

Minutes of the Parent Forum held on Thursday 22nd November 2018

Attendees:

Mr Chris Lee (LEC)	TGAS SLT
Mrs Chloe Maisey (MYH)	TGAS Staff
Mrs Pauline Brett (PB)	TGAS Parent Governor
Mr James Tole (JT)	TGAS Parent Governor

Apologies

Julia Creaton (JC)	TGAS Parent Governor
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Agenda Items:	ACTION
All items discussed were raised by parents.	
Matters arising from previous Parent Forum (30/11/17) None.	
Introductions PB opened the meeting and introduced herself and JT as the new Parent Governors. PB gave apologies for JC, the other Parent Governor, and then welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions were then done followed by a short explanation of the Meeting Ground Rules.	
Pre-year 7 Summer work booklet Q: Feedback was given to LEC on the Science element of the Summer work booklet. It was felt that some of the content was too difficult for Year 7 and it was very long, with circa 13 questions, presenting a significant amount of work for the pupils. Parents were also unclear if all questions needed to be answered and whether the work had to be handed in. Feedback was however positive for both the Maths and English. A: LEC thanked the parents for the feedback and agreed that if the experience had not been positive, it needed to be addressed for future use. ACTION: LEC agreed to feed this back to the science department to ensure this was addressed for the future and to report back to the Parent Forum on proposed changes. This has now been fed back to Science and the Year Champion for future consideration. Additional note – this booklet was optional for students and SLT agreed to make this clearer for next year to avoid any unnecessary anxiety about completing the work.	SLT
Year 8 lunch scheduling Q: Concerns raised that lunch queues were very long and for those at the later sitting, the options were limited with catering staff often clearing away while pupils were queuing. A: LEC covered a number of points in his response: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A staggered lunch system was in place – 12:15-13:00 and 13:15 to 14:00.• Queues can be quite long while pupils wait to get into the restaurant but once inside, they split into smaller queues, depending on the food choice pupils wanted.• The school have a 1% waste target so to minimise waste the catering staff will not overcook. There should however always be sufficient food. The catering team keep a record of all waste food and this shows that a variety of food is left over at the end of both sittings.• It was recognised that the catering staff do start to tidy up at 13:45 and that the pupils could see this as the restaurant is closing and/or no new food would be cooked. LEC confirmed however that food is still available and if required, can be cooked.• LEC confirmed that he had spoken to Mrs Smith about the early tidy up and how this might be perceived by the pupils. As a result, new signs will be put in place to make it clear to pupils that food is available up to 14:00 and to encourage them to ask if something they want is not available. It was also agreed to remind the catering staff to remain open through to 14:00 and encourage pupils to enquire if they are unsure if food is available UPDATE: The catering team have been directed to ensure this message is clearly communicated.	

<p>A request was also made at the meeting to investigate whether individual prices could be published both in the restaurants and also on ParentPay. The former would allow pupils to put a value to the food they are choosing which was felt important in the personal development of taking financial responsibility. Putting individual prices on Parent Pay would allow parents to see the cost of individual food items.</p>	
<p>ACTION: LEC agree to investigate this on behalf of the Parents. UPDATE: Individual prices will be advertised, as agreed by the catering team.</p>	LEC
<p>Availability of Coffee at the Academy Q: The Parents wanted to acknowledge the great work that the school were doing to raise Mental Health Awareness and in particular the fabulous work Mrs Guck was doing. Given this focus, the sale of coffee at school seemed counter intuitive given the well-publicised effects of caffeine. A: LEC confirmed that there were hot vending machines and these do sell coffee although majority of sales are hot chocolate and tea. That said, the school has a policy of no energy drinks and therefore it was a fair challenge in respect of the sale of caffeine in coffee.</p>	
<p>ACTION: LEC to feed this back to the Head of Catering for the Trust and report back to the Parent Forum.</p>	LEC
<p>Homework Q: There had been some observations made by parents that homework setting was inconsistent. Examples were given of variation in the volume and type of homework given for different pupils in the same subjects. There also seemed variation from one year to the next i.e. parents seeing differences between eldest and youngest child for a particular year group. This was leading to confusion in the school’s homeworking policy and what pupils and parents should expect. A: LEC set out some of the key aspects of the school’s homework policy, key points covered were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school’s policy doesn’t prescribe a set amount of homework. • Homework is set where it is meaningful. • The school’s assessment policy states that over a half term, there should be a suitable amount of opportunity for low stakes tests, more substantial tests that create formative feedback, and universal homework. The frequency of universal homework is set by the Subject Lead based on the particular unit and year group. Q: An example was given of one parent with twins with one child coming home with lots of modelling homework and the other without for the same subject. Was this normal? A: One reason for this may be that one teacher gets through the work quicker with one group and so embeds it in the lesson, or one teacher feels the class need more practise or support at a particular aspect and so sets more. Whilst key homework should be the same, the diet of homework over a half term might vary student to student dependent many other factors. Q: There was some feedback on homework not being loaded onto Kerboodle and also of homework being loaded onto Show my Homework during half term. LEC was asked for clarification on the school’s policy for the upload of homework and notice periods of homework. A: Homework should be set in class and the school’s policy is to upload onto the systems that same day (both on Kerboodle and Show my Homework). Clearly this has not happened in this instance and will be down to human error. On the item regarding homework dropping into Show my Homework during half term – this should not be happening as homework should be set electronically on the same day it is set in class. LEC confirmed that no homework should be set with 24 hours’ notice and noted the importance of pupils completing their planners to ensure they had their own record of homework and submission dates.</p>	

<p>Q: Some parents felt the volume of homework was too much, often totalling 5-6 hours during the week. With the emphasis on Mental Health it was important pupils were not overloaded with work outside of school.</p> <p>A: LEC acknowledged the need to be mindful of pupil's well-being but felt the volume of homework should be manageable. He recognised that there was a lot of work required of pupils but this was being driven by the heavy curriculum not down to poor planning by teaching staff. Generally the curriculum is more challenging for teachers and pupils alike, despite the 3 year GCSE curriculum with A-level standard work coming down into GCSE. If parents are concerned then LEC encouraged them to talk to the school.</p>	
<p>Reports</p> <p>Q: There was general confusion by Parents of the recent pupil assessment reports and how meaningful these were. This was a subject discussed regularly by Parents and an area they felt action was needed. There were a number of observations covered in this section of the meeting by Parents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of clarity around what the report was telling parents about their child, particularly what was meant by Proactive vs. Reactive pupil. • What is the End of Year Target 11 on the assessment report and why has this changed for some pupils. • How Parents should be using the report alongside other assessment information in student exercise books. • Section B reports in pupil exercise books not always completed so difficult for Parents to discuss progress with the child with this report alone. • Timing of Parent Evenings was not clear and navigation on web-site was often long winded. • It was however felt that generally the pupils understand pupil assessment and how to use the reports. Feels like parents are struggling most. <p>A: LEC summarised the above feedback into 2 areas; Pupil Assessment and Communications. PB spoke about a proposal discussed at the pre-meet to improve the information on the Curriculum section of the web-site. The suggestion being to split the information by year group and subject matter so Parents could more easily see what was upcoming for their child in any given subject. LEC highlighted that the Psychology site was a good example that could be adopted by other subjects.</p> <p>LEC responded in the above points, in summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents evening dates are shown on the calendar section of the web-site and are at the same time each year, dates varying by year. He did recognise that currently the dates can be found by navigating month by month through the calendar and perhaps a simple timeline by Year made available on the web-site would assist. As a school, we feel using the email notification system to inform parents of upcoming parents evening works well but will seek to communicate this via Year Champions and email this to parents. • Some parents had some concerns regarding the definitions of reactive and proactive. LEC clarified this is not to do with behaviour but to what extent the child engages with the work – Do they finish work to a high level? Do they ask questions? Do they act on feedback? Do they do additional work or reading? We will reflect on the assessment sheets as an SLT team. <p>It was felt a number of actions could help improve Parent understanding pupil assessment, how to use the various reports and their role in the process:</p> <p>ACTION: LEC to work with the school to consider what additional communications/support can be given to Parents. This may be a combination of reviewing the messaging on the current assessment reports as well as looking to use existing Parent events to improve understanding. When discussed with other member of SLT, the feedback from other parents is that they wanted more information, not less, and so this will be directed to the member of SLT coordinating Assessments to action as they see fit.</p> <p>ACTION: LEC to organise publication of a simple timeline of key events/dates for Parents/Pupils by Year Group on web-site. UPDATE: These will be done through the Year Champions.</p>	<p>LEC</p> <p>LEC</p>

<p>ACTION: LEC to check why the Year 11 target had changed for a number of pupils. UPDATE: The target grades are created by FFT data. This is a projection based on the previous cohort, or the same starting point at Key Stage 2, and how they achieved at Key Stage 4. With most subjects going through the 1-9 system for the first time last year, the projections this year changed slightly on the achievement of the previous year. We are reflecting the wording to promote this is not a school target, merely an estimation based on national performance.</p>	LEC
<p>ACTION: LEC to add explanation of Year 11 target on the Assessment Report template. See above.</p> <p>Additional note – there are explanatory notes on the progress reports which will clarify some of the points raised. Better use of parent portal to remind parents about these notes and what to expect when the reports are released would be useful.</p>	LEC
<p>AOB</p> <p>Q: Feedback that some older pupils are pushing in front of other pupils at the bag store. A: Staff should be responding to this. There is a queuing system and generally the school is very proud of how well the system works but it can get busy and the staff handling the bags will have backs turned to the queue at times. That said, there should be a member of staff monitoring the queue.</p> <p>Q: Why are there no locker rooms near the PE Hall? A: The school has decided to invest money elsewhere but allowances are made for travelling to and from the changing rooms.</p> <p>Q: What is the current staffing situation in respect of supply teachers? Have things stabilised in Science staff given the challenges last academic year? A: There had been 2 supply teachers, one covering a staff illness in History and the other covering Science. Currently there are no temporary staff providing cover at the school.</p> <p>Q: Why has Football Club been cancelled so regularly? A: It wasn't clear why this was happening. School clubs can be cancelled at late notice, normally due to the weather conditions, but it is unusual for them to be cancelled regularly. ACTION: CM to get more information for the parent concerned.</p> <p>Q: How is the building work progressing? A: The building work remains on track for what will be a 2 year programme.</p> <p>Q: Can pupils just drop into the extra-curricular activities or will they need to go on a waiting list? A: Pupils should be able to just turn up on the day (3pm) and join in. It is worth checking with CM as some activities may be subject to a waiting list.</p> <p>Q: What the process is for those who completed Bronze in the summer to get their certificates? And whether Silver is planned, if so when? A: We are currently in the process of confirming the eDofE reports for their activities (skill, physical and volunteering) and finalising and uploading the expedition reports. These will then be approved and certificates distributed. It is imperative that students have fully uploaded their profiles on eDofE in order to have this approved and award completed. If they have any issues regarding this they should come and see Miss Johnstone to gain their log in details to upload information. Regarding silver DofE, information will be sent out at the start of the next term.</p> <p>The parents wanted to extend their thanks to the staff representatives of the meeting. The meeting closed.</p>	
<p>Date of Next Meeting TBC</p>	