

Minutes of Parents and Carers Forum 11th February 2019

Many thanks to all the Parents and Carers that came along to our forum just before half term. We had three main items on our agenda;

- continuing discussions around our vision and values
- uniform changes
- discussions regarding safeguarding

In addition, we had a session answering more general questions that had been emailed into the College before the meeting and then an opportunity for parents and carers to ask senior leaders any individual questions they might have.

Vision and Values

The Forum started with a lively debate about what the values and vision for the College should look like. Following on from the gathering of ideas at the last meeting, parents and carers were invited to sit in small groups with a member of the leadership team at each table to take part in a “Diamond 9” activity. This asked participants to sort out various statements that had been formulated on their ideas into a rank order. This was then followed by a debate around the importance of student happiness versus the importance of results and how could we all work together to achieve both. The results of this activity were then collated and will feed into the wider consultation that is currently taking place with students, staff and Governors about the College’s vision.

Safeguarding

We then moved on to discussing safeguarding and, in particular, the school’s recent visit by OfSTED to review our safeguarding procedures. We went through the very positive OfSTED report in some detail including the action points resulting from the visit. We are very pleased to report that the College’s safeguarding procedures were effective and that parents and carers can now be assured that this judgement is based on a very rigorous and robust inspection consisting of four inspectors over two days and an evidence base that included speaking to students, informally and formally, carrying out lesson observations, reviewing our safeguarding procedures, looking at risk assessments for individual students, examining trips and visits we had undertaken, fire evacuation procedures, behaviour logs, speaking to staff to ascertain their knowledge of safeguarding and looking at other provision such as REACH, Lesson 42 and off site provision. Some of the comments in the report included:

Many sixth-form students spoke of how they stayed on at school because they have strong support. They appreciate the safety of the school.

Pupils behave well around the site and in lessons.

Seeing several hundred pupils cross the bridge between the two sites at lesson changeover, in an orderly way, is testament to the understanding of appropriate behaviour protocols.

Staff have a secure knowledge of the recent updates in ‘Keeping children safe in education’, 2018, especially peer-on-peer bullying, the ‘Prevent’ duty and issues such as female genital mutilation.

The school’s internet safety procedures are exceptionally strong.

Leaders’ monitoring of health and safety in its widest remit is a strength of the school.

The leader of disadvantaged pupils and the special educational needs coordinator are working together to ensure the safety of any vulnerable pupils.

Risk assessments for trips and visits are comprehensive. Staff tailor the trip according to pupils' needs. They provide one-to-one support when necessary so that every pupil can go.

The individual health and care plans and the education, health and care plans are comprehensive in describing what risk assessments and support need to be in place.

Students in the sixth form have effective plans that provide additional guidance regarding post-18 options until the age of 25, which is correct practice.

Skilful teaching assistants support pupils with SEND.

The communication with alternative provision has been exemplary.

Teaching is strong in religious education and pupils spoke of their enjoyment of the learning undertaken. Students in the sixth form receive good PSHE information.

A new leader of the personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) was appointed last year. There has been an overhaul of the curriculum. Pupils and staff appreciate the changes.

Careers guidance is effective in the main school and the sixth form.

Students receive a breadth of information on education, employment and training opportunities which satisfy the range of abilities. Sixth-form students have an effective tutorial programme which is an online reporting system.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that leaders and governors hold a strategic view and relentlessly monitor the impact of their plans, policies and practice:
 - to improve the quality of education and attendance of the most vulnerable pupils in the school
 - to improve attendance overall and reduce persistent absence, including in the sixth form, with more urgency.
- Leaders of the sixth form should ensure that teachers embed diversity and equality in their teaching to re-enforce students' understanding of working and living in a wide range of communities

The report then led to a discussion around incidents that happen at school very often being blown out of proportion by rumours which are then posted on social media but ultimately turn out to be false. It is fair to say that the Headteacher expressed some frustrations that such posts about possibly one or two individuals receive far more interests than posts about our Year 8/9 boys being national tennis champions or our Year 10 girls reaching the final 16 of the English National Football Cup or our production of Les Misérables and the various outstanding music concerts, dance shows and art exhibitions that we produce.

Uniform changes

We then discussed our proposal to move to a single grey pleated skirt for girls as well as providing the same choices for girls and boys in grey trousers as we currently offer. This would apply to students in all years from September 2019. There was a widespread consensus that this would be very positive and that it would make for a lot less arguments with daughters about what was

acceptable as well as removing many confrontations with students about the appropriateness of their skirts.

Generic questions

We then moved on to discussing a range of more generic issues which had been raised by individual parents and carers which included:

Lunch queues – we are aware of this and currently short staffed due to illness but will shortly be back to full strength.

Class Charts homework being inconsistent/too many negative points being awarded by some staff – we accepted this and as will the issue below we have a working group of staff working on trying to improve this.

Parents evening – frequency and timing - this prompted a lively debate about how effective parents' evenings were and whether we should move to electronic parent booking. Some were for this but others who had used it had reservations. We also discussed how parents' evenings had to be spread across the year.

PSHE time – we agreed here that we would like to give more time for PSHE (Lesson 42) since it provided a valuable experience for students.

Individual questions

There was then an opportunity for parents and carers to discuss individual questions that they might have with the Senior Leadership Team.

Thanks again to everybody who attended, and we look forward to meeting you again in the Summer term.