

NON VERBATIM MINUTES FROM PARENT VOICE MEETING
Monday, 27th February 2017 at 4.30 pm

Those Present:-

Staff

Dr Smith Executive Principal
Mr Hanson Vice Principal
Mr Scholey Assistant Principal
Mrs Gill Associate Executive Assistant
Mrs Scott HR Officer/Note Taker

Parent/Carer/Student

Pip Otter – Jasmine Dawson-Otter Y8
Sherly Gibson - Samuel Gibson Y8
Emma Evans – Joshua Constantine Y7
Joanna Wiecek – Klaudia Frymer Y8
Tim Gladman – Toby Gladman Y9
Melanie Elshaw – Morgan Elshaw Y8
Sue Yates – Jack Yates Y9
Denisa El Akkad – Rosanna El Akkad Y7

Introductions made and all present welcomed by Mrs Gill to the Parent Voice Meeting.

Minutes and Matters Arising

Mrs Gill

- Point 2 from previous minutes – the minutes are now on the website.
- Point 3 from previous minutes – the Praising Stars calendar is now on the website. This was queried by a couple of the parents present who said they still could not see this. This will be checked again.
- Point 4 from previous minutes – information is now on the website.
- Point 8 from previous minutes – A Year 7 Information Evening was held in early November.

Parents/carers put the following points forward for discussion:

1. There has been an issue with MyMaths log-ons. Not everyone has got a log-on.
[This has now been done. The Head of the Maths Department has confirmed that everyone should now have log-on details. If there are any further problems, please contact the Learning Manager.](#)
2. Again relating to Maths, a parent raised the fact that she is not receiving the orange homework sheets, these are meant to be sent every week and her daughter has only had one since Christmas. Also, the curriculum books are getting smaller. [This will be raised with the Department.](#)
3. Positive feedback from parent relating to parents evening. She had attended parents evening after receiving two requests to see staff in two different departments and the feedback was very positive. Any issues were worked through and the results from this have been good.

4. Relating to the Leading Parent Partnership Award, this is great but can you explain how parents were consulted on that? In what way has the Academy consulted with parents?

Unfortunately, Mrs Parkin, who has been leading on this, is not in the Academy today to explain this. However, Mrs Gill confirmed that at Portland there were text messages sent out and guidance meetings with parents, as well as parent questionnaires at parents evening and other events. These questionnaires used to be anonymous, however, parents are now encouraged to leave names so that if there are any problems these can be dealt with.

5. Regarding School Safe Texts – how valid are they? It's not that parents don't want to know, but, they are very vague. Is it constructive or is it cultivating fear?

The Academy has a duty to parents to alert them if a school safe message is received. The Academy receives alerts relating to all areas of Nottinghamshire. Only those relevant to the local area are passed on. More detail used to be included in the alerts, however the Academy were asked by the Police to stop sending these. It was decided to send out generic reminders to be vigilant and, as well as texts to parents, emails are sent to all staff to remind students when a school safe alert is received by the Academy. When alerts were not sent out the Academy received many complaints as alerts were received by the primary schools. Conversations have taken place with local primary schools to ensure texts of a similar nature are sent out from all schools.

6. A letter regarding HPV vaccinations has been received from the Health Authority, this states that it is the child's decision to make, legally, as to whether or not they want the vaccination. There is a consent form with the letter. If parental consent is given, does this mean the child can then decide not to have the vaccination on the day even though parental consent has been given, or if parental consent is not given, can the child decide to have the vaccination? Can I have clarity as to who takes responsibility legally if anything were to happen?

This letter is direct from the NHS. The Academy offer the use of the premises and a team of NHS staff come in to do the vaccinations. The dates of the vaccinations will also be confirmed.

7. How are bilingual parents/carers supported at meetings such as the parent partnership meeting and the parent voice meetings?

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to bring an interpreter.

8. Regarding the school planner and what to do if a student is absent on the day of a detention, the student must re-schedule the detention, what timescale is on that?

This should be done on the day the student returns from their absence.

Can this be put in the planner as it is not clear to parents that this is the case.

In the case of a departmental detention, these are re-scheduled automatically for the following week. Students are expected to ask when they return to the Academy, when their detention has been re-scheduled for.

9. The stickers that are put into planners are different to the sample stickers in the Behaviour Policy, the ones in the policy are not the ones being used. The ones in the policy state that it is the student's responsibility to re-schedule their detention.

Each Academy is different, these are just an example. This was on the OAV and OAP stickers previously but there was not enough room to write on the sticker. .

10. Letters in the policy are not the same as those that are sent out, there is a detention letter in the policy but as a parent I have never seen this letter.

Students are given the letter to take home. We find that some students don't take the letters home as they have the sticker in their planner as well.

11. On the OGAT website there is a revised policy, version 6 but OAP and OAV only have version 5.

There is a new version of the Behaviour Policy, as soon as this has been localised, it will be uploaded to the Worksoop websites.

12. Request for improved communication. A Year 7 may not have realised that a detention missed due to illness etc had to be rescheduled on the day they returned to the academy. Rules are not set out clearly, it is in the Behaviour Policy, but not in students' resources. Does school think about how to stop these detentions happening? Thinking of Year 7s and their well being, should there be some leniency?

This is the purpose of meetings like today. We want to hear feedback so that we can learn from it and adapt. The process has evolved over time. We can't have grey areas where teachers are chasing decisions about detentions, everyone is treated the same and keeping the rules black and white keeps everything tight. Students know what is expected of them. The responsibility is given to the students to sort out their own detentions. .

13. Also on the OGAT website there is a handbook which has a wealth of information. This is not on the Worktop sites and it would be really useful if it was, this includes governor details and lots of other information. Can this be put on the OAV/OAP websites?

We will look into this.

14. Is there a higher rate of sanctions for year 7s?

Some year 7 students settle quicker than others. Primary schools sometimes forewarn the academy that they feel some particular students may struggle to follow the rules, however we have some excellent examples of students who have been a concern to the primary school, but after a few months have settled well and find the structure and discipline systems helpful.

15. Sometimes my son has no work to do in detention and sits and reads a book, which he enjoys so the detention is not really a punishment.

The Academy sees this as making good use of the time. The 'punishment' is not meant to be extreme. Students sit in a room for an hour, staff are happy to see students reading a book rather than staring at the walls. Additional reading time is always good.

16. Can you explain the Praising Stars progress, I didn't understand the predicted attainment.

New measures are in place that people won't know about yet, this is the new way that the government are measuring students' progress. We now look at all the GCSEs and take the best 8, and double the English results. 90 would be the top, numbers are used instead of letters. The prediction is that in the future when applying for jobs, employers will ask for the attainment 8 score. Employees will be judged by a number instead of their English and Maths qualifications. Businesses will be able to see at a glance who has the better "attainment 8" score.

17. Can I ask about the recent bad press about Outwood Academy Portland, when someone is reported as having barged into a house to speak to an absent student?

This is not an accurate account of what happened. Whilst we cannot discuss individual students, the Academy has a duty of care and regularly carries out safe and well checks. Nobody will barge into the house. We would only enter a property if there was an adult in the building and only if we were invited in. Sometimes we will go into the house and have a discussion with the parent/carer/student to work out the best way forward. How many days absence would prompt knocking on the door? Every case is looked at individually.

18. When will we receive the Year 8 choices?

Mr Cavill is currently working on this. He has been looking into what is viable and which subjects we can run with. He has been having conversations with students and with parents. The problems are those options that clash/are running at the same time. Will we be able to come in and discuss options if we are not happy? Of course, nothing is set in stone, we are always happy to talk it through.

19. There has only been one meeting regarding the Year 8 residential which I was unable to attend – could this be on the website or have a webinar or something? Sometimes we are overloaded with information and sometimes there is nothing.

We will look into this.

20. The Guided Pathway Evening was brilliant but, I wanted to suggest that it be held a couple of weeks earlier. An options book was issued which raised questions, then there was a meeting with Mr Cavill which raised more questions. There wasn't enough time to read through the information and then have one meeting instead of little meetings in between. Also, the Vocational Education faculty held an open evening on the same night to show resources and there wasn't the time to go and have a look because we were at the Guided Pathway Evening. Also, I have asked if it would be possible for parents to have sight of resources and discuss how to address difficult issues raised in lessons so that we can discuss at home. Sometimes topics discussed in life lessons are taken on board by students and translated to themselves, such as body issues, anorexia etc. These students are at a sensitive age and it would help to be able to discuss at home.

We did make a conscious decision to combine the two events because historically if we have had two separate events close together, parents tend to make a decision to attend one and not the other due to other commitments. There are resources available on the Life Curriculum page of the website which explain what topics are covered each week. If supply teachers are in place, the lesson would not be delivered unless trained staff are available.

21. The VARK learning style leaflet has been issued with multiple spelling mistakes/typing errors.

We will track down who has issued this and rectify it.

22. Was another Parent Governor appointed?

Yes, we have two new parent governors. They attended the last governors meeting.

23. How can contact be made with the governors?

You would need to send a letter into the Academy for the attention of the Chair of Governors and this will be passed on.

24. The after school French club for Y9 is not running any more. The first session had a big turn out and was really good. Students thought it was cancelled because the teacher does a detention duty on the same day. When is the club coming back on again? Is it possible to change the duty rota to release staff with the skill set for running the after school club?

We will look into this.

25. Some other after school clubs, such as art are not always on. Is it possible to check rotas each half term to ensure staff can offer the commitment to keep up with running clubs?

Staff are committed to running the after school clubs. Sometimes cancellations cannot be helped due to illness or other outside factors. We always try to ensure that notes are left on classroom doors with alternatives for students if this is the case.

26. Has the date been set yet for Year 8 graduation?

This is the week beginning 26th June, across three days. OAP and OAV are on the same days, OAV's graduation ceremonies are in the afternoon. There will be a letter coming out to parents soon. Primary schools are involved in this with their Year 6 students coming in to see the ceremony when students from their school are graduating. This is good for them to see and make the connection that it will soon be their turn.

27. Can I ask about Year 8 options? Some courses only run for 1 year, some for 2 years. What happens about the different options at the end of that only 1 year?

It depends on what pathway the student takes. EBAC subjects are now changing to 3 years. There is always the option to take an extra subject if the student is particularly gifted after Y10, it depends on the other options taken. Some students do extra English or extra maths to help with their

grades, or to push further towards an A or A*, some take another option subject. Do the students have any input? Some, we have guided pathways, we try to keep as many doors as possible open to students. As an Academy we also have to think about what the government are doing. Students are encouraged to make an educated choice. Some students might be happy with a grade C and want to take a different subject, it's not always about results. This can be looked at individually and taken into consideration.

28. It is frustrating when homework is sent home and completed but then not checked. This could be upsetting for students when the work is done but not looked at. If we know which department and which teacher this relates to we can pick this up with them as it should be done,

29. Is Kerboodle used in English? I have seen this as a subject on the website. Not aware that English was an option. We will look into this.

Mrs Gill thanked everyone for attending the meeting and for the feedback.

The next meeting will be held on the 12th June 2017.