

# PARENTS FORUM MINUTES

Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2024

7-8pm, via zoom

21 Attendees

ATTENDEES: Rachel Davies, Headteacher and Safeguarding- Leader, RD  
Victoria Rodrigues, Business and Operations Leader, VR  
Joanna Lovatt, Chair and Parent Support Adviser, JL  
Aidan Doyle, Operations Director, "Lunchtime Company", AD  
Kerry Danneau, Operations Manager, "Lunchtime Company" KD  
Lucy Halliwell, Parent, LH

1. WELCOME to all attendees and I'm very grateful for those who have given up their time and energy to engage in this process. Your support is much appreciated.
  - My apologies for a mistake in the Agenda. Lucy Halliwell is not giving a full presentation but providing some key information for parents regarding the "Smartphone Free Childhood" movement.
  
2. FEEDBACK FROM THE LAST MEETING on 27.2.24
  - Future Heatwaves – having explored the idea of generating a competition for pupils to think of possible solutions, it has been agreed that Jennifer Forakis, parent and professional, will meet with relevant staff to see if there is a more strategic direction for the school to take. JL
  - Building Works – another parent kindly agreed to attend one of the regular Councillor's surgeries on a Saturday morning at Chiswick Library. Unfortunately, no further information regarding the building plans for the new social housing that is at the edge of the main back playground could be gained.
  
3. PRESENTATION FROM THE NEW CATERING SUPPLIERS, "LUNCHTIME COMPANY"
  - VR introduced the two representatives from the new company – Aidan Doyle, Operations Director, Chef and former restaurant owner, along with Kerry Danneau, Operations Manager, who will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the catering at Grove Park Primary School. A two-minute video was shown, giving an overview of existing operations at other schools.
  - The "Lunchtime Company" currently operate in the Ipswich/Cambridge area as well as London, in a total of 154 schools.
  - AD thanked the parents who raised direct questions. The company had already adjusted the menu to replace the allergy food item (Pineapple). The type of fruits will be Watermelon, Honeydew melon, Grapes etc.
  - They recognise that there will be a period of adjustment at the beginning and they will assess the new menu to replace any items that don't work well. They also have a policy to encourage pupils to try new items. RD said that one of the reasons why the school chose them was because of their visual presentation and range of vegetables when showcasing to pupils during the bidding process. They were noticeably successful in persuading pupils to try new items.
  - 92% of ingredients are fresh (including bread made daily on the premises). They use frozen peas and sweetcorn (as they are more nutritious than fresh). They won't use oil-based fried foods and there are no processed meals.
  - The company want to work with both parents and the school to tailor the best way of working. For example, at some schools, the pupils can vote for the dessert of their choice (usually a Friday). Some schools chose to run a system where parents can choose the menu in advance.

- A parent raised the current issue of food running out by the end of the lunch session, reducing the options for those still waiting to eat. AD said that they would over-produce at the beginning to ensure no-one missed out and would then assess the optimal level based on feedback. He wants to ensure that no-one misses out.
- Currently, they have no links to other organisations promoting healthier eating but would be open to it in the future.
- Another parent raised the issue of portion sizes. AD said that they have to follow the food standards but this is alongside a common-sense approach.
- VR raised the issue that, currently, children could eat pasta every day. AD stated that they have developed a menu where every option is sensible with regard to healthy eating. A parent asked if the pasta could be one that has nutritional value rather than just durum pasta. AD said that whilst they may be able to offer vegetable-based pasta on some occasions, the cost of replacing the pasta would be too much to offer it each time.
- A parent raised the issue of the number of times the menu would be changed at the last minute. AD said that they would stick to the menu unless there were extraordinary circumstances.
- A parent asked if Chicken Curry and Rice could be considered. AD said that could be introduced.
- VR thanked the “Lunchtime Company” for their time. AD said that at the end of September, there would be an opportunity for parents to come into school for a tasting session. VR will be sending out an email regarding this. VR

#### 4. RACHEL DAVIES ON THE SCHOOL’S POLICY OF PUPILS AND MOBILE PHONES

- Currently, mobile phones are allowed in very specific circumstances, particularly when there are pupils who have medical condition that necessitates them using a smart phone.
- Pupils who travel independently to school are the only ones (other than medical reasons) to be allowed to bring them onto the premises. This applies to Year 5 and Year 6 children where a parent has given permission for them to travel independently.
- Those Those that do bring in phones and/or Air Tag devices send any message to confirm their safe arrival (as requested/expected by their parent) before handing them in to their relevant teaching staff. All devices are then locked away and returned to the children by the teaching staff at dismissal at the end of the day.
- Children have responded well to this policy and on only one occasion has a child forgotten to hand in their phone.
- This policy applies to all types of phone not just smart phones.

#### 5. OVERVIEW OF THE MOVEMENT “SMARTPHONE FREE CHILDHOOD”

- Lucy Halliwell is a parent with two children (in the Infants) who is trying to plan ahead for the impact of the digital world on her children. At the beginning of this year, some mothers started a voluntary organisation/movement called “SMARTPHONE FREE CHILDHOOD”. They have a website at <https://smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk>
- LH wants to raise awareness of this organisation for those parents who are of a similar mindset and want to feel empowered. Currently, there are over 100,000 parents who have signed up so the plan is for the organisation to become a registered charity.
- They have a four-step plan and offer an approach for parents to use with their child/ren. LH wants to ensure that parents know that there is a support network available as the current norm appears to be that the Tech Giants are not going to lead on this.
- LH also said that a number of local Secondary Schools have taken action, with some already providing an outright ban and others considering a ban.
- LH is working with Jessie Chalmers, who provided an excellent free workshop last year on how to safeguard your child/ren (which is still available to watch on the school’s “Parent Workshop” link) to promote a considered approach to introducing smart phones for your child/ren.
- LH is keen to hear from other parents at Grove Park Primary School who might want to register their interest with LH so JL will find the best way for parents to do so. JL

- A parent said that there is also a West London sub-group, under the Community section of WhatsApp, that provides hints and suggestions as to how to monitor your child.

If parents have any feedback to give to the school, there is no need to wait for the next Parents Forum (which will be in the Autumn Term). They can email via the school email address [info@grovepark.hounslow.sch.uk](mailto:info@grovepark.hounslow.sch.uk)

MEETING CLOSED