



Parent Forum Meeting Minutes

Meeting: **Tuesday 07 February '23** (via zoom)

The key aims of the parent forum are:

- ✓ To discuss parent feedback related to what is working well and areas causing concern, and where possible, to address any issues.
- ✓ To allow parents the opportunity to discuss new ideas that will bring benefit to the children or the wider school community.

Representation	Present	Apologies
Head	Denise Kennedy & Harriet Ridgeway	
Governors	Valerie Gunn	
Chair & Admin	Kate Ashton	
Reception	Katie Luke & Helena Farrington	
Year 1	Nadia Dewhurst-Richman	
Year 2	Priscilla Wulandari	Zoe Taylor
Year 3	Caroline Briffett	
Year 4	Lisa Hale & Alice Harrap	
Year 5	Meg Cripps	Gemma Woodman
Year 6	Tracey King & Verity Roberts	

Agenda

1	Welcome & matters arising from previous meetings
2	Feedback and quick questions to share with the teaching & support teams
3	Quality of school photographs & fundraising opportunity
4	Parking issues and 1 way system out of school
5	Alternating days for parental involvement at school
6	<i>Book Look</i> feedback
7	Father's Day Celebrations
8	SEN Support
	AOB

Matters arising from previous meetings

1. All **feedback arising from the last forum**, shared with the teaching and support staff
2. **New parent forum class representatives** recruited to fill vacancies
3. The poll to year 4 & 5 parents re: **an idea to introduce school ties for year 5 & 6 pupils**, concluded that the majority have no appetite for this (*discussed in July forum*)
4. A poll to review the **preferred communication platform concluded that Facebook** was the preferred platform, with WhatsApp as a close 2nd (*discussed in July forum*). This will be built into the communication approach in the future where possible.
5. A poll to review how many children would require an **after-school provision** concluded that there is a need. A resource to run this was sought both externally and internal. 2 members of staff have volunteered to run the provision in the summer term, with a view to have a supplier fully operational by September. More details to follow
6. The governing body are discussing **Parent Giving** and a message to parents and parent giving contributors is imminent. Funds raised over the past 4 years, have contributed to the new library, books, and new tables and chairs.
7. An Amazon wish list for books has been set up to help parents to know **which books are needed for the library**. This will come out to parents shortly
8. The **gap in year 4 football provision** was due to Game On having insufficient numbers to make it viable to run the club for 3&4 alone and had therefore taken the decision to offer to 1-3 instead. ProFormance Global were able to encompass year 4 into their current year 5&6 football club, with effect from January.

Summary of Discussion & Actions Taken

1. Welcome & matters arising from last meeting		Rolling agenda item
Theme	Agenda & welcomes	
Summary of Discussion	A warm welcome was made to Helena Farrington (Reception) and Valerie Gunn (Parent Forum Rep for the Governors) Ideally, we would have two representatives for each class to ensure that they can cover for each other where a meeting cannot be attended. Vacancies therefore still exist for Year 1, Year 3, and in the summer term we will also be looking for a Chair and administrator for the parent forum. This can be 2 separate roles or combined. The role of the parent forum reps and the full list of class representatives for each class can be found on the parent forum webpage click here	
Actions	1. Reps to put a shout out for the remaining rep positions and request a volunteer for the Chair / Admin of the forum from April onwards 2. Anyone who is interested in learning more about being the Parent Forum Rep for their class, then please message the parent forum on parentforum@pottenend.herts.sch.uk	
2a. Feedback & questions for the teachers & support team		Rolling agenda item
Theme	The Tues 06 December meeting was unfortunately cancelled, however the following agenda items were responded to outside of the forum;	

Summary of Discussion	Mural & reflection area – coming back after October half term the reflection area looked amazing. There are a few leaves still to come from teachers and children, then the mural will be complete.
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House games event – it is great to hear that the 2-day house games were enjoyed by the children, and more events are planned for the spring term.

School football team – thank you to Mrs Sharpling and coach Harry for their commitment and enthusiasm driving the school football team. They are so positive with the football teams and it is so great to be part of a non-shouty school! Thank you to them both for all the extra time they commit to the football teams.

School netball team – this is amazing having the team, and thanks to Mrs Sharpling, Miss Surety, and Mrs Kennedy. We hope more games will be planned before the end of the netball season.

The **Young Writers competitions** is positively received as a great opportunity for the children to have their work published in a book and something they can feel really proud of, but they seem to happen so often it's starting to feel like a money-making operation. Whilst there is no obligation to purchase, when my child comes home so excited to be featured it's difficult not to feel like you have to. The school confirmed that this may take place next academic year however nothing planned more frequent than that.

Use of hand sanitiser – There seems to have been a surge in illness and parents wonder if children are still following the same hygiene principles introduced over the past 2 years during since covid. Children (and adults) are still reminded frequently to wash their hands; however, the sanitiser may not always be replenished as this is very costly to the school. Parents can continue to send a personal hand sanitiser for their child

Actions 1. Mrs Kennedy to share the feedback with the SLT, teaching and support teams

2b. Feedback & questions for the teachers & support team

Rolling agenda item

Theme Review of feedback and questions provided from parents to the parent forum

Summary of Discussion *(raised for Dec forum)* **Choice of vegetables at lunch:** pre-Covid a cold salad bar was on offer with cucumber, carrot sticks etc., however now on some days the vegetables on offer are cabbage and cauliflower which aren't the most appealing vegetables for children. Could a cold salad bar be reintroduced to increase the fruit and veg the children are eating at lunch time. Mrs Kennedy stressed that the school menu to a large extent is determined by the country council meals provider, and by the constraints of the size of the kitchen facility in a given school. Mrs Brasier however has already made some changes e.g., bringing in jacket potatoes on some days, and a further communication of the menu for the summer term will be communicated shortly. Having spoken with Mrs Brasier (the school cook), Mrs Kennedy is confident it will address the concerns raised by the forum.

(raised for Dec forum) **Book Bag v Backpack:** parents questioned whether backpacks could be used in the lower years, rather than the book bags which parents always end up carrying into school. The book bags are perceived to be impractical as they are too small to hold anything other than a book, so result in the water bottle and any additional clothing having to be carried separately (or lost on the way to school). The foundation stage teachers do empathise, however the reason for the book bags remain;

- Ease and speed by which the book bags can be stored in the classroom for refilling with new books etc

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- Ease by which water bottles can be deposited in the box if carried in by hand, rather than young children having to rummage through bags to get them
 - Lack of storage for bigger backpacks, which inevitably would be stocked with items deemed 'essential' by the child (e.g., favourite toy, colouring pens etc)

School afterschool clubs and sports teams we very much appreciate the time and commitment shown by Mrs Sharpling towards the sports teams. I know the children are loving their football, netball and dodgeball. Choir has more than doubled in size and it will be great to see the next singing instalment Mr Street has in store for the parents as Christmas was lovely. The forum requested that the after-school clubs take child care vouchers for payment or part payment in the same way that the PGL and Hudnall trips are able to be funded. This should also become a criteria when selecting future suppliers. Mrs Kennedy committed to the office having this conversation.

The **sharing assemblies** continue to be fantastic, and a valuable way for parent / carers to engage with the school curriculum and their children. Thanks go to all of the teaching team for their hard work.

Positive feedback was given on **improvements in relation to feedback previously given** on the parent forum

- Several parents have commented on significant improvements in the children's phonics and handwriting skills so we thank the teachers for your support in that area.
- Parents have also noted greater levels of communication for which they're really grateful e.g., the Maths Workshop, the curriculum letter and timetables provided.
- There has been an increase in the school printing off homework and sending it home in their books, and this is appreciated
- Teachers need to continue to encourage the children to see the importance of writing

Thank you so much to all the staff (teaching and admin) involved in organising / preparing the children for **Young Voices**, what an incredible experience for the children and parents. It is hoped that this is now part of the year 5 events for future years.

It was brilliant to see the **Friends of School Fair** return at Christmas as this was such a big event and fundraiser for the school in the past. The forum has asked the FoS team how much was raised, and once the final financials are in (e.g., match funding), the team will issue a communication

A huge thank you to all the staff for all their effort for the **Christmas events**. The time taken by staff in organising and delivering the selection of events was greatly appreciated. In particular, we and the children loved the panto trip, author visit and the Christmas show. We recognise it was not an easy month with staff shortages and we think the staff handled it all brilliantly and with smiles.

School Uniform - there always seems to be reminders in the school newsletter about uniform being worn incorrectly. Whilst many children do wear it correctly, Ms Rideway clarified that the school do speak directly to parents whose children are not adhering to the policy, and makes any reasonable provision for those who have mitigating reasons e.g. SEN children, or those children with sensory needs awaiting adapted uniform like Marks & Spencer sell. It was suggested that the school have some photo examples of children wearing the correct uniform (and PE kit) on the school's website, in both branded and non-branded uniform, winter and summer so it is completely clear to parents and children alike what the schools' expectations are. This suggestion was positively received.

Parents have requested more outdoor learning opportunities in the **Wonder Wood** as children have reported missing it and parents also feel it had a positive wellbeing value. Mrs Kennedy confirmed

that the expectation is for Reception class to use it weekly, and other years to have a week each term. Mrs Kennedy also outlined there are other outdoor areas also used to enhance learning outdoors including the courtyard and the playgrounds. The weather is a factor in why this may not have consistently been happening however Mrs Kennedy will remind the teachers.

Parents have questioned the **temperature of the classrooms** as their children say the classroom is 'freezing'. Mrs Kennedy confirmed that there are thermometers in all rooms due to covid requirements, which confirm the rooms are a comfortable temperature. Year 5 may be susceptible to feeling cold when they come back to school with wet hair after swimming on a Wednesday. Whilst the children are not able to use the hair dryers at the swimming baths, they have time to towel dry their hair both at the pool and on the bus back to school. Children are also able to leave on their coats in the classroom if this would help.

There is a perception that the same people are always the only ones given the **opportunity for parents to help on school trips**. Mrs Kennedy outlined that all volunteers need to have an up-to-date DBS check, and more recently the school governors have helped on school trips as this is an ideal opportunity to see the school, teacher and children in action. When a trip is communicated, parents are also welcome to approach the school office with an offer of their help.

¹The **maths workshop** was appreciated by the parents across the years, and it was useful to hear about the approach to the maths in each year and how this continued to evolve (certainly since many of the parents were at school). Parents would welcome a practical hands-on session to learn the methods themselves as they're not all feeling equipped to help their children. A suggestion was made that perhaps some of the videos which the lockdown home learning parents were able to access would be useful ("*that's right ... bar model*"! 😊). The school will continue to look at how parents can feel more confident to support their child.

² It was lovely to be invited back into schools again for all the Christmas celebrations, but it was really disappointing to see how poorly the **community carol services** was attended this year particularly as it's the only collective Christmas activity that the whole school can join in with. Could things be done to help drive more interest next year; maybe a couple of children from each year doing a reading, mulled wine/mince pies, perhaps even change it up and have old school carol singing around the village, and raise money for charity/school etc. These ideas will be revisited when planning for the 2023 Christmas events.

³ Mrs Kennedy will continue to communicate as early as possible re: **strike action**. Where payments have been made for swimming / after school clubs running on those days, a separate communication will be issued directly to those impacted re: carry over sessions, reimbursement as appropriate.

Actions

1. Mrs Kennedy to share the feedback with the SLT, teaching and support teams
2. Communication re: the summer menu to be issued to parents after half term
3. Office to enquire with the afterschool clubs' providers re: taking childcare vouchers
4. Friends of School to issue the final amount raised by the school fair, and a calendar of future events to look forward to.
5. Photos to be taken of children in correct examples of the school uniform, and added to the website.
6. Ms Ford to review ideas for further maths support for parents
7. SLT to revisit the ideas re: community carols in 2023/24 planning

¹ Covered offline outside of the forum due to time restrictions for the agenda

² As above

³ As above

3. Quality of photographs (carry forward from 06 Dec mtg)

Last discussed: July '22

Theme A reoccurring theme on the parent forum has been a growing sense of dissatisfaction with the school photography provided by Pret-a-Portrait.

To gauge a wider perspective, the forum issued a questionnaire⁴ to all parent / carers through the WhatsApp groups. The context given was

We would like to hear your thoughts on the school photos, so that we can continue to select the best provider for these photos in terms of both quality and value for money to our parents

The outcomes of the questionnaire would be discussed at the December forum with a view to supporting the school admin team in their decision over suppliers for the next set of photographs; class group photo (July) & the individual / family photos (November).

It should be noted that currently, based on previous sales by parents, Pret-a-Portrait always give each Year 6 a free class photo to keep as a memento when they leave the school.

The school previously committed to explore other options / providers for the school photography however the next set of photos are already booked in with the current provider.

Summary of Discussion	The forum reviewed a summary of the parent feedback collected through the survey in December. • There was a significant response to the questionnaire, which would make it a valid representation of parent views, with the highest response in year 4 with 59% of children represented. • Around half of parents purchase the initial reception photo (55%), however this drops as the child progresses through the school to around 39% purchasing the individual photos in subsequent years • Downloadable JPEG is the preferred format for the photos; however, the class photo may not be available as a JPEG and is not in a printed size where a frame can easily be found without purchasing this at great expense directly from Pret-a-Portrait • 67% of parents prefer the traditional style of photo (e.g., headshots or standing up straight), and done well 41% of parents are ok with a few relaxed or playful style photos mixed in with the traditional to choose from • Parents scored their satisfaction with the quality on average 6 out of 10, with the comments being critical of the poses which the children are asked to adopt and / or the neatness of the children by the time they have their photo taken. • Parents scored their satisfaction with the cost on average 3 out of 10, however the comments support that many parents reluctantly continue to purchase. • The specific comments on the report are very useful to provide to the current / future supplier, to enable them to better meets our needs.
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Mrs Kennedy shared that in a review of providers, all school photography providers are equally as expensive and all have a similar approach to style. A previous suggestion of a parent taking on the job as a fund raiser for Friends of School is not deemed viable.

If the school are to continue with Pret-a-Portrait, the forum would like to be assured that the supplier have received the detailed feedback re: the dissatisfaction the parents have, whilst reluctantly continuing to purchase the photos for posterity. A forum rep would be happy to meet the supplier to provide the feedback alongside the school office team.

Some ideas to mitigate some of the dissatisfactions were put forward;

⁴ Survey created in Survey Monkey and responses received from 02 - 06 December 2022

- Continue to review other suppliers in readiness for the 2023/24 school year photographs
- Parent volunteers could play a role in ensuring that children are presentable before their photo session
- The school could be opened on a Sunday for family photographs which could be a fund raiser for FoS, and gives more scope to individual families to dictate the style they would like

Actions

1. *Feedback to be given to Pret-a-Portrait with the help of a parent forum representative if required*
2. *Other ideas to continue to be explored at a future forum*

3. Parking at drop off & pick up (carry forward from 06 Dec mtg)	Last discussed: ongoing
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Theme Parking along church road is awful, with usually 3-4 cars now parking on the yellow line opposite the school gates. It's so dangerous, it's a miracle no one has been hurt or a vehicle door crunched. Previous Heads would go out occasionally in a high vis jacket and tell people not to park there and point out the sign and yellow line, and this appeared to work. It is acknowledged that the school regularly communicate about the issue, usually through the newsletter however this is ignored and a face-to-face discussion directly with those parking is required.

Parents have also talked about congestion through the main gate at drop off and pick up, and suggested that a one-way system be implemented, facilitated by opening another gate.

Summary of Discussion The issue with parking is unfortunately not easily resolved without the full commitment of the school parent / carers, taxi companies, and the wider community. There are some frequent culprits and the school and some of the parents have tried to speak directly to these people. These conversations are often met with conflict, and therefore have no positive outcome. On occasion, there may be some legitimate reasons for parking directly outside the school e.g., blue badge parking, however this is not the reason for most of the parking.

Parking wardens have been to the school; however, they have come too late for the issue to be fully observed at drop off. The police have also been involved, however where the parking is not on double yellow lines, they are unable to intervene. As previously discussed, the local counsellor continues to be engaged around the issue with provision for parking.

The FoS money could be used to fund a banner e.g., "Think Before You Park", or investment in the *model children* seen outside of some schools could be looked into, and one of the forum suggested that there may already be some in the school store somewhere. Traffic cones or parking buddy signs could also be put into the spaces at drop off and pick up, however the resource to put these out and take them in twice a day is limited. It was suggested that Mrs Miller (the lollypop lady) could take on this responsibility. All of these suggestions are welcomed however come with a cost or resource associated, and may not serve to be a deterrent as most of the people parking are aware that they should not be parking there, however continue to do so.

The discussion did not return to the suggestion of a 1-way system; therefore, this will be carried over to the next forum.

Actions

1. *Mrs Kennedy to review what resources exist already in the school store room.*
2. *Carry forward second part of the discussion to next forum*

5. Alternating days for parental Involvement (Carry over from December forum)	Last discussed: New Item
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Theme For **events requiring parent involvement**, could the school look at events for spring term and alternate the days they are held. So far, all reading mornings, book looks, FOS sales have been on

Wednesday and therefore I've not attended any. Perhaps they could alternate the dates to fit working parent schedules and some on Thursdays and Fridays too.

Some of the sessions also expose those children who do not have a parent who is able / willing to attend. With more before and after school provision, the demographic of the school may change in the future and therefore more working parents will have their children at the school and not be able to make all the different events.

Summary of Discussion	A survey was done in January 2020 to review the best days of the week for events, however this concluded that there is no single day for all parents and giving enough notice was the critical issue. Hybrid working has also enabled more parent / carers to be participate, and most events are very well attended.
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The school continue to give as much notice as possible of dates, with most dates in the diary for the school year ahead. The forum acknowledged that this has definitely improved in comparison to the past. There will be some events which cannot be scheduled until nearer the time however the school attempt to issue an updated calendar of events before the new term starts and to mix the days when events are held e.g., in the spring term the book look (Monday), reading morning (Tuesday), the parents maths session (Monday), sharing assemblies are always on Fridays.

The forum asked if significant meetings could be held via zoom or recorded and loaded onto google classrooms. This point will be carried forward for discussion at the next forum, alongside the frequency of parental involvement which may not feel inclusive for some children.

Actions 1. *Carry forward second part of the discussion to next forum*

6. Book Look	Last discussed: New Item
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Theme	Ahead of the forum, Mrs Kennedy asked the forum to gain feedback on the book look
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Summary of Discussion	The book looks on Mon 06 Feb was well received and appreciated and valued, the children are proud to show their work ▪ There's a general sense that parents and children value the opportunity for the book look. Children like to show their parent / carer their work and it is good to have the opportunity throughout the year ▪ For parents, it is a lovely opportunity to see what the children have been doing. It's great to share it with them. ▪ If the parent and child can't view together, then children & parents would rather wait to show all their work when they bring it home at the end of the year. ▪ It is difficult to do the book look justice where you have multiple children ▪ There will always be days which conflict with work commitments so please ensure the day is rotated each time
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Specific feedback for the timing of the book look;

Several parents across year groups have commented on the fact that this week's book look was on a Monday when their children were at football club so there doesn't seem much point in going to the book look as their children would not be there to share their books or where parents did go, they needed to then hang around until the end of football club.

In future, days with after school clubs will try to be avoided, however where it does have to be on the same day as an afterschool club, the forum request that the children either go to the after-

school club later, or the book look be open until just after 4pm to save 2x trips to look at books and then collect from club.

Actions *Feedback heard, and no further actions*

7. Father's Day Celebrations

Last discussed: **July '22**

Theme With the recent communication of the *Mothering Event* (17 March), the question was raised again why there is a not an event for fathers / significant males in June. This has been raised before and the reasons given were related to the church calendar including mothering Sunday. In this day and age, children should see dads as equal to mums. Given how many males are attending other school events or are pick up now, the forum is confident that Dads or significant males would attend an event and would appreciate the gift which is arranged by FoS

Summary of Discussion The *Mothering Event* communication stated that the invite was for '*anyone who is significant in your child's life*', and therefore the significant males are also invited. If the event however is intended to celebrate all gender roles in the upbringing of the child, then the name of the event could be changed to explicitly indicate that. FoS would also need to consider the gift for fathers as well as mothers.

Actions 1. *Continue the discussion at the next forum, once feedback has been considered by the SLT*

8. SEN Support

Last discussed: **New Item**

Theme Parents have commented on the lack of a forum in which they can ask questions about anything to do with Special Educational Needs (SEN). This is equally relevant to parents with SEN children, those with undiagnosed needs, or those who are simply allies wishing to know more to help their own children navigate adjustments which others in the class may require.

A request was made that the school have occasional workshops in which parents can come to discuss all things SEN-related?

The opportunity was taken to send a special thanks to Mrs Salamo and Mrs Mitchell for all their support working with the SEN students in particular, and how much the children appreciate them. A special thanks also to Mrs Drane and Miss Surety for always making themselves available to answer questions. Their time and patience do not go unnoticed and it's very appreciated by all the parents.

Summary of Discussion There is a SEN register for identified needs, however at Potten End, we widen this to also work on emerging needs-based provision. In the recent OFSTEAD inspection, the report picked up on this wider focus as a very positive proactive approach. The teachers make full use of the SENCO, TA Assistants, the use of the outdoor spaces, nurture room etc. The school also work really closely with agencies e.g., speech & language, and Dacorum family support.

Mrs Ridgeway highlighted, that the school introduced SEN coffee mornings as well as sessions run by external agencies, however these events are typically not heavily subscribed. There was a suggestion, that each class have a SEN representative so that they can champion and circulate opportunities like this, and also work directly with Mrs Ridgeway to highlight which topics would be of most use.

It was also suggested that a school community could be set up hosted by Mrs Ridgeway (and the class SEN Reps?), which provides a sense of community for SEN parents and allies. This would

create a space for questions to be asked, for discussion of the external and internal support systems, and share their own experiences. It would provide a useful place to get ideas of things that can be done with children, whilst waiting for official assessments to be done (which are increasingly difficult to get and a lengthy process).

An add on could be to have the FoS raise money for the school through providing refreshments for these sessions.

Actions 1. Mrs Ridgeway to consider the points raised

AOB	
Summary of Discussion	Fundraiser for Turkey / Syria - with the recent devastating earthquakes in Turkey & Syria, will there be a fundraising opportunity similar to what was held for the Ukraine? Given that we have Turkish children in the school, this is particularly pertinent. Given the earthquakes were only yesterday, the school have not had the opportunity to consider this yet.

Actions

Next Steps	When
Meeting outcomes to be documented and uploaded onto school website & link posted in that week's school newsletter	Friday newsletter
All actions agreed to be reviewed & executed with relevant parties	Staff meetings, class forums e.g., face to face or WhatsApp
Class reps to share the outcomes with the parent who raised the agenda items, and then the meeting minutes (via a link) on the class WhatsApp group	Class forums e.g., face to face or WhatsApp
Class reps to gain feedback for 'hot topics' before each meeting, and /or parents to use the parent forum email parentforum@pottenend.herts.sch.uk	Next Parent Forum: Tues 21 March '23