



Minutes of Staff/Parent Forum Meeting: 18 November 2008

Present: Nigel Flower, Sonia Radley, Alan Stromberg, Jonathan Bartlett, Gillian Sampson, Judy Oliver, Mary Walsh, Paul Gilbert, and Gillie Scoular

ACTION

1 Welcome

NCF welcomed Jonathan Bartlett as new staff member.

2 Matters Arising from Previous Minutes:

2.1 L6th Parents' Meeting/Reports

P Gilbert - new L6th reports timing was appreciated by parents as it gave a much fuller picture at a time when adjustments in work level were being made as pupils settled to AS demands.

Parents still felt that further / earlier support would be appreciated to cover early problems – right choice of subject / level of expectation / contact with staff that were unfamiliar to them.

Is it possible to have an informal parent/teacher meeting?
Contact to teaching staff via email / these still not available on website

NCF said pupils will take time to settle / no real indication of progress until first order grades.

Work continues on the Staff Parent Portal and this should make access to information about subject enquiries much easier / quicker.

2.2 Use of Web site / emails

NCF Recently there has been some problems with WCBS system. All are working hard to sort this out. Grades should soon be sent via email to parents – with just a few posted.

New Parent portal will enable parents to 'interrogate' system more fully to track academic progress and to contact teaching staff – although initial contact should still remain with relevant House Staff – who would then pass on. Because of the complexity of this system, it will be Sept 09 before it is on line.

Staff email should only take place via their School email address @greshams.com as a matter of internet safety and for professional reasons. Parents would like the staff email addresses on the website (these will be published and accessed through the Parent Portal, to prevent a deluge of spam).

G Scoular – reported some problems with access to departmental pages that was currently causing problems for some pupils. NCF said this matter was raised in School Forum and IT support was already investigating - hopefully this would be sorted quickly.

2.3 Life Skills programme

NCF/ SR - A new programme combining PSHE / Life skills is currently being developed for implementation in 2009. Mrs C van Hasselt has joined the team developing this and information and points of view are being sought via a questionnaire from the 6th form as to content that they would like to see included.

2.4 School Calendar and Advance dates

G Sampson – raised issues of information on planned school events. The new calendar and advance calendar available on the website is very useful. Would it be possible to include information on planned events in more detail e.g. D of E kit lists / Pre season training / Course – events that would impact on parent's planning for travel and holiday bookings as these are often made in advance of publication of information.

3 Any Other Business

3.1 Food: Letter from Parents

Letter sent to Parent Members: In outline – Parents remain concerned over the food provided – that the quantity is not sufficient, particularly at tea / quality, although improved, not all pupils seem to have access to the full range on offer.

NCF – Catering budget is constantly reviewed and hopefully the Govs will approve budgetary changes for the coming year. School's perspective there is great concern over the amount of food that is wasted by the pupils.

The issue of portion size was also raised at School forum and NCF will approach Mike Strong to discuss the issue with a view to allowing a more flexible approach at the serving points. PG – discussed the position of school suppliers and menu choices being investigated in order to save money through consortium buying.

NCF – Mike Strong has many years experience in the field and the school already uses bulk buying facilities.

3.2 Redevelopment of 'Dave's Diner'

NCF reported that the School is still keen to develop this area and are looking at a range of possibilities. However, before any major changes can be made some capital expenditure would be needed

on the fabric of the building. NCF – noted that the range and nutritional quality of food served in Dave’s had slipped back somewhat and this problem was to be addressed. The School realises that it is a very important facility for the pupils.

3.3 Open Days for Prospective Parents

GS\MW – Concern was raised over the numbers at some of the open days. NCF said the 3rd form entry Open Day this year had to be split because of increased numbers and accommodation for lunch. The first day was mainly attended by applicants from Preps School’s other than Gresham’s and the second by our Prep. The general feeling was that both had been successful, but one much quieter than the other. SR from a House perspective the smaller numbers did allow House Staff to meet and greet parents on a more personal level and felt that this was beneficial to those who did not know the school very well.

6th form entry – was for external applicants for Scholarship only and did not include any internal applicants.

3.4 Pupils Leaving School – exit information

The question of pupils leaving at the end of 5th form was raised and if the school asked for any feedback to establish reasons. NCF – Headmaster and House staff would be aware of the main reasons.

3.5 Cycling

MW – had been asked to establish if the school had a policy requiring pupils to wear cycle helmets when cycling to school. NCF/AS In the senior school there was not a rule that helmets must be worn but all children with cycles were encouraged to do so; this was a requirement at the prep school. Meeting closed at 7.35pm

Date of next meeting: Tuesday, 3rd March 2009

Staff/Parent Forum Members

Please contact your representative should you wish to forward your views or comments:

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