

# **Parents' Forum**

## **Thursday, November 19<sup>th</sup> 2009**

### **Attendees:**

Mrs Whittington, Mrs Williams, Vanessa Marston, Nicky Hart, Anya MacFarlane, Gillian Bowers, Emma Thompson, Heather Smith, Emily Wright, Elaine Prodger, Kelly Clare.

### **Apologies:**

Selina Miskell, Jane Crouch, Caroline McCall, Sarah Holdway, Michelle Livett, Tracy Lowden, Mary Nash.

### **1. Previous Parents Forum minutes.**

Apologies were made for the late posting of the minutes on the website. In future minutes will be emailed to parents as well as appearing on the website.

### **2. Cake Stall.**

Suggestions were sought on how to help ensure that all children are able to access the cakes. At the last sale, rain meant that all of the cakes had to be moved under the shelter, resulting in less space. Splitting the cakes between the stamping shelter and the hexagon could relieve crowding – Kelly Clare will speak to F.O.B. to see whether this could be trialled at the next sale.

### **3. Newsletter.**

It was requested that the date of the 11+ results should not be put in the list of dates at the end of the newsletter, since Year 6 parents are already aware of the date, and some would rather it was kept more low key. This was agreed.

### **4. Donations for writing week/ funding for activities.**

Feedback about the visiting poet has been extremely positive from parents and children, and the poet was very complimentary about the children. There have been some concerns about requests for donations, and Mrs Whittington clarified that the school budget is not sufficient to fund such events. Some parents did not receive the initial request for a donation for the poet, and it was raised that some emails from school are not being received by some parents. It was felt that this term there have been a greater than usual number of requests for money, and it was also felt that it is not always made clear how much events cost the school to run. It would be helpful to receive a letter at the start of term outlining upcoming events. F.O.B. have agreed to make up the shortfall in donations for the poet's visit.

### **5. Minibus.**

This will be used not only by sports teams, but for a wide variety of excursions, opening up opportunities to all pupils. F.O.B. will purchase the minibus, and the school is hoping

that a local business will sponsor the maintenance and running costs. Two staff members are already qualified to drive the bus, and others will be taking the minibus test.

#### **6. Letters from school.**

It has been requested that letters sent via email from the school and F.O.B. are in a font and layout which minimise printing, and that tear-off reply slips be sent as a separate attachment so that the whole letter does not need to be printed out. Unfortunately some computers will not open separate attachments, so the latter is currently not possible.

#### **7. Calendars.**

The calendars will be available to purchase at the Christmas Bazaar, with the possibility of ordering more should they run out.

#### **8. Christmas Bazaar.**

This will be after school this year, allowing more parents to attend. It was clarified that older children will still be able to move around the Bazaar unaccompanied if they wish. All classes have made things to sell, and stalls will be spread out throughout the whole school to allow more space for visitors and children.

#### **9. Dressing up.**

It was requested that parents are given as much notice as possible for days when the children are dressing up. No volunteers have yet come forward to co-ordinate passing on costumes once they have been worn.

#### **10. Handwriting pens.**

The school would prefer Key Stage 2 children to use the recommended Berol handwriting pens, as they do not blotch, and help with handwriting. If children (particularly left-handers) find this pen difficult, alternatives (such as Stabilo pens) can be used, but it is important that they do not smudge or blotch. Biro's should not be used.

#### **11. Sweets.**

It has been raised that giving out sweets on children's birthdays is not in line with the Healthy Schools initiative. It was felt, however, that it would be difficult to enforce giving out healthy alternatives.

#### **12. Communicating with teachers.**

Some children have found it hard to get the chance to talk to their teacher alone. A 'Bubble Box' where children can write a message if they would like to speak to their teacher is available in some classes – Mrs Whittington will ask if this can be done in Year 2.

#### **13. Telephone tree.**

The new Class Reps were advised to either have all of their class phone numbers stored in their mobile phone, or to set up a telephone tree so that information about emergencies etc can be passed on quickly.

#### **14. Car Treasure Hunt.**

Concerns were raised that this was not in line with the Travel Policy of discouraging car use, and it was felt that awarding house points for taking part was unfair to children who did not have the opportunity to join in. Mrs Whittington will pass these points on to F.O.B..

#### **15. Parent Evenings.**

Some parents have expressed that 10 minutes is too short a time to discuss their child. It was felt that this might be particularly felt by new and Reception parents. Extending the appointment times is not possible, as this would mean having 3 evenings instead of 2, or having to schedule a session in school time. It was emphasised that if a parent has a particular problem to discuss, it is always possible to arrange to meet with the class teacher to discuss this. It was suggested that a Buddy system for parents might be helpful, as some of the issues regard not knowing how things happen in the school. Parents who already have an older child at the school could be useful contacts for parents new to the school who have any queries. The Buddy system can be organised by the class reps.

#### **16. Sponsored read.**

Mrs Williams clarified how the day will run, with older children being paired with younger readers.

#### **17. Inset Days.**

It was requested that when Inset Days fall at the end of a holiday, that a reminder be sent out in the week before the holiday.

#### **18. Toilets.**

Funding is available for building work to be carried out in the toilets in Key Stage 1, however in order to qualify for funding, the new toilets will have to be unisex (i.e. all cubicles, with no urinals). Class Reps from Reception and Year 1 will canvass opinion from parents in these years.

#### **Next Meeting:**

Friday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2010, 2.15pm