



## Minutes for Parent Forum – Tuesday, 4th February 2025

5pm to 6:30pm

### **Present:**

Michael Parker (Governor)

Paul Haylock (Headteacher)

Antoine Le Falher (Cedar)

Ellie Driscoll (Walnut)

Julia Lester (Hazel) (Remote)

Jemma Fairbrass (Holly)

Yesim Gok Koch (Birch)

Dave Carter (Fig)

Tommy Roberts (Elm)

Lena Malkin (Fir) (Remote)

Claire Roberts (Oak) (remote)

### **Apologies:**

Raghav Kapoor (Cedar)

Yogeshwary Ramjattan (The Orchard)

Sara McLaughlin (Beech and Elder)

Anushka Brown (Chestnut)

Kylie Wood (Olive)

Haylea Elsey (Beech)

### **Agenda:**

#### **Questions from Parents during the meeting**

Dojo: we get hardly any updates about what the children are doing in class. Appreciate that Miss King has been poorly but the updates do help engage the children about what they are doing at school. They also get very few dojo points which help with their motivation.

We know parents like to see what is happening in school and there was not as much as we expected on review. We've reminded staff of the expectations we have but I want to remind parents that this is quite unique in schools and to see anything is much more than you will receive in most schools.



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Pick and mix homework: it is felt that some of the homework tasks are not age-appropriate. Also, a lot of parents would rather revert to weekly homework tasks as they are then relevant to what the children are learning in class. It also allows them to take in and show their homework which the children used to enjoy.

We've looked at these and the year 1 versions are age-appropriate and relevant to what the children are learning in class. It is inclusive of the range of abilities we have in our school. Homework was discussed at length in previous Parent Forums and the move away from 'more traditional homework' was agreed upon and it is very popular. More children are completing home learning than before. The children can still take their pic and mix homework in to share. Speaking and Listening skills are crucial in year 1 and KS1 generally. It was agreed that more direction on how to complete tasks can be given to parents.

Lost property: a lot of clothing goes missing and whilst we understand it is the child's responsibility to put their clothes in their bags some reminders/oversight from the teachers would be appreciated as the children are still very young.

I can assure you that reminders about personal property are given regularly. Year 1 children should be able to look after their own things. Any named lost property is returned quickly - often before parents even know or will ever know it has gone missing.

"Can you please ask about the food quality. Have they changed the catering company? Both kids keep complaining that the food is so bad that they can't eat it at all, even potatoes. And asking if I can make some lunch for them instead" a few parents expressed the same view.

Harrisons are our food company and the quality far exceeds what we had previously. Chartwells used to deliver trays of food prepared off-site and it was heated up for the children. Harrisons cook everything fresh each day. It is also free for every child which I find is amazing. The food has to meet the government guidelines and this means a limit on processed foods, salt etc and all food groups must be covered to ensure a balanced and healthy diet. The new menu will be out soon and we've added the baguette option on two of the most challenging days for fussy eaters. (Tuesdays and Thursdays) I do agree that the menu will take some getting used to for younger children as it is probably very different to what they have at home. But it is very healthy and nutritious.

Is it possible to arrange a space for the kids coats as at the moment they just throw everything in the floor and the parents didn't think it's appropriate or a good way to teach the kids to take care of their things.

This is for clubs and it is difficult to solve due to the nature of the school building. Having children return to parts of the school unsupervised at the end of clubs would not be appropriate as children must be supervised. We will look into large buckets for coats for clubs without classrooms.

Whilst the kids have access to more computers they are just playing games on them and children come home saying they are bored. (This is referring to the After School Club)

ASC Feedback - The children have free choice. There are loads of non-computer activities. Two whole cupboards full and Mrs Senft is constantly renewing and updating them. Granted it has been cold and or wet so outside play has been limited over the winter months. Please be assured that the children are not forced to sit on the computers. We will add time limits for all children though so they are forced to do other things (This apparently already happens)

"Just a weird question about PE T-shirts. Is anything can be done for it to be 100% cotton instead 100% polyester. The reason I'm not buying because of it. Any synthetic fibers being bad pollutants for the land and not kind for skin especially kids ect..."



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Cotton absorbs water, stays wet and sticks to the body. Not good when they then have to wear it for the rest of the day. The top is not compulsory. Parents can choose to buy their own cotton top if they wish but this must be plain - no branding etc and be white or the colour of the child's house.

Can we organise some alternative days for parents to come to phonics sessions, currently the option is Thursday mornings which some can't make due to work or childcare?

Yes this was always on the plan to do.

Alternative lunch option - apparently this has already been suggested that all children could be offered an alternative eg sandwich, is there an update on whether this will be possible and if so, when?

We had to order a new freezer and the baguette option is now available to everyone on Tuesdays and Thursdays. It is important that we try to increase the variety of food the children eat on a daily basis and that it is healthy.

Is it possible to introduce a class specific calendar (at the beginning of each term for example) with any plans included such as dress up days, trips and activities like Forest School starting? Essentially parents are asking for as much notice as possible for anything non-uniform or additional requirements

We won't be offering class specific diaries. The workload of teachers is already far too high. You have the whole school calendar, class dojo events calendar and the teacher briefing at the beginning of the year where all the key dates are shared. We will try and ensure we add more detail to events to make it clear which year groups it is for.

A parent is wanting to know if the portion sizes can be increased for lunch, or an afternoon snack be permitted as children are coming home very hungry still.

Portion sizes meet the National Expectations of 80g carbohydrates and 60g of protein.

A couple of parents say their kids have mentioned they don't like the food anymore - the as the supplier changed because the quality appears to have changed?

The menu changes happen every 3 to 4 months - we are about to get a new menu. We will also do a child survey because most children like the food and it is much better than our previous company.

My daughters have mentioned they struggle to use the toilet paper to wipe themselves as the dispensers are often trapped and they can't get to the toilet roll. Any chance we can look into an alternative type of dispenser?

We have changed the soap dispensers at considerable expense. Changing these would also be expensive and they are all of similar styles. If a dispenser is blocked or empty the children need to inform an adult in school. They will send a message to the site team via email. This pops up on the site team's phone for immediate action. The teachers also have the key.

Hazel class is very often late being brought out at the end of the day. Lots of parents have complained about this and ask that they start coming out on time at collection.

I will speak to the Hazel Class Staff to be on time. 15:05 they will be on time.

\*Is it possible to get some feedback on pick and mix homework, does the school see any results? When they had weekly project at least child was motivated to do something, now it's on the shelf, seems irrelevant.



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[Note: We were given this term's menu but it is not being pushed as an item on the weekly homework list]

More children are doing home learning than before so more children are benefitting, reading, athletics and spelling shed are still weekly tasks.

\*Is it possible to see more recognition or acknowledgement of the efforts made to complete homework tasks. I appreciate the time involved in marking homework books, however a simple smiley face or couple of words would be a great encouragement.

Stamps are something we can look at. Teacher recruitment is at an all time low and we are trying hard at looking at ways to reduce the workload of teachers. Our feedback policy is focused on quality marking in English and Maths with recognition marking in other areas. The homework is recognised in assembly at the end of the term with certificates and awards given to those completing the homework at the three levels.

"Can you please ask about ventilation in the classroom and ensuring windows are open (even a little bit) to discourage the spread of germs per the recent outbreak?"

This is the expectation. We do give reminders and this was on briefing notes on Friday last week. I walked today and the windows or at least some windows were open in every classroom.

PE and outside when raining

Forest School and PE will still go ahead in light rain and cold. Dressing appropriately is important - hats, gloves, change of shoes etc. Reminders will be put on Dojo.

### **F.O.P**

#### **Proposal to use Parent Forum Reps Email. FOP will email the Parent Forum**

This was agreed

#### **Group info for you to share on WhatsApp groups**

This was agreed

#### **Race Night Promotion**

This was agreed to be shared.

#### **School Instagram**

The group understands the need to promote the school to the wider community.

#### **Parent WhatsApp Groups**

If parents are cross about something or have misunderstood, the parent forum reps will gently encourage them to contact the school via email or Dojo rather than complain to a large WhatsApp group.

#### **Supporting School Clubs**

The need for 15 children to attend clubs was shared otherwise the groups could not run.



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### **Parent Parking Double Yellow Lines**

The disregard for the rules frustrates many parents.

### **Weather Station Link to be shared with parents**

[https://weather.lgfl.org.uk/Our School is the St Mary Cray Station](https://weather.lgfl.org.uk/Our%20School%20is%20the%20St%20Mary%20Cray%20Station)

**Next Meeting: Thursday 15th May 2025 5pm**