

# Minutes of the Parents Forum held on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2005

## Learning Resources Centre

**Present:** **Staff:** Mr Brownlow [Deputy Head]

**Parents:** Mrs Shepherd, Mr Jones, Mrs Kavanagh, Dr Eaton, Mrs Crocker, Mr & Mrs Brogan, Dr Mullen, Mrs Phillips, Mrs Lamb, Mrs Armstrong, Mrs Savjani, Mrs Taner, Mrs Vasudevan, Mrs Roberts [Chair APFLS].

**Apologies:** Mr Garbett

1. Welcome - Mr Brownlow welcomed everyone and gave out the minutes of the last meeting and asked if there were any matters arising.

2. Matters arising

- Mr Brownlow explained that as a result of the last meeting a new 'grade report sheet' had been created and it is now a two page document. The first page explains, and hopefully clarifies, the grading structure, especially with regard to the 'English grades' and included a reply box which allows parents to feedback any comments or concerns to the school. The second page contained the report itself. The school is currently discussing the use of effort grades and National Curriculum levels. The parents expressed their pleasure that something which had only been discussed at the last meeting had been acted upon so swiftly by the school.

3. Security

- Mr Brownlow distributed a letter which will be sent out to parents/carers via the pupils and explained this was as a result of several meetings with the new 'Safer Schools Team' and he then asked for the parent's views.
- Parents felt that often the children were not 'street wise' and asked if the school could help by explaining and reinforcing at assemblies, or other occasions, what could be deemed 'acting responsibly' for example, not using an iPod / mobile phone in public, keeping to the main road and preferably staying as part of a group, etc. Mr Brownlow explained that this was already done and that PC Bob Archer came in once a year to speak to the pupils about safety and there were follow up sessions in tutor time. Mr Brownlow said he would try to ensure that the pupils were reminded of the salient points of PC Archer's talk and he would also remind them about taking off their ties, not using mobiles/iPods, etc, which would make them more anonymous simple safety tips. The parents expressed the wish that the information be imparted to the children in a way that did not cause them undue stress and anxiety or cause them to lose confidence. The parents asked if the advice given to the pupils could be given to the parents via the internet/intranet site. Mr Brownlow said he would investigate the matter, and report back at the next meeting.
- Parents asked if the school would be able to have their own Community Police Officer and Mr Brownlow explained that one will be based full time at Aylward School who was responsible for the local area and Latymer were unlikely to have their own but if several parents wrote to the local 'Safer Schools Team' the situation may be reviewed. Mr Brownlow explained that he would find out more details about the use of Community Police Officers and feedback at the next meeting (There are 17 secondary schools in Enfield, but only 14 Community Police Officers. Latymer will not be getting one).
- Parents asked if it would be possible to advertise the contact details of the local police, MP etc on the schools internet/intranet site and/or pupil planner. Mr Brownlow said he would investigate the matter, and report back at the next meeting.
- Mr Brownlow explained that the response times of the police when an incident has occurred had dramatically improved. He stressed that parents must ensure that any incidents involving their children be reported to the police and a crime number obtained. Mr Kernan should then be informed of the details as he kept a record of all such incidents. Mr Brownlow also explained that the failure to report a crime meant that the police were unable to gain an accurate picture of the level of crime affecting our children or the locality/dates/times in which the incidents occurred.
- Parents commented that sometimes the location of their child's locker meant that they could be delayed when leaving school and that sometimes the bus drivers would not wait for children even

when they could see them running for the bus. Mr Brownlow explained that the school had to site lockers where there was available space and that they had spoken to the bus company about the concerns the school had but often the problem was with individual drivers.

- Parents wondered if it would be constructive to have some dialogue between both the Latymer and other local schools 'school councils'. Mr Brownlow explained that this did not happen at present but perhaps it could be considered in the future. He also explained that the local head teachers met but security was not always on the agenda for discussion at these meetings.
- Concerns about the security of the girls changing rooms were expressed by parents as there had been several incidences of possessions being stolen. Mr Brownlow said he would investigate this issue with Mr King, Head of PE, but he urged parents to ensure that all such incidents were reported to a member of staff, and that pupils used their lockers wherever possible.

#### 4. Homework

- Mr Brownlow read out several letters from parents who were unsure of the amount of time a child should spend on their homework. Mr Brownlow then asked those present if they knew the agreed times for each year group in the lower school and the number of subjects that could be set for homework each night. The general consensus was that the parents were unsure of the facts so Mr Brownlow explained that the approx length of time for each homework was written on the homework timetable, but he will make it more explicit for next year.
- Some parents wondered if the year 7s be given a moratorium on homework when starting in September. Others felt that as children has been doing homework in year 6 it would not be an issue and it was good to set a standard / pattern for the children from the beginning.
- Parents asked about 'free periods' and Mr Brownlow explained that the reason study/free periods were timetabled was to allow students to undertake homework during the day giving them the opportunity to take part in extra curricular activities. He explained that sometimes these periods were supervised, sometimes not, depending on the time of day and the year group involved. Parent's feedback on this strategy was positive.
- Parents asked about the frequency of marking as some felt the marking of homework was erratic and were unsure if their children completed all the homework set. Some parents felt there seemed to be little feedback given on homework too. Mr Brownlow explained that homework was marked on a two week cycle and if pupils did not complete, or produce homework of the correct standard a note would be put in the student planner, so in effect, no news was good news. He went on to explain that the school's marking policy was under review at present and he would keep the parents informed of any changes in the policy, and would welcome feedback at a later meeting.

#### 5. Possible issue for discussion

- Some parents asked if the provision of relevant information on the schools web site could be more consistent for example, the cancellation of a concert was posted but not the revised date.
- Parents asked if it would be possible to put more information on the web site and if parents could get access to the school intranet. Mr Brownlow explained that providing passwords for all parents would prove an onerous task for the IT department at the moment. He would however, investigate the possibility of sending a letter to parents informing them of their child's username which would allow them access to the intranet containing the information they were seeking (once the children divulged the password, of course).
- Some parents asked if it would be possible to have two meetings per term as they were felt to be so valuable. Mr Brownlow felt that it might be possible to have two meetings in the summer term but he had to consider the premises teams' workload, so he would report back at the next meeting.
- School trips generally.
- One parent expressed concerns that if there were pressing issues that needed urgent attention could the meeting continue after the allotted time. Mr Brownlow suggested that if there were any such issues, these were noted at the start of the meeting and time allocated to discuss them before the end of the meeting.

Date of the next meeting **February 7<sup>th</sup> 2006 in the Learning Resource Centre 6 -7pm**