

## Emmbrook Junior School Parents Forum – Meeting Minutes

**Friday 8 October 2021**

09.15 to 10.30 Teams Meeting

**Attendees:** Mr Usher (EJS Head), Sara Bradley (Co-Chair, Y3), Helen Venfield (Co-Chair, Y3), Sabreena Peedoly-Brennan (Y3), Vicky Gonçalves (Y4), Emma Mitchell (Y5), Mell Morris (Y5), Christine Leddy (Y4/6), Martina Smith (Y4/6).

**Apologies:** Ruth Scales (EJS Deputy Head)

**Abbreviations:**

**SLT** Senior Leadership Team

**EJS** Emmbrook Junior School

**EIS** Emmbrook Infant School

**PPE** Personal Protective Equipment

**DfE** Department for Education

**SENCO** Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator

### 1. Welcome & Introductions

SB opened the meeting by welcoming and thanking everyone for attending the Teams meeting. SB and HV have taken over the chair and secretary roles. SPB and VG were also welcomed to the Forum as new representatives.

### 2. Previous minutes – 21<sup>st</sup> May 2021

The Forum ran through the minutes from the last meeting. The actions from the last meeting have been completed and closed out. The following comments were noted:

- a) Positive feedback has been reported regarding the collection and exit of students and parents / carers from site;
- b) Wearing of PE kits to school on PE days has been well received by new students and families, and is working well in school;
- c) Arrangement of a Gardening Club is currently paused. Parents have volunteered to help;
- d) The admin team is currently one member of staff down due to ill health and they spend a significant amount of time answering queries from parents/carers. It was reiterated that EJS website has a welcome message with key dates and is a good source of information – this is addressed further under AOB;
- e) Mr Usher confirmed that the procurement process is underway for a new provider of school meals. Parents are encouraged to email the admin team with any feedback on school meals as this will assist with this process. The new provider is likely to be in place by September 2022.

### 3. Review of Terms of Reference

The Forum discussed the Terms of Reference. HV noted that the latest version on EJS website is from 2018, although the last review and update was made in 2020. Mr Usher asked that the all Parent Forum information on the website be reviewed and updates sent to him.

The following comments were noted:

- a) Representatives generally volunteer and are not nominated;
- b) A limit on the number of representatives is not currently required;
- c) Meetings do not necessarily need to be held on Fridays.

**Action: SB and HV to update Terms of Reference for publication on EJS website.**

**Action: SB and HV to review content on EJS website regarding the Parent Forum and to send updates to Mr Usher.**

### 4. Parent Feedback

#### a) Transitioning:

Comments were received requesting advanced planning of the September Welcome Meetings / Meet the Teacher. Mr Usher commented that EJS was not in a position to plan these meetings at the end of the summer term, and reiterated that the meetings were recorded and links are available on the website.

A suggestion was also made for new Y3 parents to submit contact details etc via electronic means e.g. Microsoft Forms, rather than paper, to save the admin team time.

**Action: Mr Usher to look into use of Microsoft Forms for collection of data for new students.**

#### b) Assessment week

A parent had requested that parents be given advance notice of Assessment Week. Mr Usher confirmed that this is published on the EJS calendar (website). However, he commented that this will be reviewed should absence from school during this week significantly increase.

#### c) Lost property

It was noted that the issue of lost property is frequently raised. Mr Usher said that there is a huge amount of lost property that is not named. HV commented that My Nametags are very good labels and if parents provide a school code when they order, the company will give 24% back to the PTA (NB not a discount for parents).

CL suggested that the Lost Property box be moved to the covered area in the playground so that parents / carers can check for items at pick-up. Mr Usher said he would investigate doing this before half term, but that there may be limitations at the moment due to Covid-19 restrictions. He suggested that it may be possible to move it to the new reading shed, when it is built.

It was also suggested that an assembly be held encouraging the children to take more responsibility for their own things.

**Action: HV to provide link and My Nametags school ID (18970) to Mr Usher for publication on EJS website and email to be sent to parents/carers.**

**Action: Mr Usher to investigate temporarily moving lost property to covered area in the playground.**

d) Manor trip

A parent suggested that parents are told in advance how photos will be shared so that they can navigate Twitter in advance, or an alternative be offered. Mr Usher confirmed that photos from the trip have been saved on Microsoft Teams and there is no need to navigate Twitter as access to the photos is made available on the EJS website.

It was also suggested that an 'out of hours' phone number be made available in case parents need to convey emergency details to the school relating to the children. It was discussed that this would either have to be a personal mobile number of a staff member or the venue number (preferable as there is little mobile reception at the site).

**Action: Mr Usher to ascertain whether the venue has a phone number that can be used in case of an emergency.**

e) After school clubs

An email was received by the Forum querying whether after school clubs could be fixed at the end of the previous term, and if they could run for the duration of the term, families need to plan childcare ahead of time. Mr Usher flagged that not all of the new Y3 starters come from EIS, and therefore it would not be fair to offer the clubs for the autumn term at the end of the summer term. Also, the autumn clubs were not finalised in the summer term and therefore booking was not possible. SPB noted that the autumn term clubs available were publicised during the summer term, but with no information regarding how to sign up. It was suggested that next time information be included regarding how and when sign up will be possible.

**Action: Mr Usher to feed back to admin team that additional information be included in clubs letter regarding expected timing of sign up.**

Comments were emailed in regarding the Cross Country club – it wasn't necessarily clear at sign up that a commitment from parents / carers may be required for transport to competitions. MM asked if parents could be told who else is in the club so that car shares to competitions could be sought. Mr Usher flagged that parents cannot be told who is in a club. However, permission to share details could be sought from parents / carers at sign up.

**Action: Mr Usher to discuss with admin team requesting permission to share details between club participants.**

f) Parents Evening

A query was received asking when Parents Evenings are likely to go live in Scopay, noting that the school should be giving as much notice as possible. Mr Usher said that Parents Evening dates were included on the website and in his weekly newsletters, and that booking generally goes live the week before the meetings. Mr Usher confirmed that the time that Parents Evening goes live in Scopay will be moved from 3pm to midday, as was discussed at the last meeting, and in line with EIS.

#### **4. Update from Infants Parents Forum**

CL and MM confirmed that EIS had not held a Parent Forum meeting yet this term. They will update the EIS Parent Forum on EJS discussions at the next meeting.

## 5. AOB

The Forum discusses whether any Governors would be interested in sitting in on the Forum meetings. Mr Usher confirmed that the Chair of Governors, Sam Dowse, should be contacted.

**Action: HV and SB to extend invitation to meetings to EJS Governors, and to add EJS Chair of Governors to Agenda distribution list.**

The topic of communication was raised and discussed at length. Mr Usher flagged that the EJS admin team is currently one member of staff down due to ill health and they spend a significant amount of time answering queries from parents/carers for which information has already been issued, diverting time from other tasks. It was reiterated that the EJS website has a welcome message with key dates and is a good source of information, as well as Mr Usher's weekly newsletter. MM suggested that a Microsoft Forms questionnaire could be sent to parents/carers to ascertain preferences regarding communications from EJS.

**Action: All to contribute to questionnaire for parents regarding communications from EJS.**

## 6. Next Meeting TBC

It was agreed that 09:15 on Friday is a good time for everyone to attend the meetings. It is hoped that the next EJS Parents Forum meeting will be held in person, on site. Potential dates will be circulated.