



Parent Forum Notes
Tuesday 27th September at 6pm
Breezehill Centre, Sir Christopher Hatton Academy

Present: Rob Hardcastle, Felicity Richardson, Claire Iweka, Bhav Dhanji, Ronak Trivedi, Michaela Austin, Kaye Aitken, Alastair Mitchell, Claire Byron, Colin Hinds, Stephanie Asobo, Osato Rita, Justine Woodbridge, Catalin Matei, Amit Kotecha, Sylvester Asobo Lily Hawkins.

Apologies: Bogdan Casauanu, Simon Cross

Agenda

- Introduction of all
- Menu selection across Trust
 - Colin Hinds (Director of Finance and Operations) to feedback
 - Survey Results
- Uniforms
 - Seasonal Adjustments
 - Cost of Living
 - Update of Second Hand Sale/Primary Support
- School trips
 - Notice
 - Deposit
- AOB
 - School Transport
- Close

Meeting notes

Welcome to the Parent Forum.

Menus

Survey results discussed (as attached) and Primary gap in respondents acknowledged. Some members reported the need to top up despite a FSM allowance or packed lunch provided. VPA rep confirmed they were happy with the choice available.

Queuing up and solutions to minimise this plus current staffing issues discussed by Alastair Mitchell (Co-Principal of SCHA). He added that Year 7's do have a staggered lunch break as they need more time to choose – this has prevented queue delays and the 'Grab N Go' area is not yet open due to staff needs. There are ongoing canteen vacancies available on the website as seeking to fill the roles.

Issues around Pay 360 were answered by Colin Hinds (Director of Finance & Operations). Any further problems, advised to go through to the Finance department for links and troubleshooting now that glitch in system is resolved. There is a need for more information around meal deals as some parents are unaware this relates to hot and cold meals to the value of £2.50.

CH has acknowledged that clearer communication could be made and has proposed sending an email with all information including how children can get a full meal, the rise in the allocated amount to spend, plus the healthy choices available. He has raised that there is a 'duty of care' to provide nutritious meals and poor choices are queried at the point of sale with alternative offered. This is balanced with the understanding some students may bring in a meal and snacks are to top up as opposed to their only source of food for the day.

It was discussed 'rolling over' unspent amounts of Free School Meals due to absence over a set period of time. The Trust operates the canteen with a not for profit model but due to rising costs, breaking even is very difficult. Rob Hardcastle (CEO) has confirmed that the Trust subsidises £40,000 per year to lunch provisions. One parent was pleased to see that there are reduced items which is more cost efficient and prevents waste.

Uniform

Seasonal adjustments to the uniform were raised in a previous meeting and were raised by Michaela Austin (Chair). It was felt that with the new route to exit school each day, appropriate footwear has become a more pressing matter.

CH has confirmed that the Gold Street exit was a trial throughout September. Dark nights and poor weather will be taken into consideration and an email is due imminently to parents regarding the trial. It is aimed that a survey will highlight concerns and provide feedback. Traffic and businesses will be considered. It was raised that some students are running across the main road which may pose a risk, use of the underpass has been encouraged by the academy. The use of the nearby island and more education in class was suggested.

RH reiterated that the law is changing with regards to access to uniform branding and budget - this will be communicated in the new policies to parents. It is of a huge importance that uniform is not a barrier to students coming into school and the Trust will do all that is possible.

Claire Byron (Principal of Oakway Academy) confirmed that they have price matched PE joggers to supermarkets and subsidised the shortfall. It is only requested that the jumpers are branded with a logo.

Lily Hawkins (Trust support) provided an update on Victoria Primary Academy who recently had a 'pre-loved giveaway' following the need raised in the last Parent Forum. This was very successful and will be held again in the next term.

CH highlighted the 'Charging and Remissions Policy' which is available for each academy and expressly mentions that the Pupil Premium Fund and Hardship Funds are available to support families. It is not an invasive process and all parents may apply.

It was raised that if there is a reasonable uniform issue and the academy is informed beforehand, there will not be the usual action such as reflection. There have been problems with the website of the uniform provider and individual items have been sent across several weeks. SWI has confirmed there is on average a 5 week delay though not for everyone. SCHA will support families with individual issues. Kaye Aitken (Director) has encouraged parents to discuss with other parents where there are issues, to allow support and communication.

School Trips

It was felt that Year 10 could benefit from more trips due to the impact of COVID and the lack of previous opportunities – once Year 11 begins it may be hard to schedule trips in around GCSE timetables. Trips are promoted with a very quick turnaround and it was raised that there has not been enough communication with regards to a recent Year 8 trip.

AM acknowledged that there could have been a better system for the Ski trip allocation with the amount of notice given and the timings for releasing the places. AM mentioned that the trip was oversubscribed and apologised that the parents who worked shifts or would have benefitted from the time to budget weren't factored in. He confirmed that learns were made for future trips and highlighted that there are always places held back on trips for those eligible for Pupil Premium to ensure all have access.

It was raised that the Natural History Museum trip ran twice due to high demand – seats drive the trip so if a coach can be filled, it is possible to repeat a trip. A fair ballot system will also be introduced to ensure trips which are very in demand are fairly decided.

A parent member raised that a student magazine or newsletter would be a way to provide notice of upcoming trips, news in the academy and enrichment opportunities - AM confirmed that SCHA will look into this.

Discussion around metrics for twitter and website, it was noted that at Sir Christopher Hatton Academy, top pages viewed are usually admissions pages and trips. Social media is a great way to promote and keep parents informed whilst children are on trips.

AOB

School Transport

RH updated members on a recent issue where a new contractor for coach transport organised by NNC failed to collect a small number of students. The academy provided transport for the week until the issue was resolved and raised minor problems that followed on from this with NNC.

Financial Literacy

Parent members raised that the pressure of school life including branding is building for some students and it would be good to educate students as part of LifeSkills curriculum to prepare for the future including coping after school.

Parent Information

It was raised that some parents would appreciate being informed of the Post16 options available to them to support their children. The use of Prospects, assemblies and lessons to advise students was mentioned but a specific adult focused class was raised. This could include internet security and CCE. A parent offered support from their capacity as an employee with National Rail which was gratefully accepted.

Next meetings for the year ahead:

Tuesday 31st January 23 – venue to be confirmed.

Suggested topics include carry over items, preparation for the Annual Survey of Parents and staffing.

Tuesday 25th April 23 – venue to be confirmed.

Suggested topics could include a review of the report from the Annual Survey, curriculum consistency, sport opportunities and social media/school communications.

Tuesday 27th June 23 – venue to be confirmed.

Annual General Meeting.