**Emmbrook Junior School Parents’ Forum Minutes 12th January 2024**

**Minutes**

Friday 12th January 2024

Emmbrook Junior School

13:45 – 14:30

Attendees: Jim Usher (EJS Head - JU), Christine Mitchell (Chair of Local Advisors Circle Trust), Sara Bradley (Chair, Y4 – SB), Martina Smith (Y5 - MS), Christine Leddy (Y3 & Y5 - CL), Mel Morris (Y6 - MM), Vicky Goncalves (Y3 & Y6 - VG), Celine Gilart (Y4 - CG).

Apologies: Emma Mitchell, Helen Venfield

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 and introductions.

Welcome to Celine Gilart a new member of the Parent Forum representing year 4. Christine Mitchell, Chair of Local Advisors Circle Trust was also present.

1. Previous minutes – 14th July 2023 SB

The Forum ran through the minutes from the last meeting. There were some follow on actions from the last meeting detailed as follows:

1. Permission forms – commented on hard copies of letters being sent home and whether this would be easier online. EJS commendted that hard copies were necessary for day trips to ensure the information was current in case of emergency. If forms are kept on a device then lack of mobile signal could prevent access. JU will review situation and as now EJS is part of the Circle Trust – will look at policy of having blanket authorisation to help reduce repeated requests.

JU commented that all letters and are available on the website.

1. Dolce Catering: JU updated that the situation is still not where we would like it to be. Staff recruitment is an issue and there is a reliance on temporary staff and still some vacancies. Children are still encouraged to report problems and no complaints received this term to date. Dolce is in year 2 of a 3 year contract. Parents are still encouraged to email Dolce directly with problems.
2. Parent Feedback - comments received (below)
   1. Year 5 Additional Support:

The forum received a question regarding additional support in class for Year 5. This was specific to one pupil it was not appropriate for discussion at the forum, however Mrs Liddiard has responded as follows:

*We are working with individual children involving parents and outreaching support from external agencies to support individual children and ensure personalised provision is in place to provide children with strategies with regulating emotions. We are also upskilling our staff by providing CPD to ensure they are best equipped to deescalate behaviours and meet the needs of children with additional needs in the classroom. Finally, we are working with all children in the classroom to ensure they feel safe in school and their voices are heard as well as educating all children about neurodiversity through PSHE lessons and school assemblies.*

* 1. Toilets

The forum received numerous questions regarding the conversion of toilets from single sex toilets to unisex, resulting in female pupils avoiding using them due to them not being kept clean. There were concerns that female pupils did not have access to a single sex space toilets as per DofE guidelines. This was especially sensitive for girls who require access to sanitary bins.

EJS Response:

JU provided clarity on the situation: The toilets inside the school are individual cubicles with a toilet and wash basin enclosed behind a lockable door. The toilets were previously pink or blue and have since been repainted in a neutral colour and can now be used by either sex. We have invested in improving the indoor toilets – repainting, new mirrors, hand driers etc. They remain individual private spaces. Half these toiles have sanitary bins. Converting the toilets so that they can be used by either sex has reduced queue times and reduces lost learning time.

Our outdoors toilets accessed from the playground are the more typical group toilets that may be accessed by more than one person at a time and these remain separated by girls and boys. The toilets are both checked (often multiple times a day) and cleaned daily. As with any toilet used by multiple people there are instances of the facilities not being used carefully enough and where we become aware of this, we raise this with children and make our expectations clear. Changing back to separate toilets for boys and girls is an option but would disadvantage the girls over the boys. We will ensure that our site controller is aware of the concerns and ask all staff to check toilets on a regular basis.

ACTIONS:

* To ensure girls are reminded that they can use the female only toilets via the playground if they prefer.
* Children are encouraged to report cleanliness issues to teachers immediately.
* Sanitary bins should be provided in ALL unisex units.
  1. PTA Funds

A couple of questions regarding PTA funds and how they are spent. In particular why PTA funds could not be used for new football kits as per a recent request. Both questions were asking about how PTA funds are spent and where this information can be found.

EJS Response:

JU advised that football kits would be funded by PTA funds and ordering new kits this term.

PTA funds are shared across both infant and junior schools and includes a contribution to the costs of trips and events for all year groups to the sum of £500 per year group. Other contributions were made to the cost of the reading chalet and the entire cost of the trim trail. There are planned developments for the trim trail so that it can be used all year round. Potential future contributions include the building of a MUGA; contributions to whole school events such as drama work shops for world book day; and pantomimes etc.

PTA Newsletters which go out termly show the amounts raised and the amounts given to the schools and how they have been spent. EJS weekly newsletter also includes details on how PTA funds are spent. PTA termly minutes show a breakdown of amounts raised and sums given to each school – payments are made twice a year.

* 1. School Trips

A question came through regarding the cancellation of a year 4 school trip due to insufficient parental contributions. Could the school provide a list of expenses at the start or end of school year to enable parents to budget? If parents cannot or won’t pay, then can those children remain at school while the trip goes ahead for those who can?

EJS Response:

JU advised that they are compiling a list of planned events to share with parents in advance. The year 4 trip was deliberately timed to coincide with November pay day. We cannot ask those children whose parents haven’t paid to remain at school – it is against the law. Parents and carers should contact the school directly to discuss any difficulties with payment. It was also suggested that the option to pay in installments would also be helpful.