

Parents' Forum Meeting

Monday 25th September 2017, 2.45pm

Present: Miss Palmer, Trudy Hinton, Jules Bond, Helen Little, Karen Palmer, Karen Penny, Tracey Phenix, Hannah Reed, Beccy Stenner, Rob Stenner, Sam Stone, Amy Woodhouse

Apologies: Rebecca Thomlinson

Open meeting – no agenda set

Welcome to new representatives

Helen Little, Beccy & Rob Stenner, Karen Palmer and Elizabeth Ingham.

This year's class representatives are:

Wrens – Helen Little

Robins – Karen Penny, Beccy Stenner

Owls – Hannah Reed

Kingfishers – Sam Stone

Woodpeckers – Karen Palmer, Becky Thomlinson

Falcons – Tracey Phenix, Jules Bond

Hérons – Amy Woodhouse

Link Governor – Elizabeth Ingham

Minutes of Last Meeting

Shoe collection – our end of term shoe collection for Mercy in Action had an excellent response with over 90 pairs of shoes - thank you. Hopefully this will take place again at the end of the summer term. Please save your children's shoes, and encourage other parents to do the same!

Clubs – Two archery club sessions have started. The providers will run another block of sessions and keep the same time slots all year. They can also offer tri-golf, fencing etc. in the same slot, if required.

Race for Life – this was a huge success and will definitely take place again.

Booked by Dorset – upcoming dates will be sent to parents on a ParentMail or on a Friday newsletter.

Packed Lunch Policy and National Food Standards

Miss Palmer talked through the National Food Standards (NFS) with those present and explained that a Packed Lunch Policy is best practice in many schools; various examples can be found on the internet. A model NFS Packed Lunch Policy was handed out, as well as a draft Wyke policy based upon this, for review by those present. Miss Palmer noted the appendix contains NFS guidelines regarding what is and is not recommended to be included in lunch boxes. Also distributed were policies from several different schools as well as the main government guidelines.

Some present thought that the policy was 'heavy-handed' and that responsible parents do not need to be guided about the contents of their child's lunch box. Miss Palmer agreed but also explained that sadly many children are regularly sent to school with lunchboxes containing inappropriate foods (such as multiple chocolate bars); these are the parents the policy aims to encourage to make healthy food choices for their children.

A parent asked why children who bring packed lunches cannot have a sweet treat every day since school lunches often contain cakes, etc.. Miss Palmer explained that the hot school lunches provided by the catering company are nutritionally balanced over a set period of time. She also explained that the sweet items are made using alternative ingredients to sugar, such as hidden fruit, etc. Miss Palmer will contact the catering company to confirm this.

Those present collaborated on the policy, examining and rewording sections to fit the Wyke parental community. It was agreed that the policy should clearly state that the guidance originates from the National Food Standards. All agreed that it is important to acknowledge that the majority of parents do provide a balanced, healthy packed lunch.

A concern was raised about staff removing 'inappropriate' food items from children's lunchboxes. Miss Palmer reassured those present that food will not be removed from lunchboxes. However, teaching staff and lunchtime staff will make a note of lunchboxes whose contents are repeatedly unsuitable (containing for example, multiple chocolate

bars); class teachers will then have a discreet word with the parents concerned (all agreed that children are not to be involved in this conversation – it is for parents only) and provide advice and literature to support healthy choices.

Miss Palmer advised that as well as the Governing Board, the School Council will also be consulted about the policy.

Miss Palmer also explained that there is a plan in place to change the structure of lunchtimes to enable all children to eat in the hall, rather than the classrooms. Not only does this create a safer environment, but it also allows the children to make a distinction between where they learn and where they eat.

Any Other Business

Water – a parent representative raised a concern from parents whose children do not like to drink water during the school day and the subsequent risk of dehydration. Miss Palmer would prefer the children to drink water as it is all their bodies need and is best for hydration, but also recognised that not all children will adapt easily. She encouraged those parents with concerns to come into school to talk this through with staff, to allow us to work together on this issue. A compromise of gradually lessening the amount of concentrated squash (until the drink is just water) was suggested.

Future PF meetings – please email the Parent Forum email address with the most suitable day of the week. (parentforum@gillinghamwyke.dorset.sch.uk)

Christmas Production – this year no evening performances have been scheduled as historically many children do not come back to school for the evening performances, particularly KS1. This creates gaps in the production and makes it difficult for the performances to run as they should. However, many parents are keen to have the option of an evening performance. Miss Palmer will feed this back to the teaching staff who will reconsider the issue.

Topics for discussion at next meeting

None identified.

Meeting ended 3.20pm.

Date of next meeting: TBC