

Notes of the Parent/Carers Forum held 10 November 2009

Present: J Evans, N Lamb, J Lederhose, H Pedro, M Shepherd, M Wilsher, C Wakefield (Chair), L Daly (Notes)

1. Apologies for absence

1.1. Apologies had been received from: S Andreoli, P Biswas, C Johnston, H Savjani

2. Notes of the last meeting

2.1. Parents' Evening Appointments

2.1.1. It had been noted that despite having been assured that they would definitely be able to see a subject teacher if they had not been given an opportunity to do so at the preceding event, some year 13 parents had not been able to see certain subject teachers two years running. On further discussion, this appeared to be most relevant to mathematics where different staff teach different specialisms.

Action: Mr Wakefield to forward comments to Ms Beskeen, and noted that the colleague recently appointed to coordinate parents' evenings, had been collecting data to ensure that parents would definitely get an appointment to see any teacher that they had not seen the previous year.

3. Forum Membership

3.1. Mr Wakefield offered the thanks of the School to those parents who had participated in the Forum, particularly those who had kindly extended their membership. The first meeting of the new members will be in March 2010.

4. Timing of the Year 11 Prom

4.1. This item has been discussed before at the Parent/Carers Forum.

Some parents are unhappy that the Prom usually takes place the night of the last day at school (traditionally a half day) before the first GCSE examination of the season. It is felt that this disadvantages any student taking that first examination, and makes parents face a very difficult decision as to whether or not to allow their child to participate.

4.2. It was also noted that the preparations for the prom diverts attention from preparation for GCSEs.

4.3. Although the event finishes at 10pm, it was pointed out that travelling back from central London and the excitement of the event contributed to a very late night which is not conducive to preparation for examinations.

4.4. That there is no food at the prom, only fizzy drinks and crisps for purchase at high prices, was also a cause for concern.

4.5. Parents felt that the School had never explained the reasons for the timing of the event, or satisfactorily explained why it could not be held after the examinations.

4.6. Mr Wakefield explained the timing of the event was chosen by the school as suitable as it did not impinge into teaching time, enabled a good end to the teaching year with no reported bad behaviour on the last morning leading to exclusions of students, as in previous years; staff were prepared to make themselves available to supervise the event at this time; it would be difficult to have any authority over students who left Latymer after their GCSEs as the sanction of being unable to take examinations in the event of bad behaviour would not be available. Last academic year, the Prom was held the night before the RE examination, the results were excellent and compared well with other subjects, hence there is no evidence that performance is affected. Revision should be long term, well in advance of examinations. Mr Wakefield did not have the record of the number of students who did not attend, however, the vast majority did. The prom is designed to be a fun, additional event and should not be considered as automatic.

4.7. Parents understood the reasoning by the school, although did not fully support them, but thought it would be helpful to have an explanation of the reasons for the timing of the event in the letter announcing future proms.

Action: Mr Wakefield to forward the concerns of the Forum to those responsible for deciding the timing of the Prom

5. Saturday Sports

5.1. Concern was expressed at the lack of Saturday sports this year. Some parents had counted this activity among their reasons for choosing Latymer and were disappointed and concerned at the sudden reduction of activities without any explanation.

5.2. Mr Wakefield explained that there has been a reduction in the number of PE staff, and in addition, the personal circumstances of some staff members have changed and they have chosen to stop participating in this voluntary activity. The situation may well change depending on staffing, and SLT have been exploring other ways of supporting extra curricular sport activities. Mr Wakefield confirmed that Latymer remains committed to sporting activities, and would continue to explore other avenues.

Action: Mr Wakefield to relay the concerns of The Forum in regard to both the lack of activities and the absence of communication.

6. Any other business

6.1. It was suggested that more references to the work of the Forum, and how to submit business for discussion be more regularly publicised in letters home from School.

6.2. Members of the Forum wished to record their appreciation of the time that staff make available to their children across all areas of the school.

7. Date of the next meeting

7.1. The next meeting will be held at 6pm on 16 March.