



## Abbey College Parent's Forum Q&A

Some of the questions raised from a Parent's Forum questionnaire are listed below with responses. Some questions that were received have highlighted areas for discussion at future Parent's Forum meetings. Parent's Forum meeting minutes are available on the website [here](#).

	Question	Answer
1.	Raising aspirations: The academic expectations for children at Abbey College seem to be very low. What can be done to improve this? What can be done to motivate and stretch more able students? Homework has been limited to the summer term only and there was a table of homework set for each year. My son has been set very little compared to this. How will you prepare students in Year 8 who have both missed on a chunk of the curriculum due to Covid, and who have had no expectation of being set homework, to manage the workload in year 9 when they start GCSE subjects? Because of low expectations, there is a fear of being classed by peers as being studious, and this attitude to learning needs to be changed.	We do not have low expectations. As per our communications, allowances were made this year for Key Stage 3 students with homework as many lacked stamina, having spent lots of time at home. Since the Spring, we have increased the demands made on students with regard to homework slowly, so they can better manage homework when they reach Year 9. Curriculums have been adjusted to cover missed learning owing the school closures, and to get pupils back on track. In addition, we are working with students to change the mind-set of a minority in Key Stage 3, who are concerned about being classified as 'studious' by their peers. This will take time and we have seen a marked change in KS4. Events such as the 'Employer interview' and STEM workshops have been put into KS3, and students have enjoyed these. It will take time, but mind-sets are changing.
2.	The maths intervention lessons have been great. Will these sessions continue next school year and for other students?	Yes, they will continue. Covid support will be on a future Parent's Forum agenda. In addition, all interventions are detailed on our <a href="#">website</a> as we have to publish these by law.
3.	What approach does the school have for those more able pupils who need additional challenges to reach aspirations and may find the work too low level?	See answer to question 1. In addition, we will be launching a programme next year to stretch our more able pupils that will be aired at a future Parent Forum Meeting.
4.	Can there be a clear outlining of individual spending for each child who gets additional funding for pupil premium and EHCP?	Pupil Premium spend is published on our website, <a href="#">here</a> . For students with an EHCP, please see Mrs Neal, as parents are directly involved with the creation of these plans.
5.	Can lockers be provided for children? They carry so much in their bags and with them now needing PE kits and footwear this makes their bags even heavier!	Bags compared to pre-Covid, must be lighter as PE kits have always been a constant requirement in schools. However, as PE kits will be required when we return in September, it's important to note that with the introduction of Teams, we no longer ask students to carry textbooks and this will certainly lessen the weight students have had to carry with them. If there are individual concerns, we can put in place a risk assessment for individuals if there is a medical need. Please contact the Welfare Team if you require this intervention.

6.	Can there be a school band if there isn't one already?	This will be discussed with Mrs Carr and Ms Davey. As with many of these types of activities, Covid has put a halt to them and we will have a renewed offer of extracurricular activities when allowed.
7.	What support is there for children with anxiety?	We have the ' <a href="#">Worried? Anxious?</a> ' tab on our website which outlines some of the support we offer. Mental Health will be added to future Parent's Forum agendas.
8.	Thinking about children who are not diagnosed with any particular learning difficulties, but struggle significantly at school, how are they being supported?	This was discussed at the last Parent's Forum meeting and will be covered at future Parent's Forum meetings. Mrs Neal our SENCO will offer guidance and support.
9.	There seems to be a focus on high and low achievers, how are the middle achievers tracked and what can be done to push those students?	The middle performing students well outperform their peers nationally, in fact we achieve within the top 5% nationally. As a school, our focus is on helping our more able boys to achieve in line with the girls, which is the same situation nationally.
10.	What extra services are you offering to help students catch up on loss learning from Covid 19, as the government have said they are allocating schools extra funding for tutoring/summer lessons?	Pupil Premium and Covid Premium spend is published on our website, <a href="#">here</a> . This is updated three times a year to show the impact of our work.
11.	There is anecdotal evidence that pupils are using their mobile phones to take selfies in the toilets. Presumably this is so staff cannot see them doing so. Some schools have banned mobile phones, is this an option?	Phones are banned in school. We will look into this and ensure staff on duty are more vigilant around these locations, without being obtrusive.
12.	Are there extra-curricular activities for SEN Students?	The SENCO will be asked to update the Parent's Forum, highlighting opportunities.
13.	There needs to be more support for children who are bullied.	We have the ' <a href="#">Worried? Anxious?</a> ' link on our website to report any concerns or obtain support.
14.	Why is there a requirement to ask to remove blazers and why are tights required when wearing a skirt?	We have uniform requirements, and it's a standard we expect. Good schools have high standards.
15.	It has been a difficult year, but parents are not receiving enough feedback on the SIMS parent app, will reporting increase so that parents can see where children might be behind?	As assessments are resuming, the schedule of reporting to parents will resume three times a year. This will be an item on future Parent's Forum agendas.
16.	Will children's aspirations be increased to include PE and getting back to playing team sports?	This was discussed at a previous Parent's Forum meeting. A Sports Academy has been launched for year 8s, designed to stretch the most able sports students.
17.	Why are children given reward points but not told of them?	Students are told, but we will remind staff to ensure students are informed when rewards or sanctions are issued. This will be on a future Parent's Forum agenda.

18.	Who is the SENCO and how can they be contacted?	Debbie Neal - <a href="mailto:Debbie.neal@abbeycollege.cambs.sch.uk">Debbie.neal@abbeycollege.cambs.sch.uk</a> SEND information can be found <a href="#">here</a> .
19.	How can you raise the aspirations of your students and their needs when there is a strong focus on the tell system?	We have firm standards. As a school, our performance is in-line with the top 20% of schools nationally. In order to maximise time learning in lessons, we simply do not accept disruption and therefore have simple rules. Occasionally, some students require reminders and are: asked, then told and if it persists, removed from the lesson so that others are free to learn. We think three reminders, of which a 'Tell' is the 3rd reminder, is reasonable. This system has been externally reviewed, including with Ofsted, who have clearly stated that the majority of students state that classroom behaviour is improving. With any system, we always need to work with staff on ensuring its consistency and will continue to do so. In addition, some students require additional support and tutors work hard with those students to get them on track.
20.	Is there a cycle safety course to enable students to cycle to school, as there is at primary school?	The PE department will be asked to see if this is available to secondary schools.