

Emmbrook Junior School Parents' Forum

Meeting Minutes

Friday 19th October 2018

2pm

The Bungalow, Emmbrook Junior School

Attendees: Emma Wilkinson (acting Chair), Rob Fenton (EJS), Rachel Brown (EJS), Christine Leddy, Cathy O'Conner, Clare Doyle, Karen Crawford, Michelle McLeish,

Apologies: Jo Tucker, Vickie Robertson, Claire Worsfold

1. Welcome & Introductions

Emma opened the meeting by expressing thanks to Sam, Annabel, Jas and Kerry for all their hard work with EJS Parent Forum over the past year.

2. Parent Forum Chair, organisation, representatives

Emma is currently Acting Chair; all agreed that they were happy for Emma to continue as Chair. Everyone introduced themselves and stated which year group they represent:

Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Christine	Cathy	Clare D	Karen
Emma	Jo		Michelle
Claire W			

It was noted that one more representative for Year 5 would be good. **ACTION:** Christine to put out plea on Junior Facebook page.

3. Review of previous minutes 15 June 2018

The main Action from the previous meeting was regarding school photographs. Rob confirmed that no date has been set for photographs as the school is currently deciding between two potential photographers. A decision will be made and the date set in due course. It has also been decided that the photographs will be taken over a longer period i.e. either a whole day or two sessions on consecutive days in response to the previous feedback. **ACTION:** EJS to confirm when they have appointed the photographer and set a date for school photographs.

All other actions (namely the school setting up a Twitter account and the Wrap-Around Childcare) have been completed and closed.

4. Terms of Reference

Clare and Emma discussed the Terms of Reference, acknowledging that they are a good foundation for the EJS Parent Forum. A couple of minor amendments were suggested by Emma and Clare; these amendments were accepted by Rob.

The amendments were as follows:

- 'Head-Teacher' has been changed to 'Member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)' in the first paragraph regarding membership of the forum;
- The Chairperson is no longer named;
- The frequency of the meetings has been changed to half-termly; and
- 'Representative of the Governors' has been removed from the second to last bullet point. Rob stated that any sensitive issues need to go straight to the EJS SLT and they will feed back to Governors, as necessary.

A copy of the revised Terms of Reference is attached.

5. **Parent Feedback**

Positive feedback was received about the recent Open Morning; it was noted that the morning was well-organised and welcoming.

a. **Communication from the school**

Comments have been received regarding the current methods of communication from the school. Concerns were raised about whether the text messages cost the school money. Rob confirmed that they pay a flat annual rate so the text messages are at no extra charge.

Queries were raised regarding return slips and whether there could be an electronic form of response. It was agreed that a simple email response would be time-consuming for the school admin staff and a phone call response was not adequate. Clare mentioned that other schools use survey-monkey as a method of response. Karen and Cathy discussed a dropform which is an option in Outlook and collates all the electronic responses into an excel document. Rob and Rachel agreed that an electronic form of response would be good as long as it does not create more work for the admin staff.

ACTION: Karen to liaise with Rachel about details of Dropbox/google sheets.

Post-meeting note: Karen has sent details of jot forms and google sheets to Rob Fenton.

Comments have been sent into Forum regarding confusion about the different ways in which the school communicate. Rob confirmed that text messages are sent when small items of information are given (i.e. <160 characters). This information is not repeated on email. The school does not have anything to do with the Teacher2Parent app – this is an outside app which parents can choose to download. The app simply replaces the text messages, it is not new information. Twitter is for promotion of the school into the wider community and emails are used to send out specific information about the school. Emma suggested that as many parents, especially new parents, are confused about the different methods, it might be a good idea for the school to send out a 1-pager summarising the different methods of communication that the school use and what information they require from parents e.g. main mobile number, email addresses etc. **ACTION:** EJS to put together a document summarising the different methods of communication.

Christine fed back that the Year 2 to Year 3 transition for the children was very good and perhaps the issue lies with the transition for the parents. The two schools are very different and parents often struggle to get all the information they need. It was agreed that whilst this information may not be a priority for the school, there are useful bits of

information which would be good for parents to know. Michelle said that the charity she works for (Mind The Gap) are thinking of introducing parent induction meetings for parents who's children are transitioning from Juniors to Seniors and this may be an idea for Infant to Junior transition. Everyone agreed that this would be a good topic for a survey. **ACTION:** Forum members to canvas parents to find out what information they feel would have been useful for them to know when transitioning from one year to the next. Christine to put out a general question on facebook (this could include information that Junior parents wish they had known and also information that current Infant parents want to know). Forum members to also put together a survey monkey. Forum members can then collate the answers to put together a FAQ document for the school to issue (see Point 6).

b. Named lost property

Comments were sent into Forum regarding lost property; parents were concerned that lost property was being left in the playground and raised the query as to whether school staff could return this uniform to the lost property box. Secondly, parents asked whether there could be another solution to named lost property rather than this just ending up in the lost property box.

Rob confirmed that the issue of lost property has been addressed by the school and there are now Year 6 monitors tasked with returning named lost property from the lost property box to the correct classroom. This happens on a daily basis. Rob also stated that any property left on the playground is the responsibility of the children and it does not fall to school staff or Year 6 monitors to return this to the lost property box. Rachel noted that there is still a large amount of lost property that it not named. **ACTION:** Christine to notify parents of the new system regarding lost property and the Year 6 monitors, via facebook, and to remind parents of the importance of naming property.

The possibility of turning it into a House challenge was discussed i.e. which house has the least amount of lost property being returned by the Year 6 monitors.

c. Amazon wish-list

Comments were sent into the Forum regarding the idea of the school setting up an Amazon wish-list. The concept of the wish-list was explained to Rob and Rachel and they thought it would work really well for the school. Emma suggested that they speak to Marie Moran who is currently volunteering in the school and has started to put the wish-list together. **ACTION:** EJS to talk to Maris Moran with a view to get the wish-list up and running.

***Post-Meeting note:** Marie has already starting set the wish-list up and is in the process of populating it.*

d. School uniform

Comments were sent into forum regarding the possibility of changing uniform supplier to Marks & Spencer as there are ongoing delivery issues with the current supplier. Marks and Spencer can do logo'd uniform at a cheaper rate, with a quicker delivery and give 5% back to the school for each order; parents can also take advantage of the regular 20% discounts even for logo'd uniform. We understand that M&S. Rob and Rachel confirmed that there is no reason not to move from the current supplier.

ACTION: Rachel to research into the M&S uniform option and feedback to the forum.

e. **Homework**

Comments have been sent into the forum regarding homework. Year 5 parents were concerned about the inconsistency in homework issued. Rob confirmed that the only homework missing for Year 5s was the MyMaths and this has been addressed internally with the teachers.

Clare said that there was also an issue with communication regarding homework as staff members had told parents that the homework was changing but no more information had been forthcoming. Rob confirmed that the homework was in the process of being revised but that it was currently at Governor level and therefore was not an issue to communicate to parents until decisions had been reached. It was agreed that miscommunication of information was the issue, rather than the homework itself. Rob will address this internally with staff members.

The issue of comments on the Junior facebook was also raised. Clare and Christine confirmed that all posts on the facebook page have to be approved by three administrators before being posted. It is not possible to pre-approve all the resulting comments but the administrators regularly check the comments and remove any that do not abide by the rules. It was agreed that there is always the risk of negative comments being posted but that this is addressed quickly and efficiently and generally the facebook page is a positive place for parents to communicate and clarify general school-related issues. **ACTION:** Christine to put a reminder on facebook regarding the rules of naming individual school staff.

***Post-meeting note:** This reminder has already been put on the Junior facebook page by Sarah Bray, another admin on the page.*

6. **Parent Forum survey**

ACTION: As stated above, forum members will canvas parents through facebook and survey monkey to find out what information they would have found useful to know when transitioning from Infants to Juniors and between year groups, e.g. arrangements with clubs that occasionally take place off-site (football tournaments, cross country etc), cool-milk, snacks, lunchtime arrangements etc.

7. **AOB**

Emma said that information regarding the Parent Forum needs to be updated on the EJS website. Rob gave Emma the email address of our website administrator. **ACTION:** Emma to contact him directly regarding the amendments.

8. **Date of next meeting - Friday 14th December 2pm**

Attached

- Revised Terms of Reference