

Parent Forum - 9.11.17

9 parents, Sam Hunter (SH), Diana Massa (DM) and Judith Rutherford (JR) (Chair of governors)

Started with requests that parents had sent it before the meeting to discuss.

- 1) Homework. SH shared that a parent had asked if pupils could be supported with their homework at After School Club. It had been agreed that while we can provide a space for children who wish to do their homework we are not able to provide adult support to facilitate this as the adults who are there are employed to keep the children safe and to entertain them. SH also reminded parents of a previous communication that the teaching staff are also in agreement that we will not provide a homework club as they feel that this would dilute the home/school connection. SH and DM went through what the expectations are for homework for each year group, how this is communicated and how homework is rewarded.
- 2) A parent had asked how DBS checks work and why they couldn't put in for a check in case they might volunteer at a future point. SH explained that a DBS check 'lasts' for 3 months and so needs to be done for a volunteer who is about to start rather than who might be coming in to school or for a one off event. However, if a volunteer is not going to be left alone with children, e.g. they are going to be working alongside the teacher in the classroom for the day, then a DBS check is not required. The infant school do not tend to need a DBS check for school trips as the parents are with the staff all day. However, on junior school trips the parents are often away from the teacher with a small group so the DBS is required. Jon Clark works with Vikki Batten to review the Single Central Register. This work is also reviewed by the link governor for safeguarding. It is the first agenda item on all FGB meetings. SH advised that if there is an individual case/query then please come in and see us.
- 3) The Year 4 London trip to the British Museum when there are high levels of terror alerts in London. SH said that she was aware of parent comments on this and therefore wanted to ask Parent Forum what they thought. SH explained that there had been no issues about taking Year 6 to Harry Potter World which is a large tourist attraction. She explained that they followed Local Authority advice as well as advice from the DfE. The Year 4 trip was one that was already familiar with the team. Gail Beale had ordered wrist bands that all children will be able to wear on trips to link them to the school and provide a contact number. Wherever possible, the class teacher 'floats' rather than being with a group. Risk Assessments and trip planning is shared with Jon Clark, including the Risk Assessments of the location being visited. SH will always take into account any last minute changes and will cancel a trip at the last minute if she feels this is the best thing. Trips are never risk free. She is in complete support of any parents who would rather keep their child back at school. She was aware that for the British Museum trip there were parents who felt that it was important that the trip still went ahead so that we were not letting terrorism affect our plans. It was felt by the parent forum that it would be good to share this thinking with all parents at the start of each year. SH talked about Wheelers coaches and that we avoid using them at all costs but that sometimes some coach companies sub-hire the contract out to other companies (without the school being made aware). JR confirmed that this is something which the governors are looking at. SH confirmed that if pupils are split across two coaches that we record who is on which coach in case of emergencies. It was suggested that a general letter at the start of each academic year explaining the safety procedures behind trips would be helpful. SH agreed to do this.

- 4) SH wanted to give some feedback since previous parent forum/information evenings about the impact of school to school support on teachers being out of class. She went through all the teachers for the term to date and shared how many days they had each been out of class. It was agreed that the amounts to date did not cause any concern. Judith Rutherford, who was at the meeting as chair of governors and as a parent, explained that governors continue to monitor this. DM explained that children are aware of regular changes, such as when a teacher has PPA, but we need to strike the right balance with explaining every time a teacher is off, such as with illness. HLTAs cover regular slots of half days but not whole days. They are part of the same staff meeting and INSET training as the teachers and the same monitoring. Regular whole day slots are covered by teachers however one off days will be covered by HLTAs.
- 5) There was then a conversation around children with SEND and how included they are in the playground/friendship groups. The parents shared their different experiences of this. SH explained what we do to ensure inclusivity as much as possible although we cannot see all that goes on in the playground. DM is going to meet separately with one of the parents to explore further their questions. It was discussed what the school can do to influence the messages that parents give their children at home but it was agreed that this is much more complex.
- 6) There was a discussion around lost property and if there is a way to get that cleared more regularly.
- 7) Pupil Voice groups were discussed and what the selection process looked like for this and children's experience of it. DM explained that a new process is now in place to track which children does what across the years to ensure that where possible there is an equal experience. SH did explain that sometimes children are placed in a pupil voice group due to personal circumstances.