

Parent Forum Meeting Friday 19 June

Present: Jane Joshi, Nicola Castle, Verity Roberts, Katie Bett, Andrew Morris, Samantha Packer, Simon Barnard

Approval of last meeting minutes

Minutes approved via e-mail so that the pdf could get onto the School website faster.

Follow up of any items from the last minutes:

Crib sheet for Google Calendar – (AM)

Mr Morris (AM) circulated a crib sheet for downloading Google Calendar so that the school dates can be easily seen on a PC and smartphone/tablet.

Class Trip- policy on parent accompaniment

AM reported that there is a difference in Year Groups where parent accompaniment changes from needing a high adult/child ratio to the children being at an age where the ratio is much lower. Problems have occurred where parents have turned up to class trips uninvited and wanted to take an active part in the activity. AM stated that it will be made clearer for the trips where parental involvement is required, and all parents invited will be written to separately with a Parent Agreement so that the responsibilities are clear.

Adjectives – for school Mission Statement

The design for this is being worked on, and someone outside the school is doing this work.

Breakfast Club – report back on Berkhamsted Schools provision (AM)

AM has consulted with Berkhamsted schools about their provision of breakfast clubs. The Potten End Pre-School was not interested due to the changes they would need to make to their organisation.

Berkhamsted Schools used Home from Home or Paws, both of which are expensive. Home from Home will do a club but with numbers at a minimum of 10 and can withdraw if these numbers are not met. Charges are around £6-£6.50 per day, or around £4.50 for a drop-off nearer 8am. Nicola Castle (NC) suggested asking parents if that cost was acceptable, to gauge reaction. AM agreed and will send out a questionnaire to find this out. AM also has spoken to the Vicar about the Church Rooms, as the timing would be before the usual bookings, but Simon Barnard did raise the point that there is little storage for games and equipment. It was agreed that the parents need to be consulted to find out if the terms likely to be given would be acceptable and then gauge whether they are committed to having this provision.

Agenda Items:

1. One question through the parent forum e-mail - Message from Reception class parent - Could messages that go on the class windows or whiteboards also be sent home in book bags. I.E show and tell dates for June. As working parents who rely on others to collect their children may not see the messages in time.

AM has spoken to Mrs Hall and this will be done. Verity Roberts (VR) thought it had been missed off in the first week.

2. Rounders club. – Sam

Sam Packer (SP) advised that following the rounders club of the previous week, there had been some upset. The teams had been heavily weighted with good players on one side which meant a lot of the children on the other team hadn't had a chance to play. Coupled with this, the children had overhead discussions by the teachers about selections for the Rounders Team and those who hadn't got a chance to be involved were upset because

they thought they had no chance. SP stressed that parents understand that the children need to learn about winning and losing, but for a club that the children are going to for fun, would it be possible to ensure the teams are more equally split so that everyone does get a chance to play.

AM responded to say that the Rounders Team had not been selected on that particular day but selections will be made nearer the date of the match. A letter was due to be sent out on 19 June to advise parents. AM did state that any clubs that are linked to teams that represent the school would ideally be non-paying, and that he is keen that good sportsmanship is learned.

3. Dress down day for children whose birthday it is. – Lou

This will not happen. There are too many issues that this would raise (for children whose birthdays are weekends/holidays etc for whom they will not be able to dress up) for it to be feasible.

4. Could year 2 have a trip to Butterfly world or similar educational trip to tie in with their learning – Sarah

AM stated that trips are left for teachers to decide on and link to the work being done. Year 2 have been on a trip to Boxmoor Trust this year. AM will advise Mrs Birch of this point, but hopes that all year groups are catered for.

5. Scooter / Bike park area so the children who walk to school have this option (I thought we had discussed this already) – Verity

Verity Roberts asked if there could be a place where Scooters/Bikes could be left at school in order to encourage parents to park further away, knowing that they wouldn't have to take them back to the car after drop-off. AM stated that space and security are the main issues, as well as taking responsibility for other people's belongings. SB suggested the walkway between the new classrooms and Pre-School which is currently used for maintenance. There is a gate at one end, it's on school grounds and children aren't allowed to use it. AM has agreed to look into this.

6. Do the children have the opportunity at the appropriate age to do their cycling proficiency and if not could this be looked into. – Verity

AM stated that the school is currently looking for a Cycling Proficiency provider and it would be for teaching in Year 6. If anyone does know a provider, please contact the school with details.

7. Competitive sports. Maybe the reception parents aren't aware of any yet due to the children's age. What sports clubs are on offer , rugby, cricket, football, netball, rounders etc – Verity

VR asked what club provisions there are for Year 1, particularly sporting clubs. AM reported that sometimes there is not the uptake for younger year groups (ie when cricket was offered), but that Multi-Skills clubs might be appropriate for that age-group. AM reported that the clubs made a loss last year, partly due to trying to make pricing fair. He also stated that the school are trying to develop sports with Watford (football team??) working with Year 5, Ashlyns Sports Leaders running clubs, Game On doing PE with years 3 and 5 and cricket with years 3 and 4. SB suggested Quick Cricket for younger children and he thought the school might be eligible for grants to run this.

8. Rising costs of school residential trips. Could year 6 have advance notice and an installment payment option to assist family budgeting. (Miranda)

AM reported that Mrs Adams is going to send out a form shortly regarding the PGL holiday for Year 6 next year. The majority of parents had opted for a five day trip, and the school has paid a holding deposit to reduce the cost. Parents will be given the opportunity to pay by instalments.

9. Would it be possible for the children to mark/celebrate Father's day next year, instead of or as well as Mother's day/Mothering Sunday (appreciating time constraints), as this seems to get overlooked each year! Obviously it's too late for this year. (Katherine)

AM stated that Father's Day does not have a service at school because it is not a Christian Festival. However, there has been some information on the CofE website about how recognising Father's Day would be a good idea, and so it is likely that this will be observed in some way.

10. Following on from the e-safety questionnaire; is there enough demand to run a workshop for parents who aren't good on IT security to be shown the basics of how to make their home set up better? (Katherine)

AM reported that one of the questions in the e-safety questionnaire related to this and that 2/3 of respondents did not need help. Those that did asked for Worksheets. AM doesn't feel that he can tackle specific cases as there are so many different internet providers with different settings, but is happy to point parents in the right direction.

11. Please can we be given notice of, &/or sight of the video our children have seen on e-safety and what will be said before hand; as the recent video (shown to 6 & 7 years olds) and teacher comments afterwards, lead to a sleepless night, tears & worries of strange adults (who had pretended to be children) coming to our house and trying to get in. (Katherine)

KB reported that some children had been frightened by a recent talk about e-safety, as a discussion about Madeleine McGann had come up in class. She admitted that it was not linked to anything seen in class, but would appreciate some warning to parents if a sensitive discussion arises that they might need to be prepared for. AM did stress that the children are not shown anything outside the National Curriculum, but the school will try to communicate any sensitive issues that arise in class.

SB did report that e-safety is a huge problem nowadays and social media causes a huge amount of arguments, bullying and aggravation.

12. Do we continue with the Parent Forum if the same discussion points come up again and again (Tracy)

Everyone present at the meeting agreed that they found the Forum useful and helpful in communicating between parents and school. SB suggested that topics discussed and a decision made on them should be precluded from being raised again on the agenda for 6 months, or if a change in circumstance occurs. It was agreed that this was a good idea. Parents asking questions should also be directed to the school website to read previous minutes to see if topics have been previously discussed.

13. Replacement for Tracy for setting agendas each time (Tracy)

As there were several people absent from the meeting, it was agreed that this question should be asked by e-mail when the minutes are circulated.

Any other Business

KB asked whether there will be a Head Boy or Girl for Year 6 as with other schools. AM said that there wouldn't but there would be Prefects. There will be Heads and Deputy Heads of Houses which will change each term. This ensures that most children will be given the opportunity to have a position of responsibility in school. Houses have been promoted in school more and there are House winners each months, with 15-20 minutes extra playtime for the winners as a prize.

Next meeting

25 September 2015 @ 2pm.