

Parent Forum Meeting Notes

Wednesday 14th February 2024
5pm – 6pm, via Teams

1) Welcome

Present:

Caitriona Powell (CP) – Deputy Headteacher	Deborah Archer
Gemma Craig (GCR) – Assistant Headteacher	Kate Smith
Siobahn Dowd (SD) – Assistant Headteacher	Lisa
Charlotte Downing (CD) – Governor and Chair of Parent's Forum	Eve Kamau
Sarah Noble (SN) – Assistant Headteacher	Alison Gaillard
Katie Dodsley – Clerk	Catherine Lilley

Around the screen introductions were made. CD introduced herself as the new Chair of the Parent's Forum.

2) Minutes of the meeting held on 30th November 2023

- a) Any matters arising not covered by the agenda
 - Clip on the tie – SN is due to meet with the uniform provider and will update next time.

3) Homework policy, expectations and different methods to complete homework – C Powell

C Powell gave an overview of the review and how students were consulted. Different subjects will set homework that works for them.

Q – how do parents understand better what homework has been set across different platforms? Teams is used to set homework and middle leaders have been asked to add repetitive app tasks to Teams to try and help with consistency.

Q - A parent noted that homework has been a lot better recently, with less emphasis on work on apps.

Q - A parent noted that the feedback they see on work, especially for their child in Y13, appears to be inconsistent. One teacher gives a lot of good feedback, whilst another does not give as much worthwhile input. This does happen in lower years too and it would be useful for parents to be able to see feedback. CP noted that it is tricky for parents to see all feedback as students get a lot of feedback in their assessment books which mostly stay at school. These assessment books are reviewed for consistency and in July there was a book scrutiny with governors where feedback given was quality assured. Another review is planned for March and if any Parent's Forum parents would like to join this review, they are welcome to attend.

Q - are there any guidelines on the balance between written and online homework? CP reviews this regularly and also talks to the students about homework. There are only 4 subjects out of the 10 that use online apps and there has been a move to paper and revision more for homework. There has been a change and parents have noticed this.

Q – a parent noted that their Y7 child seems to still doing online homework. CP noted that it should mainly be for four subjects and she will follow up.

Q - A parent noted that the consequence of a detention for not completing homework has had a positive impact as their child doesn't want a detention.

Q – There were some IT issues and parents missed the online parents evening, what is the schools view on online parents evenings? The school has found that online parent meetings have more uptake and engagement. If there are online issues, phone calls are arranged on an individual basis and issues followed up with. If a parent wants feedback and is unable to attend on the evening they can still get feedback. The school is currently reviewing ways in which it

works with parents. A parent noted that there was an issue with browser settings and some information about settings and usage to go out to parents prior to the parent's evening would be useful.

4) Higher Prior Attaining Students – S Dowd

SD gave an overview and noted that Mr Patterson also oversees HPAs. The school identifies HPAs as students arrive and their needs are addressed by things such as supporting learning with the Teaching and Learning policy, careers programme, learning techniques, providing extra curricular support such as the OOPs and raising aspirations. Students are assessed by SATs, assessments and teacher recommendations and are identifiable on Edulink as 'more able'. Lead Learners are involved with making strategies for the HPAs and there is a focus on exam technique at KS4 as this can be an area where HPAs don't perform as well. The pin drop silence is to help all students focus and closing the gap is about having an ethos across the school about aspirations.

Mr Patterson has set up the Children's University with KS3 where students attend a range of OOPs, HPQ, D of E or Maths Circle and when the bronze award is achieved students graduate at a ceremony in Peterborough.

The Sixth Form have set up the Academic Society, to be aspirational and support with tutoring Y11s. The Society would like more parental engagement as they feel that parents who are engaged will see what learning students are doing and will see what a good experience the Sixth Form is. They want to set up regular quiz for parents and children to compete but will struggle with providing refreshments and generating quizzes. **Action:** All to let Clerk know if able to support.

Action: SD to update next time.

5) Antbullying Update – S Noble

The behaviour team are trying to implement more routine communications as there can be some delays due to lots going on during the school day. There should be a holding text when a concern is raised and then a communication of the outcome.

There was a student survey which showed rates were low. This is positive but the school want even less. A follow up survey showed views were the same or better. There has been a submission to the Antbullying Alliance and all will be kept informed of the outcome.

6) Parent Partnership Award – G Craig

GCR gave an overview and shared the presentation of the award that is being worked towards. The working party has been looking at what it offers parents, what the school does well, any gaps and what it can do to improve. The more parental engagement there is, the better the student outcomes are.

A survey was sent to parents with 152 responses. Information was analysed with answers being split and opposing. An audit was completed and an assessor visited for the initial evaluation, which went well. The school is already green in some categories, especially those linked to the curriculum and policies, with evidence to support.

Some areas for improvement that the school will work on are to make the small meeting room more welcoming for parent meetings and to help parents to help their children more.

Once the action plan is thoroughly reviewed the school would like support from the Parent's Forum to review what has been put in place to improve the red areas. Different parents want different things, so it would be good to get some different ideas. **Action:** GCR to bring action plan with some questions to the next meeting about what support is needed for students and parents. Some departments have already sent surveys out to parents and/or students and some teachers are visiting other schools to see how they engage parents.

Parents noted that it sounds like a great initiative and it would be good to have sessions for parents on resources and tools available. An idea might be to have students talk to parents to get their engagement.

Action: Clerk to send the Parent Partnership Award presentation to the Parent's Forum.

7) Fundraising and Finance Update

Tracy Hill opened the uniform shop at the Y8 Options event and had good attendance. She does struggle to get volunteers to help with the shop and parents were asked to spread the word that volunteers are needed as the much needed shop can only run with volunteers to keep it going.

Action: All to consider options for the shop to be operated.

Q – could sixth formers support? There are a lot of restrictions with students running the shop as there would need to be risk assessments and safeguarding procedures in place with meeting people.

Action: Ask finance for the amount raised and ask the school for an area to support.

8) Items for the next Agenda

AI linked to homework – at a future meeting ask Tom Huggins to come in and talk on how staff using it.

Guidance for staff when communicating with parents - GCR

9) AOB

Q – A parent noted that they struggle with email addresses into school and how to contact a teacher. It was noted that there has been an overhaul of the IT system and all email addresses changed and are now [firstinitialsurname@abbey.college](mailto:firstname@abbey.college) eg KDodsley@abbeycollege. The office@abbeycollege email should be used and any enquiries are forwarded to the relevant member of staff.

Q – It has been stressful trying to support with finding a placement for work experience and this has been the feedback from other parents too. Could the school not contact the regular providers for help or make some suggestions? **Action:** CP to look into the query and consider if Careers could come to a meeting.

Q – Opening a trip for payments at 3pm was difficult for working parents and there were a lot of disappointed children, all should be given a fair opportunity to apply for a place. GCR noted that the school is going to try and create a calendar for regular trips from September which will include the number of places, an estimate of cost and the school will try and look for a fair way of allocating spaces. The SLT are discussing the issues and want to help parents plan. The PE department are aware of how popular the recent trip was and are planning more trips with a ballot system. **Action:** Review in a couple of months as the issue was raised on the survey too.

Q - The school is looking for a new parent governor and any interest should be directed to the Clerk.

10) Date of the Next Meeting: TBC