

Emmbrook Junior School Parents Forum – Meeting Minutes

Friday 14th October 2022

09.00 to 10.00 Emmbrook Junior School

Attendees: Jim Usher (EJS Head - JU), Sara Bradley (Chair, Y4 – SB), Sabreena Peedoly-Brennan (Minutes, Y4 - SPB), Vicky Gonçalves (Y5 - VG), Martina Smith (Y5 - MS), Christine Leddy (Y5 - CL), Mel Morris (Y6 - MM).

Apologies: Emma Mitchell (Y6).

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

The Forum offered thanks and appreciation to JU and EJS staff for trip to Manor Residential and still continuing with the trip on the day of the Queen's funeral.

2. Previous minutes – 27th May 2022

The Forum ran through the minutes from the last meeting. The actions from the last meeting have been completed and closed out.

3. Parent Feedback

a) Communication:

- Some Year 3 parents/carers felt that the first day of school was confusing as to where to drop off their children, and instructions provided was not clear.
- It was felt that a reminder should have been sent closer to the time on Welcome Meeting.
- Number of emails coming from EJS was commented to be too much.
- It did not feel that School Exhibition was notified to parents/career in a timely manner.

EJS response: JU will review the plans with staff for next year with incoming Year 3, but felt that this was communicated via email to parents/carers prior to Year 3 starting.

JU stressed that he and his team would over rather over-communicate than not, to ensure messages get to parents/carers. Noted that in the past it has been commented that EJS over communicates so parents/careers are inundated with emails. Understood that this will never be perfect, and best for EJS to continue as is with their emails, but be kept under review. Parents are encouraged to review the EJS calendar on the website and review dates for activities/events. The Exhibition date has been set in since the start of the year.

b) School Clubs:

Request from parents/carers to look into non-sporty clubs (Lego, art, crafts, music).

EJS response: JU believes that already provided a varied amount of school clubs e.g. music clubs (Berkshire Maestros, Musci Guru), Sugarcraft. Noted by CL that it would be useful to have another communication sent out for Berkshire Maestros as they haven't always responded back to parent query.

A further communication has been sent out for Music Guru to provide lessons [Actioned by EJS – email sent 4th October 2022]. An email has been sent out to see if children would be interested in Gardening Club – to be provided by a parent, from Spring 2023 and for a small contribution [Actions by EJS – email sent 12th October 2022].

JU is open to other clubs, and will look at other clubs that can be provided. Noted that these clubs must be provided as to no disruption to core lessons.

c) Scopay:

Parents/carers would like an update as to the current situation of money in Scopay and when it will be transferred to Dolce.

EJS response: Claire from the office team is working to resolve the situation but has not been successful in getting a response from Scopay to date. She will continue to follow up on this.

CL pointed out that on SchoolGrid (that runs Dolce catering options), you are able to set up a direct debit so that the lunches your child have had can be paid at the end of the month, and money taken from your account, rather having to check if you need to top-up payments.

d) M&S uniform:

There have been issues with ordering school uniform, and only once we get to payment, user is told that item is out of stock.

EJS response: acknowledges the issue, and is not what the school was expecting. It had been agreed that there would be a certain amount of stock ready to order immediately, and not have the long lead times as have been demonstrated. JU requests that parents notify the School admin team if they are having issues with M&S orders, so that the school can take it up with M&S directly and be kept aware of the issues.

JU will also look at the option of having badges to sew onto uniform. While preference is to have the logo uniform, JU understands that due to rising costs and the delivery times of uniform coming on them, this is not always possible. He is fine for children to wear non-logo uniform, as long as the uniform is in the school approved colours and appropriate uniform worn (i.e. PE kit worn only on PE days).

e) Photographs and Twitter:

Concern that photos of the children on school trips are shared on Twitter platform, which is open to public, and why Facebook not used, as this can be a private group.

EJS response: JU reminded parents/carers that permission is asked as to whether they can share photos of their child/children on social media such as Newletters, EJS webpage and Twitter. If parents/carers want to check this, please contact the EJS admin office. EJS do not have a Facebook page. JU feels that it is important for EJS to be kept separate from Facebook, as that is a platform for parents to use with no EJS involvement.

SPB requested that JU make the purpose of using Twitter clear on the EJS Newsletter.

[SPB – further feedback from parent on this and to be followed up at next Parent Forum meeting – why use Twitter rather than Facebook? On Facebook, there is privacy settings set that only parents/carers can see pictures of kids, and have control over this. Have also been made aware that Twitter can be private.]

f) Staff List:

Request to have a list of the Teaching Assistant's ("TA") in each class as well as the one-to-one TA's. Rational is that it is clear to parents/carers who is supporting that class, and if

parents/carers want to organize collections.

EJS response: JU appreciates the sentiments behind motive of collections. JU needs to keep fluidity of TA's – so not possible to give a list of TA's for each class, but will ask EJS admin staff to be aware that requests for TA's in class may be made for such occasions such as teacher collection by parents/carers and to be provide information to date.

g) School dinners:

There have been issues with the school dinners and commented that there was not enough food for kids.

EJS response: JU said that there have been issues with staffing levels in the kitchen, as previous staff in kitchen were employed by Caterlink and choose to remain with the company and therefore left. Dolce have been trying to recruit, and there should be 4 members in the kitchen, and there has been 2. JU has said there has not been an issue with quality or quantity, and alternatives have been provided such as salad, and generally the feedback has been positive.

SPB requested that JU take pictures and share on the Newsletters so parents/carers can see the food.

4. **Update from Infants Parents Forum**

No items were raised for discussion.

5. **AOB**

- a) Parent/carers contributions to school trips – JU said an email would be coming out to parents/carers as to what they can reasonably contribute to in terms of external trips, given the rising costs, and will be able to afford. This will help EJS plan accordingly. On the back of this, EJS staff team would look to the possibility of other trips including residential stays.

[Action: email sent out October 2022]

- b) Exhibition mornings –Parent reps asked if the Exhibitions could start slightly earlier at 9.15, and look at another day such as Friday. This is due to parents/carers work commitments, and be able to take the allocated time off, or having to go home and come back again.

This could be an opportunity for PTA to sell drinks and cake in school hall (for a small cost) to parents/carers if not possible to start Exhibition earlier.

JU will speak to staff and see if starting earlier would be possible and enough time to register and settle the children ready to start the Exhibition.

- c) Positive feedback for the school – while the Parents Reps saw that the parent forum was a space for parents to raise issues with EJS anonymously, it should also be used to have the positives of what is working well for parents/careers. Parent Forum reps to ask for positive feedback also to raise in meetings.

6. **Next Meetings**

9:00am – TBC – JU to provide dates he can do and reach agreement with Parent Forum rep.