

MINUTES OF KS 3 & KS 4 (Y7 – Y11) PARENT FORUM

Tuesday 16 June 2009

1. Action taken following issues raised at November's meeting
 - Cookery: our catering manager ran a basic skills cookery course for Y7 pupils during the Easter holidays and a further basic skills course for Y7-9 will be held during the first 2 weeks of the summer holidays, followed by an intermediate course at the end of the holidays for Y7-9. All Y9 girls have had a half day of cookery at Sheffield College this term.
 - School website: a copy of the school calendar is now available on the school website.
 - GCSE coursework/modular exams. These will be mapped out in advance for Y10 and 11 next year.
 - The AQA Baccalaureate will be available to Y12 girls next year. This is an additional qualification which gives accreditation based on 3 passes at A level, AS in General Studies, Critical Thinking or Citizenship, Voluntary service and completion of an extended project.

2. Exams (Timing, Purpose, Results, Reports, Revision)

Exams are held every year for all year groups immediately after the May half term holiday. We try to keep them low key for girls in Y7-9. The purpose of the examinations is to help staff to assess the girls' understanding of the year's work and for them then to be able to set targets for the following year with their teachers. The exam week also helps them to get used to following exam rules in a formal setting for when they sit public examinations from Y10 upwards.

The girls are given their exam timetable approximately 2 weeks before half term. Girls write their results in the relevant section at the back of their planner. The results are then standardised and it is the standardised score which is recorded on the report and an explanation of this is included with the report. Some discussion about this followed and a request was made to have the actual score and the standardised result recorded on the report. This will be explored.

Revision for exams: girls are given revision lists by each subject and revision materials are available on the portal for the girls. Revision also takes place in lessons before half term. Y7 girls work on revision strategies in their fortnightly "learning to learn" lessons and Y8 and 9 girls work on revision techniques in form time. Y10 cover Study Skills in PSHE lessons. A revision booklet on revision strategies is also available for purchase in the school uniform shop. Next year's planner will have revision hints and information on how to access revision material on the VLE.

3. Getting a healthy work/play/rest balance

We want to encourage all the girls to be able to continue with extra-curricular interests alongside their school work but also to have time for relaxation too.

Some girls spend longer than the allocated amount of time on homework and parents need to let teachers or the Head of Year know if this is the case.

Good organisation was felt to be key to getting the right balance, as well as encouraging the girls to be self motivated. Prioritising is also important – sometimes the girls have to realise they can't do everything. Sometimes the girls don't want to let the staff down and parents should encourage them to speak up if their workload/extra curricular load is becoming unmanageable.

4. Homework

Please would parents let the teacher or Head of Year know if their daughter is taking longer than the allocated time or if specific subjects are taking longer to complete

5. Quiet places to work in school

The library is not quiet at lunchtime because of the numbers of girls in there, looking for information, borrowing books etc.

M5 is allocated as a quiet working room for anyone wishing to complete homework at lunchtime and G2 is available as a Y10 quiet work room.

The dining room is now open throughout lunchtime for girls who wish to sit and chat quietly.

A request was made for a space where the girls could go and sit and have some time on their own. The sensory garden outdoor classroom was suggested and this will be discussed with the Junior School.

6. Anti-bullying policy and procedures

The school has an anti-bullying policy which is available to parents on request at the moment but will be available, along with other school policies, on the school's website from September. The procedures on how to report any bullying are outlined in the girls' planner. The school's code of behaviour is reviewed every 2 years by School Council and is due for review before the end of this term.

We deal with very few incidents of bullying/unpleasantness but any which are reported are always followed up. The difficulty is when a girl says she doesn't want anything to be done.

If parents are aware of any unpleasantness please would they contact their daughter's Head of Year or Mrs Bennett.

7. School Uniform issues

A request was made for a navy cardigan to be available for the girls to wear in the summer. This will be followed up with the school uniform shop and samples requested.

From September a skirt will be available to replace the current PE skirt and gym knickers.

8. Duke of Edinburgh award scheme

A suggestion was made whether Duke of Edinburgh bronze could be started in Y9 instead of Y10. This will be followed up with the D of E Co-ordinator.

There were some issues this year with a clash of D of E dates with coursework deadlines which will be avoided in future. Girls need to notify their teachers if this is the case.

Next year all Y9 will be offered a Young Leaders course through PE.

9. After School Club and fixtures (late cancellations, clubs over running)

At the start of the school year clubs very rarely need to be changed or cancelled unless a member of staff is unexpectedly off sick.

At the end of last term however a number of netball matches were cancelled, (by the other schools), on the day. If this is the case, the girls can remain in school to work until they are collected by parents.

At the end of the winter season when there is a build up of fixtures/competitions to fit in, some after school clubs may have to be cancelled. Notices to this effect are always placed on the sports noticeboard at least 2 days in advance and it is the girls' responsibility to check the noticeboards daily.

All arrangements regarding fixtures/pick up times are always displayed on the sports noticeboard.

10. A O B

- A request was made whether there could be a Parents' Discussion Board on the school website for parents to raise issues for the Parent Forum. This will be followed up with our website co-ordinator.
- Attendance: a parent asked whether the school telephones home if a pupil is absent. Calls home are usually made by school on the 3rd day of absence. Parents are asked to notify school, (direct link to the school nurse), if their daughter is ill.

Thank you to all parents who attended or submitted topics for discussion.