teacher / year group 	<p>It was discussed we already receive a year group newsletter every term.</p> <p>It was proposed we could have a note added on to the class / year group section of the website with any extra information.</p> <p>Action: ES/KD to discuss with CTs</p> <p>It was asked if there was a reason we don't have email addresses for our teachers?</p> <p>It was stated that although this seems a reasonable request but in light of investigations and liaising with other schools this hasn't always worked positively. It also puts more pressure on the class teacher who may have a continual additional stream of emails to respond to or who may miss an email re a change of pick up arrangements as they are focusing on teaching children. It is therefore considered to be the best option to continue to email any information/requests via the office initially and they can pass it on to the appropriate person as necessary.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross Teach 	<p>It was requested we have some reassurance and follow up regarding a situation that occurred at another local school.</p>

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		<p>It wasn't felt there was nothing further to say on the matter other than Cross Teach are not attending our school now. However, it was confirmed we have not had any issues arising from Cross Teach being present in our school in the past.</p> <p>It was reiterated whenever external visitors are used within our school a member of staff always supervises them.</p> <p>It was confirmed our school have been in talks with Mr and Mrs Griffiths from Christ Church and they are trying to organise a form of Bible youth club for Years 4, 5, and 6 that should be introduced shortly.</p>
<p>3. Feedback</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of day congestion 	<p>The new positions of collection for each year group seem to allow a free flow and much less congestion in the drive area.</p> <p>It was noted the red barriers can be obstructive for pushchairs as the pathway is meant to be for the teachers and children to stand at the end of the day.</p> <p>It was confirmed these are moved at 3pm by our caretaker unless he is called away to a task that is essential. If this is the case and the barriers are still in place it is not a problem if we move them carefully to the hedgerow.</p> <p>The purpose of the red barriers is for safety during the school day and to ensure no traffic goes down the drive where children are potentially moving around the school.</p> <p>It was also reported the reception area is flowing well now with little congestion.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road Crossing Patrol 	<p>It was noted by many parents having Road Crossing Patrols on Prospect Road and Kibbles Lane is very comforting. ES confirmed this was no simple process and many hours / meetings took place with the assistance of our Local Councillor Peter Oakford was necessary to implement the crossing patrol in Kibbles Lane.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff at gates 	<p>We mentioned having staff on the gates in the morning and teaching staff available at the end of the day was a valuable source of communication. We requested this continues.</p> <p>It was confirmed it enables any queries to be raised and can be resolved very quickly as often staff can alert the relevant person/action immediately on route to class. This is useful as stops situations escalating but also allows something to be resolved very quickly. It was mentioned in this day of technology is it often pleasant to speak to someone rather than type / write.</p> <p>It was confirmed emails / calls / notes are welcomed in the usual way and all items will be followed up but speaking to staff can sometimes be a time saver.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Learning 	<p>It was confirmed the new system seems to work but it is very early days to make further comment.</p> <p>It was requested this is added to our next agenda for feedback.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maths Info Sheet 	<p>It was noted that year 2 / 3 would like some guidance particularly in relation to Maths and how children are expected to carry out certain procedures. Some parents were concerned they would be assisting their children incorrectly and therefore not supporting them properly.</p> <p>It was proposed further workshops would take place particularly in relation to Singapore Maths some year groups who may have missed it previously or their children were too young.</p> <p>It was confirmed the school are currently in the process of preparing workshops for each Reception class at 8.55 am – 9.15 am.</p> <p>It is appreciated some parents would be unable to make these sessions due to work or other commitments, but it would be useful to gauge feedback on when is best and if you would like to attend. Previously some sessions have been very popular but others very few people attended.</p>

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		<p>ES and KD confirmed they are very happy to prepare sessions and support parents as best as possible but would like to ensure they prepare the correct content and at the optimum time to accommodate as many parents as possible.</p> <p>Action: PF members to ask their parents about content and best time</p>
<p>4. Communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact details for all parents 	<p>Due to data protection it was confirmed parent details could not be given without consent.</p> <p>It was proposed we prepare a message to go out via Parentmail where a parent can 'opt in' or 'opt out' of their names being given to their class representative to add to an email group.</p> <p>It was confirmed this information would not be shared with anyone else and only used for information relating to school.</p> <p>It was also suggested that each Facebook page has a statement of information in relation to what is appropriate to share to the group. This information would be like our Terms of Reference and to ensure only school related issues are discussed that would not include individual children, parents, teachers, staff or classes.</p> <p>It should be made clear that any negative or inappropriate information is often relayed back to the management team at school and therefore aware of many comments even if they are not initially exposed to them.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff use of PF 	<p>It was mentioned, particularly in Early Years and KS1, the class representatives feel they are not being used and they are happy for the class teacher to liaise with them and make requests as necessary to forward through to parents on our Facebook pages or WhatsApp groups. This could include simple tasks eg collecting cereal boxes or alerting parents of the need for Wellington Boots!</p> <p>Action: This will be followed up by ES and KD and reported back.</p>
<p>5. Action Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PF representatives added to website 	<p>An up-to-date list of parent representatives will be added to the school website with possible pictures of us!</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertise the PF more so parents know we exist 	<p>It was proposed a list of class representatives will be sent out via Parentmail, so parents are aware of who their class representative is.</p> <p>We also intend to promote ourselves better via the website, so it is clear what the purpose of our forum is.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to proceed? 	<p>This item was not fully discussed.</p> <p>I am very keen to optimise our Forum and any requests, suggestions or ideas are very welcomed. If someone feels they would like to do more and be more involved in planning meetings and/or doing the minutes, please speak to HJ.</p>
<p>6. AOB</p>		<p><u>Updates from ES</u></p> <p><i>Home learning:</i> was adapted as information received via the parent questionnaire expressed a small group of parents were unhappy. It is hoped the new system allows for homework to be done and there is scope for the children to do more if they feel the standard homework is not sufficient (via Mathematics and extra comprehension/reading).</p> <p><i>New gates at the front of the school:</i> We are hoping the installation of amazing new gates at the front of the school are imminent. Unfortunately, there has been some delay due to TWBC's planning permission department are bouncing back ideas. We are confident this will take place as soon as possible but final agreements are being made in relation to depth, height and materials used. We are keen to ensure the safety of our children, so we have requested higher electronic gates which will be operated via our school office.</p> <p>NB: We appreciate the gates at the front of the junior department are fairly new but to replace our gates we need to replace the entire front section. The gates were installed when the Children's Centre was built and funded by them.</p>

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		<p><i>Breakfast and After-School Club on site:</i> As a result of feedback of the school Parent survey, a working party has been set up to discuss the provision of breakfast and after-school clubs. It is proposed a further survey goes out to parents and currently costings are being checked and finalised.</p> <p>With this in mind, the working party will show consideration / sensitivity to local people who are childminders to ensure this does not impact on their business.</p>

MEETING CLOSED 3.10 pm

