

MINUTES OF PARENTS' FORUM

17 September 2007
The Willis Room at 7.30pm

Present:

Mrs Carole Aspden	Mrs Helen Murphy
Mrs Rebecca Coleman	Mrs Diane West
Mr Ron Gould	Mrs Judy Williams
Mr Peter Hancock	Mr George Materna
Mrs Ann Bond	Mr Dick Holden
Mr Dean Molyneaux	Dr John Thornton
Mr Nick Rutter	Mr Kevin Giles
Mrs Teresa Sinclair	Mrs Gill Hunter
Mr Mike de Mellow	

Staff Present: TRH, SJM, NGW, DJK, MM

	Action
<p>1 Minutes of the Last Meeting</p> <p>Sport - The Guide to Sport has been distributed</p> <p>Drama – Study opportunities will be provided at Sunday rehearsals</p> <p>Debating Society – SJM will look into this</p> <p>GAP year students using cars for transport: this is discouraged and is not policy. Parents encouraged to check car insurance policy if their child is carrying other pupils</p> <p>Minutes of the meeting approved.</p>	SJM
<p>2 The International Baccalaureate</p> <p>TRH informed parents that there is a confirmed move towards the IB with no known dissent. It will be available to those in current year 10 in two years time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pupils probably choose when they enter year 11 through current interview system and possibly other routes• Question – is it divisive? No, because those operating IB already are half and half state and independent schools• Question – do Universities understand IB points system? There is a UCAS tariff available. There is no evidence that either IB or A levels will give PGS either advantages or disadvantages with regard to offer.	

3 A Differentiated Curriculum in Years 7 – 11

TRH explained that PGS is re-evaluating the curriculum.

Views of parents:

- Why did we choose current system and why are we changing it? Current system goes back at least 15 or so years. Exams and the school have moved on. Inspection confirmed a need for greater variety of options/possibilities which had always been acknowledged in the PGS Development Plan
- Languages: TRH said that the current system needs changes and that PGS is looking into setting for Modern Languages. Also the possibility of taking exams early was discussed and positively received provided it does not add to pressure
- Will other fast-track subjects be available? TRH responded that all is up for discussion. Creative subjects the likeliest.

4 Standards of Teaching and the Elimination of Patchiness

TRH explained:

Pastoral Care: PGS introduced HOY posts to provide further tier of pastoral care. Very effective and tight system

Teaching: Standards of teaching monitored by system of width bands. Each department must stay within the set boundaries

TRH asked for views:

Parents not at all unappreciative of the school's teaching: indeed they sent their children to it largely for that reason. Hearsay was a powerful factor and did not always correspond to facts and statistics. Freak bad years were known in many subjects in most schools. Patterns over time were a surer indicator and PGS had clear regular and stringent measures in place, relating to teachers, not just departments. Parents should always air their concerns: the school sometimes felt it did not hear quite enough of them.

5 The Nursery

TRH explained that the Nursery is now operating successfully and is at its limit of operation. Were there comments?

- Parents like Nurseries to be close to home, even if older siblings travel a long way to school
- Parents of Nursery age children especially value parking
- The PGS Nursery is a top rate provision – there are cheaper Nurseries available.

6 Any Other Business

- **Phone Lists** – have class lists in the JS so why not in the SS? Parents responded that whilst it was helpful it could be seen as onerous and unwieldy. Pupils can do it themselves. TRH to put this, as a question, in the end of term mailing
- **Museum Road Gate** – SJM explained problems of gates at the end of the school day. He proposes that the school exit through the main arch both am and pm with the Nursery being an exception. Parents replied that the school must do what it has to do to ensure safety of all. SJM explained unhelpfulness of City Council with regard to road safety issues. Parents parking on double yellow lines is a perennial problem
- **Mailings** – parents can subscribe to email mailings. TRH asked should we now send mailings by email only – Thursday postings only. Parents responded – what about signatures? TRH to investigate. Parents said this was overall a good idea. TRH would write to parents at half-term to ascertain feeling.
- **School Uniform On-Line** – Bursar explained that he is investigating this option. Parents responded that it would be a problem if parcels were to be picked up when a parent was out. TRH said that the company could deliver to school. SJM said that company would put on name tags. TRH said that PHS uses this system and asked those with friends to canvass opinions. One PHS parent reports that there can be a problem with sizing which leaves the onus on the parents to “pay” for wrong uniform
- **Reduction of fees for last term of 6th Form?** (Long Serving Parents). TRH explained that the fee is for the year not the individual term. PGS seeks to have the simplest possible structure without held over deposits, danger money, cautionary deposits or any of the other tricks of the trade. So, alas, the only way to accomplish this idea would be to raise fees generally, which would be counterproductive.
- **Vote of thanks** – a vote of thanks for TRH was proposed by Mrs Rebecca Coleman: “The Parents’ Forum would like to thank TRH for introducing the Forum. It has proved to be very successful and a helpful addition to the school. Furthermore, the Parents’ Forum would like to express its sincere gratitude for TRH’s hard work and dedication to the welfare and happiness of all pupils.” TRH responded with thanks but stressing that he had not stopped yet!

TRH

TRH

7 Date of Next Meeting

Monday 28 April 2008 7.30pm Willis Room.

Dist: All present
PSF
ERP
LEP
CJD
Website