

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

Thursday 12 November 2009

1. Feedback on action taken following issues raised at the June meeting

- School policies are now available on the school website under current parents – policies
- Uniform issues: requests for a navy cardigan will be followed up with samples. The new PE skirt is now available. We apologise for problems with stock which some parents encountered in the summer. This was as a result of one of our suppliers going into liquidation and also because of the long term illness of our Uniform Shop Manager.
- Clashes with D of E dates and GCSE coursework deadlines has been resolved.
- Parking and traffic issues: this is an ongoing issue and parents are requested not to leave car engines running when parked and waiting to collect their daughters. An elderly and unwell resident on Rutland Park has requested that parents do not sound their horn when trying to attract their daughters' attention at the end of the school day. Parking in residents' permit bays is a particular problem on Southbourne Road, residents have been asked to alert us with registration plates so this can be followed up individually.

2. SIMS Learning Gateway

Ian Guest, our ICT Development Manager gave a short presentation on the SIMS Learning Gateway which will be accessible to parents during the course of next year and will give parents secure access to certain school data held about their child e.g. personal information, attendance, academic performance, timetable, assessment information, medical information, reports. Parents were invited to let the school know of any other information they would find useful to be able to access from home.

3. Safe use of the internet (Facebook and other social networking sites)

This had been raised by several parents so Mrs Dunsford began with a short presentation on what the girls might be doing when using the internet. It became clear from the discussions which ensued that a considerable number of Y7 and 8 girls have Facebook accounts, despite the minimum permitted age being 13 and that the younger girls seem to be trying to collect as many online "friends" as possible and some are sharing and taking inappropriate photographs. Parents shared ideas on how to set parental controls and how to check on the sites their daughters were accessing. Mrs Dunsford has talked to Y10-13 girls in assembly about the pitfalls to be aware of when using Facebook. She will be writing to parents of girls in Y7 and 8 raising the issue with them and giving information on how to keep their daughters safe on line.

4. Accessing and printing ICT at home

- It seems that some girls have had difficulties accessing files and work via the school portal and Mrs Dunsford will follow this up with the IT department.
- Girls do not have to print work off at home. This can be done in school in the library or one of the ICT rooms if the work is brought into school on a memory stick or saved onto her school account.

5. School Uniform

- Shop opening hours: these change depending on the time of year and how busy it is likely to be.
- A parent requested later opening hours one day a week and this will be followed up with the shop manager.
- Parents are requested to support us in ensuring that the length of their daughter's skirt is no shorter than 4 inches above the knee.
- Shoes/boots. If your daughter has a long walk to school or if the weather is very wet, she may arrive at school in boots and change as soon as she arrives at school.
- School bags: clarification on the colour of school bags was requested. This will be discussed with the pastoral team.
- Make up/nail varnish/jewellery is not allowed and girls who arrive at school wearing makeup/nail varnish are sent to remove it.
Please would parents assist us in this by ensuring that your daughter does not leave the house wearing make up, nail varnish or jewellery.

6. Lunchtime clubs

- A football club was organised at the beginning of term on Fridays after school but was discontinued because of lack of interest. This will be considered again next term when the nights are lighter.
- Enquiries were made about a debating club and this will be followed up
- A parent enquired whether a silent workroom was available at lunchtime for Y10. M5 is available each day for any girls who wish to complete homework in silence.

7. Email contact with staff

Staff can be contacted by parents using the school mailbox, (enquiries@she.gdst.net) and marked for the attention of a particular teacher.

8. Assessment tests and revision techniques

- In the autumn term girls in Y7-9 have a series of short ongoing assessments and the marks from these tests go towards the attainment mark on the end of term report. In the spring term there are fewer formal written assessments as the main assessment is for the Spring/Summer term is in exam week at the beginning of June.
- The girls cover revision techniques in their Learn 2 Learn course in Y7 and in form periods and PSHE sessions. There is also ongoing advice for them in the Study Skills Section available through the Portal and also in a section in their homework diary. A “revision cracked” booklet is also available for purchase in the school uniform shop.

9. School Textbooks

A parent had commented about the age and state of repair of some of the textbooks. As all our textbooks are school owned, the replacement of textbooks is an on-going process and they are usually replaced to coincide with changes to the exam syllabuses or proposed changes to schemes of work.

10. A O B

- Homework given to be completed during School holidays – we aim not to give homework over half term holidays and teachers will be reminded of this.
- Trips: the deadline for sending in deposits has been very short for some trips recently. This will be followed up with staff who are organising trips
- Clarification was requested about the procedure for girls signing out if they have dental/medical appointments during the school day. The procedure is that a letter should be given to the form teacher who will sign it and give it back to the pupil who must present the letter to the receptionist signing out.

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