

PARENTS FORUM MINUTES

Thursday 9th November 2023

7-8pm, via Zoom

54 Attendees

ATTENDEES: Rachel Davies, Headteacher
Victoria Rodrigues, Business & Operations Manager
Joanna Lovatt, Chair and Parent Support Adviser

1. JL welcomed the Parents/Carers who had joined online, of which 54 people had signed in individually – almost twice the normal number.
2. As this is the first meeting of the new academic year, JL reminded the meeting that the agenda was set by Parents/Carers as a place for them to safely & respectfully discuss their opinions and perspectives with the School. The school is normally represented by Rachel Davies, as Headteacher and Safeguarding Lead plus Victoria Rodrigues, as Business & Operations Manager as well as deputising for Rachel.
3. JL also reminded attendees that the discussion on School Lunches has been left off this agenda so that families input can be sought at the appropriate time during a tender process.
4. The Agenda is:
 - a) With “Little Foxes” running the clubs at school, the **finishing of clubs 3 weeks early** causes childcare issues for at least one family. Is there anything that can be done to provide an alternative? From the Zekkos family.
 - b) What is the school’s view on **mixing classes within the same year group**? Submitted by Ruth Campbell.
 - c) Reflections on the change in policy of pupils changing into PE kit, as recommended at the last Parents Forum
5. FINISHING OF CLUBS 3 WEEKS EARLY
 - This is the first term that “Little Foxes” (LF) has run the clubs and the school and feedback indicate a very successful start for all involved. Previously AKTIVA run the clubs for 10 weeks every term, whereas now, they just run the wraparound care.
 - This term is unusually long with the next term much shorter. One of the key objectives for any club is that it is affordable for the vast majority of the families and this is why the school asked for this term to run for 12 weeks.
 - Two other parents also mentioned that the cost of using the wraparound services or any other childcare alternative was very costly to cover the shortfall.
 - VR would encourage parents/carers to contact little foxes and/or complete the survey that was sent last week with any feedback.
 - One suggestion is that LF provide a general club, which could be multi sports and/or games and/or supervised activities instead for the three weeks.
 - Another parent asked if Reception would be offered clubs during the Autumn term in the future (ie in 2024 and beyond). VR said that LF will be making a decision on this either to provide provision in the second half of the Autumn term or from the first half of the Spring term.

6. MIXING CLASSES WITHIN THE SAME YEAR GROUP

- RD explained that before Covid, children arriving in Reception classes were divided into the two separate classes (Chestnut & Willow) prior to the children starting in September. This meant that we were allocating nearly half of the children (who had not been in our Nursery) to a class without being able to get to know them well
- However, since the lockdowns, the school wanted to consider the balance of each cohort so for at least two weeks, once all the children had started, the teaching staff would get to know the children before then deciding which class to allocate them.
- Mixing classes is not a policy that the school wish to pursue because:
 - In London, we have a transient population with new children arriving all the time which means that there is change anyway.
 - For some children, any extra changes/transition is hard enough each year, with a new classroom and teaching staff
 - The school offers opportunities for classes to spend time together, such as the year 5 sleepover and PGL Outdoor Activities event for Year 6.
 - Relationships and cohorts fluctuate at all times and so the school would never be able to get it right for everyone if classes were mixed up every year.
- When asked for any further thoughts from the attendees, no other comments were made.

7. REFLECTIONS ON CHANGING IN & OUT OF PE KIT

- Since the discussion at the last Parents Forum meeting, the school used the forum's feedback and now Year 4 come into school in their PE kit on the relevant day.
- Nursery and Reception years are not required to change into a PE kit as it is felt that they have a number of transition times during the day as well as various skills to learn already and changing would take a lot out of their learning time. The children in Nursery & Reception are constantly free-flowing between indoor and outdoor play developing their gross and physical skills – they do not have a specific PE lesson.
- Therefore, Years 1, 2 & 3 are the only year groups to change in and out of their PE kit in school. The school recognise that at times items of uniform/PE kits can get misplaced; the school urge parents to name every item.
- RD has noticed that over the past two months, pupils are taking ownership of their own items and the vast majority do neatly pile up their clothes when getting changed and this has been really positive to see.
- Please talk to teaching staff if individual cases need to be made.
- One parent stated that some children simply wear plain black trainers (which are permitted as part of the school uniform) on the day they have PE so they don't need 2 pairs of shoes.
- A question was raised about items going missing when transitioning from school to LF Clubs. VR has asked LF if children can simply change into trainers for sports clubs rather than the full PE kit. No parents disagreed.

8. AOB

- A parent asked if staff and other parents/carers had noticed the smoke and smells coming from the Building site and whether concerns had been raised. She had communicated with the building company but had no satisfactory reply.
- VR said that having addressed a number of issues with the builders, they had addressed them successfully but it now appears, in the past week, that the issues of the smoke and smells from the diesel powered machinery was becoming a problem again. Another parent said that they had asked about this and had been told the emissions were within regulations but the machinery was left switched on and idling.
- Another parent raised the issue of windows directly looking over the L. VR has asked for site plans several times from the contractors but no luck so far. VR to continue to push for this. So far, the information that has been given to the school means that safeguarding has not been an issue but the school are continuing to monitor.
- Parents/Carers are urged to email the school (info@grovepark.hounslow.sch.uk) if problems with smells and smoke continue, as this the volume of these prove more successful to show the contractors.
- A parent wanted to record that this term, her child has noticed that there is more choice at lunch and the quality has much improved.
- Several parents also used the chat box to show their gratitude towards staff for all that they do in class and outside of school hours to support the children and families.

As there were no further queries or issues raised, the meeting was closed and all participants were thanked, particularly since it was the largest attendance for a Parents Forum.

The date for the next Parents Forum is still to be decided.