Friday 21st April, 2017

Dear Parents and Carers

Re: Discussion points from the meetings with parents

First of all I would like to say a big ‘thank you’ for the very warm welcome that I have received from parents since taking over the post of Head of School. Similarly I am very grateful to all of the parents who attended the meetings on Monday 20th March. There was a really good turnout and I found the meetings really useful, in helping me to prioritise my actions for the coming months.

We discussed a wide range of topics, so our plan is now to look at how these points can be addressed over the next term. My initial thoughts on these topics are written in blue. The topics included:

**Improving Communication**

Parents requested that they be given more notification, where possible, of key events which they would like to attend and whether there are other alternative means of communication other than ‘pupil mail’. This is particularly important for working parents.

The Governors are already exploring how technology can be better used to support this. The school will also work towards setting dates in good time and notifying parents as soon as this has been done. We can aim to set up an annual calendar with key dates of performances, sports day etc.

**Parents’ Evenings**

Parents requested that these would be more private, if there were to be held in the classrooms. It is also difficult for working parents to sign up for the meetings, if they don’t come to school

I am happy for the meetings to happen in a more private space. We will look into a better means of booking in times e.g. sending slips home for parents to show a preference for a time; encouraging parents to call in or to email the office.

**Contact with teachers**

There can be a problem communicating messages to teachers, if children go to breakfast club.

Parents can either leave a message with the breakfast club staff, who will pass on the message, or phone in to the office which is manned from 08.30 am. We will also ensure a pad and pen is available, for parents to leave a written message and a box to put this in. The box will be taken to the school office at the end of the session.

**Homework**

There is not a consistent approach to the setting of homework or the celebration/appreciation of the work done. In the summer term, we will review what homework is set; the quantity and quality of the homework and whether it is age appropriate.

**How to support your children at home**

Parents would like guidance on how to support their children at home e.g. with mathematics and handwriting.

We will start to put together some information sheets on the above topics. These will either be sent home to parents, or put on the school website. In the future, we can also run some workshops for parents.

**Celebrating pupils’ achievements**

There seems to be a lack of a defined point when achievements in class are rewarded and as a result, is there an incentive to work towards gaining family points etc?,

We will review this subject next term, so that we can put together a means of celebrating achievements, so that the children feel there is a defined goal to aim for.

**School meals**

The standard of meals provided by the school should be reviewed.

Currently the meals are provided by Devon Norse. The Trust is looking to take over the production of school meals at some stage in the future, which will give us more flexibility over the menus and more influence over training etc. This has been highly successful in the schools in the Trust which have done this.

**Before school routines**

Parents had mixed views on the current system of the beginning of the school day, in that there are two alternatives to the beginning of the day throughout the week.

Given that the school day i.e. teaching and learning should start at 09.00 am, the days when children arrive in class at 09.00 am, this can’t happen, therefore this needs to be reviewed. It takes approximately ten minutes for children to sort their things and for the teacher to do the register and sort out the school dinners. There is also real value to children being able to spend time in the playground before school. The school is to re-evaluate the current system, taking into account the desire for parents for their children to have a chance to spend time with their friends in the morning; the teachers’ need to complete the necessary administrative morning tasks and the desire to use the beginning of the day before school starts for the children to complete activities designed by the teachers to support their learning and for teaching to start at 09.00 am.

**Behaviour of pupils**

There was a mixed view of the standard of behaviour in the school and the respect that is shown to others. Some parents felt that there is an issue with the respect that some children show to other adults and that some of the older children do not look out for the younger ones. Other parents did not feel that this is a significant issue.

We are already reviewing the current behaviour policy particularly with a view to providing incentives for good behaviour; recognising good behaviour and putting in place appropriate sanctions for those children who do not follow the policy. The teachers are keen for this to happen. It will be shared with the children and parents, so that everyone is clear about how this is to work.

And finally… There were a number of other discussions which have given me food for thought over the next term. If parents wish to discuss any of the above points, or indeed add to them, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

Claire Baillie, Head of School