

Parents Forum – Meeting Minutes – Friday 11th November 2016

Attendees: Annabel Yoxall, Claire Worsfold, Jo Tucker, Kerry Jones, Maxine Cronin, Joelle Beavis, Sam Dowse

Mr Fenton (Head Teacher), Mrs Freeman (Office Manager)

Chair: Sam Dowse

Apologies: Lisa Standing

Minutes:

1. Review & Feedback from previous minutes

- a. Infant school Forum - been set up, own independent forum and first meeting has taken place.
- b. Online dinner money - matter is still in debate and is still being researched. Three companies have been approached - all three have the same cost implications that the school would need to take on board, at an expensive outlay from their own budget funds. To have the system in place would mean that the school has both an annual financial commitment and a daily/weekly outlay e.g. the school would have to pay a fee for every transaction that is made on a credit card (12p per transaction). The cost of running an online system will be at the detriment of the school budget. Comparisons cannot be made with Infant School systems, as hot school dinners are free for all children in FSU, Year 1 and Year 2 and therefore a daily payment is not being processed.

Mrs Freeman will continue to research and investigate this proposal of online systems and will report back at the next Parent Forum meeting.
- c. The minutes of the last Parent Forum (17th June 2016) meeting were agreed to be an accurate record by the members present - all agreed.

2. Review Terms of Reference (TOR)

- a. See attached Terms of Reference – all present agreed, amendment to review date to be made.

3. Break time snack for the children

Matters Arising:

- a. A high number of queries on this matter were submitted from parents.
- b. Issue is with the morning break time snack policy and permitted list of snack items. Some parents are unclear as to what the policy states, which foods are permitted and why some foods are not permitted. Majority of queries expressed that the permitted food list is too prescriptive, too limited and very bland and does not allow for other equally healthy snack items.

- c. The question as to why breadsticks and rice cakes are permitted, but plain crackers are not was raised by a few. The question as to why pure fruit and pure vegetable smoothie drinks are not permitted/deemed healthy was raised.

Outcome:

- d. The school will not be revisiting the break time snack policy, as it was reviewed recently.
- e. The list of items is based on food products that ideally do not come in packets (i.e. a piece of fruit/a piece of vegetable).

4. Hot School Dinners

Matters Arising:

- a. A high number of comments were submitted, regarding the food quality, overall standard of meal, menu options not being available and portion size of dinner. There is also an issue with the last group of children to be served dinner, not having the pudding option/side options available, that they would like.
- b. The issue is with the catering company – Caterlink.

Outcome:

- c. Mr Fenton is already liaising with Caterlink – meeting has already taken place.
- d. Caterlink must provide 1/3 of a child's daily food portion intake – Government set portion size. This will mean that portion sizes will not be increased.
- e. Caterlink must follow specific set guidelines when producing the food. Deviation from these guidelines is not an option.
- f. Caterlink has agreed to work with the school council to address the concerns being raised. They are keen to listen to what the children have to say.
- g. There have been some staffing issues within the catering company, which has had some impact. This has now been rectified and a full team of staff is present daily, with an established cook in place.
- h. Parents can give feedback on school dinners – book held in the school office. Parents can ask for the book at any time, add their comments (both negative and positive) and this information is imparted directly to Caterlink.
- i. Mr Fenton agreed to highlight to Caterlink, the matter of the last group of children not having the full range of options available to them. It was clarified that the main meal option is the only choice submitted to the caterers in the morning. The pudding choices are on a first-come-first-served basis. This matter is going to be raised with the area manager of Caterlink. Mr Fenton will feedback at the next Parents Forum.

5. School Uniform Supplier

Matters Arising:

- a. Issues have been raised regarding the current school uniform supplier – online company 'Gooddies'. Issues raised were the process of ordering between two set 'cut-off' points in any given month, time taken for delivery of ordered items, orders and deliveries not being fulfilled in a timely manner, the poor quality of items.
- b. Some parents have decided to purchase items of school uniform from high street shops, therefore without the school logo, because of the poor quality of uniform items and the substandard service from Gooddies.

Outcome:

- c. It was felt that few parents visited the uniform shop when it was available.
- d. Any pre-embroidered logo stock, is at a cost to the school in the event of a shop closure or no sale. Embroidering of the school logo, on receipt of an order placed, ensures that the school is not at risk of underlying costs.
- e. Mrs Freeman is happy to liaise directly with Gooddies – providing all feedback from parents. The school has no plans to change the uniform supplier, but will ensure that concerns are highlighted. The school agrees that Gooddies should know that some parents are disappointed and unhappy with the service. Mrs Freeman will contact Gooddies and feedback the outcome at the next Parent Forum meeting.

Post meeting notes:

The response from Gooddies is attached as an appendix to these minutes.

The school would also like me to share the following: as a school, we are not looking to change supplier. We would however ask parents to ensure that any future problems are brought to the attention of the school so that we can contact the supplier. They should also ensure that they are returning any faulty/unacceptable items to Gooddies for them to exchange etc.

6. Extra-Curricular Clubs/Activities provided by the school teaching staff

Matters Arising:

- a. The question has been raised, in both the Infant school and the Junior school, if the provision and allocation of extra-curricular clubs can in some way be coordinated between the two schools, with regards to a united distribution of information/letters home.

Outcome:

- b. It is very difficult to distribute letters at the same time, during the Summer term (June/July), in preparation of the Autumn term (September). The Infant school are in a different position to that of the Junior school – the Infant school children are already at the school (they may be due to move class, but they are remaining within the school). The Foundation Stage children (new arrivals) of the Infant school are not given the option of attending a school club in the first term (September).

- c. It is difficult to ask any new teachers taking a post at the school, if they plan to run clubs for the academic year. Teachers are not paid to run the clubs during their lunchtime or after school – it is voluntary. Any new teachers are not contractually obliged to start their new post until the 1st September.
- d. To initialize a successful coordination, between the two separate schools, for (September), the Junior school would need to send letters to a variety of Infant schools/various destinations to capture the new Year 3 intake. The coordination of this would be problematic.
- e. Mr Fenton agreed that he would liaise with the Infant school, on the distribution of the extra-curricular club letter, for the Spring and Summer terms of the school year. The only option for the Autumn term, would be to continue as is or to not offer any clubs to the new Year 3's in September.
- f. It was agreed that the school offers a huge range and variety of clubs for the children, both at lunchtime and after school. These clubs are majority run by the teaching staff and not outside agencies. These clubs are provided at minimal or no cost to the parent.

7. AOB

- a. Mr Fenton raised the matter of AOB on the agenda. The Terms of Reference state that all agenda items are by prior agreement between the Head and Chair, therefore there should not be any AOB items. Any subsequent matters arising should form part of the next Forum agenda, or be by prior agreement (with the Head) for additions to be made.

Individual & Sibling School Photographs/Liaising with Infant School

Matters Arising:

- b. Questions arising with regard to the timing of the proof photographs being returned to parents, not being at the same time as the Infant school proof photographs. The school has no plans to change the current school photographer. The school is unable to request when proof photographs should be distributed.

Focus Topic Area for the Parent Forum Group

- c. Discussion took place around the focus of the Forum for this term or academic year.

Road safety in the local area - was agreed that this may be difficult to address from a school perspective, with regards to how much power the school would have to initiate change and have an achievable outcome.

Internet and online safety – very current, school could have a supportive role in and a positive effect on, achievable outcome. E-Safety is taught every Autumn term in school, this topic focus would tie in with current learning. The school agrees that parents need to be informed and up-to-date with the current dangers and E-Safety in general. It is a fast moving, ever changing challenge and difficulty for parents of today. The school will be hosting a curriculum evening on 'E-Safety'.

PTA/Governors/Parent Forum Information Poster

- d. See attached poster. All agreed that it made clear the different roles that different groups within a school community have and how each group can support the successful running of a school. All agreed that a poster would be useful for the Junior school parents.

Manor Residential Trip for Year 6 – Feedback

- e. Very positive feedback was given on the successful Year 6 residential trip. Parents expressed that the trip was well organized, well led and had been hugely successful. Mr Thomas was highly praised for a very informative and engaging information evening prior to the week away.

(Mr Fenton and Mrs Freeman left the meeting)

Current Email system used by the Parent Forum

- f. Discussion took place around the Parent Form email system, with regards to the receiving, responding and collating of emails. Currently Sam Dowse manages the whole system. Suggestions made to share the workload between the parents on the Forum and have multiple administrators to access the Forum inbox. Offers made to share the workload with Sam.

Appendix – feedback response from Goodies

Uniform – Feedback from Parents

- a) The process of having to wait a significant number of weeks before items are delivered is not ideal and quality of the jumpers and cardigans are not great.

We are a nationwide supplier using the same products to supply hundreds of schools and have not received any complaints regarding quality. The sweatshirts and cardigans provided to Emmbrook Juniors are Low Pill Colourfast Garments designed to meet the rigorous standards of everyday use.

We have provided the same garments to the school for over 2 ½ years. If an order is placed on the cut-off date it is delivered 10-15 working days. We often deliver orders early.

- b) The order process and delivery time are a problem. It would seem that they only pull orders off their system twice a month, which means if you have just missed one of the cut-off dates then you will have to wait a whole month until you receive your order.

We process all orders after the cut-off dates and aim to deliver approximately two weeks after. We encourage all parents to order before the cut-off dates to avoid delay.

The dates are displayed on the webstore and also on the delivery information page. The dates have not changed since we have provided the online service. We have to at some stage stop taking orders and start the process of embroidering garments. Schools who provide uniform from the office often ask parents to have their orders in by a set date so they can place their orders with their supplier. Unfortunately some parents still miss the cut of date this will always be the case regardless of when and how many dates are set.

Some suppliers only offer one delivery per month.

- c) Despite the supplier having cut-off and delivery dates, they do not fulfil these. I placed an order on 29th June which was before the cut-off on the 30th, this order should have been delivered approximately two weeks later (around 13th July). It wasn't actually shipped until 20th July which was the last day of term!

I would need an order number or name to be able to have a look at this order

- d) The quality of their goods is poor, in particular the PE T-shirts, Sweatshirts and Cardigans. the material puckers all around the embroidery on the PE T-shirts, the colour has faded after only two washes. The length of the sleeves in comparison to the width of the item is out of proportion on the sweatshirts and cardigans.

I have taken a look at the system and throughout 2016 we have had no items returned due to quality.

We have Only had items returned for a refund due to ordering the wrong size.

If there are issues regarding the T-shirts we would need to see them in order to return them to the manufacturer for an inspection.

I'd like to recommend a change in uniform supplier. Although I gave no issue with the quality the order and delivery options in terms of timing are not very customer friendly.

Customers are able to order with us online securely all year round. The cut off dates work very well for over the hundred other schools also online, due to being able to order through the school holidays and the two deliveries per month.

Often shops will stock uniform for limited times during the year and do not always have stock available.

- e) I feel strongly about supply and quality issues with the current uniform supplier, as the delivery times are so long that I decided a long time ago to source uniform from high street shops instead. I would prefer to use another supplier so we don't have to wait for over a month for it to delivered, and I would start buying uniform with the embroidered logos on again.