

Minutes of the joint KS1 and KS2 Parent Forum

Wednesday 3 November 2010

1. Feedback on issues raised at the last meeting

- A Walking Bus service has now been introduced to enable parents to drop off their daughters on Rutland Park where Sixth Formers will meet them and then walk them through the school grounds to Melbourne House. The service runs from 8.10 to 8.30am every morning and is proving very successful.
- Security: parents may have noticed that new gates and fencing have been installed over half term to make the canteen area and playground secure.
- No Parking signs: parents may have seen the signs supplied by Sheffield City Council at the beginning of term which were displayed outside Westbourne School. These are being trialled by the City Council to try and encourage safer parking in the vicinity of schools.

2. Internet Safety

Mrs Dunsford gave a short presentation on "Keeping your child safe on the Internet". This was recommended at a Child Protection training course she recently attended. Recent surveys of Primary age children nationally have revealed that 25% of 8-10 year olds and 40% of 11 year olds now have a Facebook account, despite the permitted minimum age being 13. Parents are advised to check regularly their child's internet usage through accessing the "history" and to install software for tracking the "history" if they are concerned.

Parents are also advised to check regularly whether their daughter has set up a Facebook account and if parents have permitted this, that she fully understands privacy settings. Parents are also advised to talk to their daughters about personal safety regarding photographs/uploading videos/use of webcams etc, Internet safety is covered in PSHE lessons throughout the Junior School.

3. Measuring Performance and Progress

Assessment for learning is used by all teachers to assess each girl's progress every lesson, so they can pinpoint areas where each individual might need extra support or additional challenge. Progress is also monitored using PIPS (Performance Indicators in Primary Schools) which is a standardised assessment test used by most independent schools. The girls are assessed using PIPS at the beginning and end of Reception and then at the end of each school year. This then gives the teachers a standardised measure of attainment for each girl and measures the progress she is making year on year. The tests give an indication of any areas teachers need to work on with each individual girl and information from the tests is used in feedback given to parents at Parents' evenings. All data is transferred to the Senior School so Y7 teachers have a good knowledge of the girls' abilities. At the start of Y7 and Y9 the girls follow a Midyis (Middle Years) test similar to PIPS which measures progress from Y7 to 9 and gives an indication of likely performance of GCSE. All our girls usually outperform their predictions and for the past 2 years our Value Added Score (progress made from Y7 to GCSE) has placed us in the top 5% of schools in the country.

4. School holidays

Some parents have asked us to consider extending the October and May half term holidays and shortening the summer holiday. As holidays must be the same for Junior and Senior girls, an extended May half term would not be possible because of the timing of GCSE and A level examinations.

Any changes to October half term holidays would need to be discussed with Birkdale and other local independent schools as all the schools endeavour to set summer holidays.

Dates have already been set for 2011/12 but we will bear this request in mind for 2012/13.

5. School Photographs

In order to try to satisfy all parents, some of whom prefer Mr Bloodworth's photographs and some who prefer Tempset, we will continue to use each photographer on alternate years.

6. Suggestions for new clubs

Requests were made for cookery and sewing clubs for Y6 and additional music clubs for Y2. Mrs Jones explained that over 50 clubs run each week for the Infant and Junior girls, almost all organised by the teaching and support staff or sixth form students. We try to organise a wide range for each age group. Cookery is currently for Y5 pupils (on a rota basis) and staffing and facilities do not allow us to extend this to other age groups. Sewing and Crafts are for Y3 this term. Recorders begin in Y3 and music theory is taught within the music curriculum.

If any parents have any suggestions for new clubs we are always happy to receive these.

7. School Lunches – size of portions

If your daughter would like a larger portion than the one she is given, please encourage her to ask for more and this will be given.

8. Happiness Survey

Mrs Jones explained that all the girls had taken part in a happiness survey earlier this term asking the questions "what makes you happy in school", "what makes a good lesson" and "what would you change in school if you could".

Mrs Jones read out the main findings of the survey which were very positive indeed.

9. Summer dresses

The old summer dress should not be worn from now on.

Mrs Dunsford will enquire whether the school we support in Bangladesh would be interested in having the old dresses.

10. Tea-time club invoices

Please would parents let Mrs Jones or the school office know if they are still being sent invoices when they have already settled their accounts.

11. SIMS Learning Gateway

This is currently being piloted with a small number of parents and will be rolled out to all parents when teething problems have been resolved.