

Parents' Forum – Friday 26th September 2008

Attendees:

**Mrs Whittington
Mrs Williams**

Yr R	Sycamore Holly	Carolyn McCall
Yr 1	Pine Oak	Viv McMillan/Iwona Batterberry
Yr 2	Chestnut Elm	Sam Amend Michelle Livett
Yr 3	Cedar Beech	Emily Wright Vanessa Marsden
Yr 4	Willow Cherry	Catherine Barlow Gillian Bowers
Yr 5	Sequoia Juniper	Joy Small Nicky Moss
Yr 6	Ash Hawthorn	Tracey Lowden Sabine Bolier

1. Emergency telephone tree

It had been suggested at the previous meeting that, due to a general feeling that the telephone tree 'dry run' had not been very successful, a system of sending a text message from the Parent Representatives to members of the class would work better.

It was agreed that this system should be tried; the school office would send a text message to the Parent Representatives who would 'group' text members of the class. Anyone not acknowledging receipt of the text by a given time would be referred back to the office by the Parent Representative, along with names of any members of the class who do not have a mobile 'phone.

It was also agreed that a 'back-up' Parent Representative needs to be selected in case the office fails to succeed in contacting the primary Parent Representative with the initial message.

In addition, the office would inform Parent Representatives of any new children in the class or of any who leave.

2. Early closure of school on last day of term

It was suggested that this may be introduced, as it already happens in the majority of schools. A questionnaire will be sent out to parents to canvass opinions on the matter.

3. Lunch in the hall

A number of points were discussed:

i. Year 6 children were finding it hard to transport crates of lunchboxes and to ensure that every lunchbox ended up in the right place.

Trolleys have been ordered to contain lunchboxes: these will be positioned outside classrooms and transported to the hall.

ii. Some children are putting snack in their lunchboxes and then are unable to access their snack at playtime.

Please ensure snacks are kept separate from lunchboxes.

iii. Some children are being moved in order for cleaning and clearing up to take place.

This does happen if children are eating particularly slowly, but is kept to a minimum.

iv. Tables are not always clean.

Tables are wiped frequently throughout lunchtime.

v. Will Year 6 children be swapped round so they can all get the chance to help younger children?

Yes.

4. Hot dinners

The point was made that there was a possibility of a government initiative stating that all children should have hot school dinners.

This is not likely to happen as the school has no facilities to cook hot meals and the only option would be 'airline' style meals which would be unsatisfactory.

5. Drinking water

Please could children be encouraged to drink water regularly and could teachers ensure that water bottles are kept on the tables so children can drink from them whenever they wish.

6. School milk

It appears that not all children who are entitled to milk are receiving it.

Milk is delivered to each classroom for those children who are entitled to it and it is up to those children to help themselves to a carton.

Some children have complained that, lately, the milk has an unpleasant taste.

Possibly this is due to the fact that it is UHT semi-skimmed milk, so not what they are normally used to drinking at home.

7. Synthetic phonics

Please could some resources be recommended so parents can help their children and what is the difference between synthetic phonics and, for example, Jolly Phonics?

Mrs Williams explained that Jolly Phonics helps children learn sounds, whereas synthetic phonics focuses on blending and segmenting sounds in order to facilitate reading and spelling.

She also recommends playing games with letters at home, rather than using specific resources which may not support and complement the way phonics are taught at school.

8. Objective meetings

Could meetings such as the objective meetings be held in the evenings?

Mrs Whittington explained that it is hard to expect staff to give up even more of their evenings than currently is the case. Wherever possible it is hoped that parents would make arrangements in order to be able to attend meetings during the day.

9. Homework diaries

These have proved popular; parents appreciate being able to communicate with the teacher via the homework diaries.

However, not all homework is being written on the board for pupils to copy – please could this happen so the children all know exactly what they are expected to do for homework. KW to speak to staff.

10. Losing playtime as a punishment

It appears that, as a punishment, some children are kept in at playtime/lunchtime. This was considered to be inappropriate for children who are being punished for fidgeting/not sitting still as what they need most is the opportunity to run around at playtime.

11. Has a new 'Lollipop Person' been appointed yet?

Mrs Minihane (mother of Jacob and Ryan) will take on the rôle; she needs training but will soon be 'in post'.

12. Year 6 cycling

It had been requested at the last meeting that the oldest children should be allowed to 'scoot' to school.

Storage had been an issue but scooter racks have now been purchased, although these need to be cemented into the ground; FOB are to fund the cement!

13. After-school clubs

Many clubs take place on the same day which means children are unable to take up as many clubs as they would like and have to choose which they would rather do (eg French v sports club)

This is logistically hard to change as, very often, more than one club requires the same facilities and so have to be on different days, meaning that others need to 'fit in' with this situation.

14. Nits

Does the school have a 'nits policy'? Please could a letter go home to inform parents if there is a nits outbreak in a particular class?

Mrs Whittington said that, although it is not common practice to send a letter home in such cases, she does, in fact, do this.

15. PE in winter

Can KS1 children wear tracksuits to keep warm?

Yes; they are meant to. Mrs Whittington will mention this in the next newsletter.

Date for next meeting: Friday 24th October.