



NOTES FROM THE PARENT FORUM MEETING 5th October 2015

Ashley Tomlin, Principal Deputy Head presented a brisk overview of the school's priorities, the external changes and pressures affecting us and some information about areas for development this year. There was a good discussion among the 15 parents present, and the following are comments made on the feedback sheets provided. Red is our initial response.

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Home Learning

- Could there be guidance at school about doing homework whilst watching TV/listening to music
Already given, but will reiterate
- Please direct students away from the internet for homework tasks (any excuse to go on a computer)
Will highlight with staff in briefing
- Completely agree with the school escalation system for homework
Great. We will publish the flowchart on the website.
- Parental login to SMH is a great idea
These have been issued
- Homework club WITH SUPPORT is a great idea (specific days for specific subjects).
There is already a support class every night for year 11 – staffing will be the issue. It may be that staffing a more generic homework club with support is more achievable
- Recognition for good work and personal study plans are an excellent idea
We need to work on this
- Homework feedback and support for weaker areas (possibly by a different teacher to give a different perspective).
Interesting idea, which has positives and negatives i.e. loses teacher relationship, but gains a fresh perspective. Will consider more carefully.
- The new marking system is pleasing, but sometimes feel that quantity v quality is unbalanced.
You are right and it is an area we are working on. Whilst not an excuse, there will always be difficulty with staff who teach several hundred students a week, to get this balance right
- Concerns in terms of consistency of use of show my homework and teachers should become familiar with the app before instruction to avoid anxiety.
Unfortunately, the only way to get people to do something differently, is to get them doing it. The app is easy to use, but requires changing a pattern of behaviour that teachers have become accustomed to, often over decades. Please just bear with us whilst we push for this to be used more consistently.
- A remote learning link would be good to help students access files and software from home
Yes, this is something we are working towards, although currently our ICT is managed by Capita, so there may be issues regarding managing this service.
- MyMaths is good – what about Linguascope for languages? Interesting.
AT will investigate with the languages team.
- Give suggestions on how parents can support their children develop good learning habits.

I accept this is important. There is some guidance on our website and we ran a “support your teen” evening last year which we intend to run similarly this year. We also have a maths-specific year 11 evening on the 15th October intended partially for this purpose.

Attendance and punctuality

- Recognition for good attendance and punctuality is a great idea (said multiple times)
Plans are already in hand to make this happen this year
- Let parents know about the correlation between attendance and achievement
This will happen
- My year 10 child is very happy with school dinners and the 3 year GCSE (both discussed earlier) However, he had 100% attendance and wasn't recognized for this – what about a certificate or some other recognition?
This will change this year.

Support, intervention and communication

- Communication tends to focus on bad behavior and not when things are good.
This is a fair point (although unfortunately the result of staff having limited time). However, staff have been reminded this year to try and make this happen – we will also be trying to systematise recognition this year.
- Movement in setting is an issue because of lack of parental communication.
This should not be the case and curriculum leaders will be reminded that parents should be fully informed.
- Is it possible to have more parent and tutor meetings?
Whilst clearly a good idea in principle, teachers at secondary schools will often teach 5 or more year groups, meaning they already have parents evenings and events to attend for each of these years. It is therefore unreasonable to require more, other than in year 11, 12 and 13 where the demands of the exams often require it.
- Planners are very rarely signed by tutor.
This should not be the case. Please contact the tutor or head of year and express this concern. If not, feel free to contact myself and I will follow up.
- It would be good to know schemes of work and topics
Almost all subjects have a web based area where these documents can be accessed. Students will be aware of these, however, I will investigate whether we can link them to the website for parents.
- Make learning fun so that they want to do it
We do try!

General Comments

- Concerns raised about the impact on creative subjects over the government requirement for all students to study the full Ebacc for the current year 7.
We hold the same concerns as does the Her Majesty's Chief Inspector. However, we are currently considering an options process that would maintain a balanced curriculum for all students despite this imposition.