



NON VERBATUM MINUTES FROM PARENT VOICE MEETING
Monday, 3rd October 2016

Date of Meeting at Valley School

THOSE PRESENT:-

Staff

Dr. Smith Executive Principal
Mr. Cavill Vice Principal
Mrs. Gill Associate Executive Assistant
Mrs. Parkin Learning Manager Y11

Parent/Carer/Student

Vicky Celoleskaj – Lucas Y7
Tim Gladman – Toby Y9
Sue Yates – Jack Y9
Emma Rounce – Lenny Y9
Melanie Elshaw – Morgan Y8
Sherly Gibson – Samuel Y8
Denisa El Akkad – Rosanna Y7
Michal Stankiewicz – Natalia Y7

Introduction made and all present welcomed by Mrs. Parkin to the first sole Outwood Academy Valley Parent Voice meeting.

Minutes and Matters arising:

Mrs. Gill

- **P16 Centre attendance** - All students are now in the Post 16 Centre at all times. This has been beneficial to all Y12 students, increasing their results.
- **Letters home** – As you can appreciate students at P16 are 16–18 years old, therefore, we expect them to take any correspondence home. Should you have a particular problem please do not hesitate to contact the P16.

Dr. Smith

- **Results** -We have had record breaking results, 85% of students achieved A*-C in English and maths which places us in the top 5% of schools in the country.

Mrs. Parkin

- **Leading Parent Partnership Award** – We are holding a Year 7 parents information evening on Tuesday 18th October. This will give parents the opportunity to learn more about how the Y7 curriculum is taught and the strategies we use to support learning. It will also provide parents with an opportunity to ask any questions now that their child has had time to settle into the academy.

Parents/carers put the following points forward for discussion:

1. Can you explain why the Ebacc percentage is lower than other results?

The Ebacc is made up of 5 GCSE qualifications, English, maths, a foreign language or a humanities subject and two sciences. We do not insist that students aim for the Ebacc as it is not always appropriate, for instance, if a student wanted a career in the arts, their option subjects would be drama, art, music and this would not allow for further options (humanities and a foreign language).

2. The Parent Voice minutes from the meeting 19th May 2016 have not been posted on the website. Apologies this will be looked into and they will be added to the website.

3. There is no Praising Stars calendar on the website. Also can parents who are not invited to see staff still come in to get an update on their child's progress during parents evening.

We will ensure the dates for Praising Stars are uploaded without delay. Teaching staff indicate on the Praising Stars© sheet if they wish to meet with parents for their specific subject, however, all parents are welcome to make appointments to see their child's teachers if they wish.

4. Could curriculum revision topics be put on the website, as this would be a good way to for parents to support learning. Also, if parents knew the curriculum, this would allow them to purchase the correct revision books to support learning. Also would it be possible to be notified of topics to be covered especially in relation to life/science subjects and sex education, as some students may not be ready for this or their religion does not agree with this.

Updating the curriculum page on the website is ongoing and we hope to have it completed soon. At the moment we are in the process of revamping the whole of Year 9 new GCSEs. Once this is completed we will post a breakdown of subjects and syllabus.

5. Can you explain how subjects, set students.

Subject sets are either determined from student levels obtained at primary school or through faculty coordinators after October Praising Stars, apart from languages which has only two sets, one high and the other lower.

6. Who decides trips, e.g. Austria skiing. Would it not be better to go to a country to develop language skills.

When it is a leisure trip for students, then the member of staff taking the trip decides on the country, we have not as yet planned a trip to Spain.

7. Despite being told that there would be regular updates from staff on the Y8 Kingswood residential. Communication didn't happen which caused parents to worry. Parents couldn't also make contact themselves as students were not allowed their mobiles.

Unfortunately, this is due to lack of network reception but staff do try to 'Tweet' but if this is done it is in their own time outside school hours. We don't allow students to take mobiles as we want them to engage fully in the activities and not to be distracted by their phone. Also students can sometimes by contacting home say something that causes a parent to worry. If there are any problems we would always contact home but what we normally say is no news is good news

8. A parent commended Outwood Academy Valley by stating that the transition was first rate, "my son has settled here very well, he first went into the Bridge then into mainstream without any problems". However, some parents of Y7 students felt that more could be done to help parents.

We recognise that the culture of secondary school is very different to primary and the contact with

class teachers is often less. In order to help our parents feel more involved and help them with the transition, we are about to start an Y7 Information evening as we already do for Y10 & Y11 and letters should be with you shortly.

9. A parent raised a concern regarding enrichment and students have sometimes arrived at the class and there is no club.

Apologies were made and a commitment to speak with staff regarding enrichment was made. However there are a number of enrichments the students can go to if one is cancelled at short notice.

10. Higher ability students appear to be going over the same things, would it be possible for these students to move forward onto a different topic.

This is not easy when you have a class due to mixed ability students, however, we do stretch all students to achieve their potential. If you have any specific concerns please speak to Learning Managers who can liaise with staff and ask them to contact you to ensure any parental concerns are addressed.

11. I have been waiting for staff to call me back.

Apologies were made – it is not acceptable as all concerns should be responded to. If parents are having difficulty contacting a specific member of staff please make contact with your child's learning manager. Please don't think that you are being a pest to Learning Managers, they will follow your child through their 5 years at the academy and they are always there to support with any concerns or problems. When Learning Managers pass on messages they ask the parent to get back in touch with them if they have not had any contact from the member of staff within 48hrs. Learning Manager will then chase the member of staff or take the concern to a higher level if necessary.

12. Can guidelines be given as to time off for sickness, also concerns raised regarding call parent and school safe.

In answer to the queries, sickness, a student should not return until they are clear for 24 hours. School Safe messages issued, we have taken advice from the Police and have been asked not to divulge specific information. However, we send the text to remind parents to speak to their child about being vigilant when coming to and from school. Assurance was given regarding serious incidences and that if needed, further details would be share with parents. The best advice we can give to students is to be in a group and not on their own and to be vigilant at all times.

13. Lunch (SQID) accounts. What happens if a student hasn't enough money on their account or has forgotten their dinner, would they be still be allowed food. A problem was raised where one child didn't have lunch

Yes students will always be allowed food, a child should never be refused lunch no matter what the reason. Lunch /kitchen staff will allow a student to have a lunch and pay for it the next day. Staff will write down how much is owed and they usually request for it to be paid back the next day.

14. Parental involvement and interaction requested not only through Parent Voice and more than just coffee mornings. It could be talks regarding employment etc.

We have invited employers to join us at the academy, for instance we have representatives from the Army recently and on the 18th October we have invited the Police along. We welcome involvement from parents and are happy to consider any suggestions.. A letter was sent out to parent/carers two years ago with no response to parent talks or involvement. If this was to be a one off then a DBS would not be required but regular visits one would be required. The previously suggested involvement, however, was not a success.

15. What type of PE shorts do we need, only Trutex do not currently have any in stock.

Plain black with no motif they are fine.

16. Are any lockers available for students to hold PE kit/winter clothing/etc.

We do have lockers, but they are very popular and are taken quickly. We ask for a deposit to cover the cost of the key and lockers can be kept until students leave in Y11. The deposit is returned once the key has been handed back in. Often students share a locker with friends. Even without a locker we encourage students to come wrapped up during the cold weather in winter coats and footwear and change on entering the academy.

17. Would there be a possibility of students from out of catchment primary's to engage in transition.

Yes normally the primary school identifies students who they feel would benefit from additional transition in addition to the standard 3 days. They normally liaise with a member of staff (Mrs Ward) and a bespoke package is then discussed. This year we held extra transitional visits both during the school day and via Summer School.

18. What websites can students use to help them with their learning.

Students can log on to MyMaths, Vocab Express for languages and BBC Bitesize, which is also used by teaching staff for planning.

Mrs. Parkin thanked all for attending and hoped the sharing of good practice continued. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, 6th February 2017.