

**Abbey College, Ramsey - Parent Forum**  
**Minutes of the meeting held Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021, 4.30pm**

**1. Welcome**

All were welcomed and introduced themselves. The following were present:

Andy Christoforou (ACH) – Headteacher

Debbie Neal (DN)

Janet Oswell (JO)

Cheryl Greyson (CG) – Chair

Katie Dodsley (KD) – Clerk

Amanda Bakewell (AB)

Claire Eeley (CE)

Catherine Lilley (CL)

Gemma Lowely-Smith (GLS)

Zara Matthews (ZM)

Sarah Whalley (SW)

CG reflected on the past year and on lockdown and noted thanks to ACH and all the staff for all of their hard work looking after the welfare of the students.

**2. Minutes from the meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

The minutes from the meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> March were agreed.

Matters arising

A parent survey about a staggered start in September was carried out and there were 111 responses, which is a positive response. 89% agreed with a staggered start and this was approved by the Governing Body. This is a great success for the Parent Forum and it is positive that the Y7s will have two solid days of quieter time at the beginning of their secondary education to settle in.

**3. Progress since reopening**

Emotional wellbeing – DN reported the following:

- Y7s, Y8s and Y9s have settled well, are resilient and have enjoyed being back with their friends. The higher year groups have struggled with the uncertainty.
- Some are relieved to be having the two week Easter break.
- Some students who were in school through lockdown have struggled with the school being full and busy.
- The school has increased welfare support and more students are attending the settling in morning sessions. Support has been provided for those students doing Covid tests. The increase in support is manageable.
- **Q** – Will students have to wear masks after Easter? It is not yet known what the government will decide. ACH visited form groups and explained why masks are to be worn and the majority have bought in to this and the spirit is good. A parent noted that the students seem to be coping well with wearing masks on the bus.
- **Q** – Are there plans to continue monitoring how students settle after Easter and in September? It is hoped that after Easter it will be a normal start after a holiday. Students know the services available and this will be reinforced during form time. Currently, form time will not be extended after Easter and it is hoped that normal routines will resume with support where necessary. Students can message and call Welfare through the holiday and Teams has been useful for students to flag issues. The start in September is yet to be determined.

- It is hoped that Y6 transition will take place in the summer term and the government have talked about summer schools but no details have been released.
- ACH noted that Y11s and Y13s will undertake low stake testing and this increases anxiety. The school is using positive language and there will be a period of assessments and students will be needed in school.
- There will be a bridging the gap period for Y11s going into Y12 to cover some of the missed curriculum and this will provide some reassurance.
- **Q** – When the school reopens in September with a staggered return, will those returning later do work on Teams? It has not yet been decided. There are transition plans for Y7 and sixth form and it might be that there is some online learning in place but there will be issues with new staff and getting timetables out.

Assessment and how the curriculum is being adjusted to support students – JO reported:

- In March 2020 when the school was suddenly closed due to the pandemic, the usage of Teams wasn't as strong as it is now and the curriculum was adjusted to make work accessible using current knowledge. Last summer the subject departments met to review what had been studied, what areas had been missed and needed to be covered from September and the curriculum from September was updated. With the second lockdown, Teams was up and running and there wasn't a need to adapt the curriculum. There has been some good progress but some students didn't engage or regularly attend online lessons. There was mixed progress when the school reopened and most departments started something new so that all students started at the same point. All years will be tested at the end of the year to identify gaps in learning. Data from testing will not be published as it will not show a complete picture.
- **Q** – How does the school feel that students in Y10 and Y12 are performing, as those students are going into exam years? Y12s are already impacted as they started A Levels with gaps in learning. Teachers are aware and have made adjustments. Y10s have had 2 periods of disruption to their GCSE's and it is not thought that GCSEs will be the same next year because of the large gaps. This will be an ongoing legacy as it is a national issue, but the school continues to plan. Y11s did sit exams in November and did very well.

Thanks were noted to DN and JO for attending.

#### **4. Fundraising**

Payment systems – a parent sent details of a PTA payment system that a local primary uses. It work wells but there are fees involved. It is beneficial as there is minimal cash to be handled and it is less time consuming for staff. **Action:** KD to discuss payment system with finance.

CE, SW, CL and AB will meet separately to discuss and review some fundraising ideas with a view to report back at the next meeting and communicate to parents.

Areas for spend were discussed:

- Providing blazers to support families – there has been a 30% increase in FSM (Free School Meals) students. Costs are approximately £3K. The welfare team know of families to target.
- Creating green meadow retreat areas. Fencing, benches and meadow grasses would be needed. Cost is approximately £500. Parents liked this idea if sustainable and for the long term as it fits with the mental health award achieved by the school.
- Lunchtime sports equipment – more sets are needed to accommodate year bubbles. Cost is approximately £300.

- Laptops for all incoming Y7 students to roll forward every year. Approximate costs are £250 per laptop. This is an ambitious project and different options were discussed. There could be a voluntary payment from those families who could afford it, payment schemes, some families would not need the basic laptop but others would appreciate the support. Some capital could be used if supported by fundraising and donations. Further consideration is needed for a marketing plan.  
**Action:** CG to investigate the marketing of laptops.

It was agreed that the meadows and sports equipment are achievable and £800 would be the initial fundraising target.

#### 5. **Items for the next Agenda**

- Recent Ofsted visit – ACH noted that parents will be told outcomes once feedback is received from Ofsted. This can be discussed at a future meeting.
- Equality and how the school implements the policy – Sarah Noble (SN).
- Parents evenings next year – Jane Warne (JW)
- **Action:** Clerk to invite SN and JW to the next meeting to report on equality and the parents evening system.

#### 6. **AOB**

ParentView results – these were circulated prior to the meeting. There is some negative feedback from a few parents. The SEND questions are aimed at families with SEND students but it appears that there are more answers than SEND students. There needs to be a process to target the parents who don't agree with the schools standards and consideration needs to be given to communication with hard to reach parents. **Q** – Does the school know who the hard to reach parents are? There is some knowledge as the school has relationships with some parents, but there is still a minority who don't come forward. There are some recent ex-students with a grudge and some parents have their own negative experiences that they carry forward. It was discussed that this topic will be discussed again. The Ramsey Rural Museum is collecting things to do with Covid and would appreciate any photos. **Action:** Clerk to send photos to ZM.

#### 7. **Date of the Next Meeting: Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> April**

The meeting closed at 17.40