

Parental Focus Group Minutes



Date of Meeting: **Wednesday, 1st May (morning)**
Thursday, 2nd May (evening)

Present: Ms Fagan Jones, Miss Govan, Ms Hale, Miss Hartard, Mrs Read (morning group)
Mrs Griffin, Mrs King, Miss Pocock, Mrs Sanderson (evening group)

Apologies: A Corbin, T Hindmarsh, S King, M O'Hara-Harris, L Segal, C Pepper, J Towns, C Brown

1. **Matters Arising (January meeting)**

- Bedrock Vocabulary – all children in Years 7-9 were tested on Monday. Programme as homework to be rolled out this term.
- Action Your Potential sessions – time brought forward to 6pm and now just for one hour.
- Visit to the Sports Hall was carried out by the Evening Group.

2. **Rewards (Mr Campbell)**

New reward system started in September (copy was handed out). Pupils are achieving points for attendance and work in school which is tracked on EduLink. Looking to update for September and requesting suggestions. In school we have found:

- Certificates do not motivate all pupils, but they like early tuck and lunch passes.
- Too many milestones.

Suggested changes by school:

- Less milestones
- 1 reward for each milestone
- Want positive contact with home, but phone call home at 75 points was too much work. Parents felt it was not necessary.
- Responsibility of child to collect reward
- More tangible rewards e.g. early tuck/lunch pass

Suggestions by parents:

- Milestones highlighted on EduLink when achieved
- Asked about rewards party at the end of year – this will happen this year
- Asked if vouchers are awarded – these are for 450 points

Problem that all teachers still do not give achievement points; attendance points identified as particular problem and not always added.

Evening group comments:

- Felt the sheet needed to be less complicated.
- Points for reduction in Prom ticket need to be clearer.
- Parents love postcards home.

3. **PE Kit (Mr Dallaway)**

Planning to introduce a new supplier from September (handout provided showing new kit and prices) – meeting with new supplier tomorrow. Want pupils to look the same and make easier to organise into teams. Will also include tracksuit trousers as part of

kit. Option of different polo shirt for girls and boys and a skort as well as shorts – concern this may over complicate kit. Price is same or cheaper for most items.

Comments from parents:

- Will long sleeve top be warmer? It will be same as short sleeved, though short sleeved version can be worn underneath. We are also considering warmer zipped top.
- Will current pupils have to buy new kit? No, don't expect current pupils to change until they need larger size.
- Some parents don't like current shorts.
- Are tracksuit trousers only for certain months? Yes – but will let pupils know when they can wear.
- Asked about a school cap for summer months – will look into this.
- Tracksuit trousers seem expensive especially as they are not personalised to the school. Mr Dallaway to follow up with company.

Miss Cronin added that pupils had previously been asked about a skort and didn't want it.

- Evening Group like the skort and felt it should be put to a vote.
- Evening group did not feel it was necessary to have a fitted shirt for the girls – keep it simple.

4. Careers (Mrs Adams) – see presentation below

Mrs Adams spoke about the Investors in Careers Award which is due for assessment at the end of June. The school have to meet 8 Gatsby benchmarks – these were explained and what the school is doing to achieve these.

Asked if any parent could attend assessment day on Wednesday, 26th June for about 20 minutes and also if anyone knows an employer who could come in and talk to the pupils.

We will hopefully achieve the full Award which is valid for 3 years or if not 'making good progress towards'

Parents asked:

- Is the aim for pupils to have a clear careers path? No – just to give them an overview.
- Can parents set up Work Experience? Yes as long as employer has employer liability insurance. Once in Year 10, pupils have a log-in to work experience database, however can set up own placement.

Miss Cronin advised parents to look at Apprenticeships too.

- Evening group happy with careers provision, particularly the use of alumni.

5. Geography Club – see pupil script below and attached slides

Geography club pupils made a presentation to the group on work they are doing to promote care of our environment. Younger pupils are leading this. Miss Cronin would like more older pupils involved. Parents liked the presentation and asked:

- Which plastic lids can be collected? – any type 2 or 4, so most bottle tops
- Parents were unaware of battery collection in school.
- Parents asked for a copy of the presentation.
- All parents agreed that everyone had to push care of the environment through action and not striking.

6. Homework

Miss Cronin explained to the group that the Homework Policy is being looked at and discussed what the purpose of each homework is. Is it valuable? Some suggestions from staff were highlighted and parents were asked for their views:

- Like the idea of homework to aid strategies for GCSEs in the future.
- Wellbeing built into homework is a brilliant idea
- Clubs take time away from homework and especially a problem if homework due in the next day.

- Some Year 7 pupils struggle with homework but need strategies for developing independence.
- Parents don't like history essays especially in Year 7.
- Miss Cronin said there is a suggestion to spend the first few weeks in Year 7 focusing on how to do homework and building up 'learn to learn' skills. Parents liked this idea as pupils don't always have revision skills and therefore don't do as well in tests as expected.
- Problems raised of homework not being returned with feedback or taking longer than allotted time.
- One member of staff is still giving Year 11 pupils homework and not revision.
- Feel sometimes homework set for the sake of it.
- Issue of printing raised. Miss Cronin explained pupils can use library or Prep Club for printing or any photocopiers around the school.

Miss Cronin asked if, as a school, we should reduce homework significantly. Parents responded:

- Still need independent learning skills – perhaps should be rebranded.
- Homework gives parents an insight into what their children are learning at school.
- Parents keen for less computer based homework. Like MathsWatch etc but then for other subjects would prefer writing tasks, rather than computer tasks.
- Parents felt homework was important and our standards with reference to its completion made us 'stand out' as a school.

7. Reporting

Miss Cronin raised the question as to whether the Pastoral Report front sheet is still required.

- Parents really like the personal comments and felt the Form Tutor comment is key.
- Would be happy if available on-line.
- Puts the school in a good light especially as Miss Cronin reads and comments on all pupils.
- Pupils like the pastoral report too.
- Parents want to know that their child is known – felt Pastoral Leader/Principal should comment on the report and the tutor should comment on the person developing in their form. Form Tutors to focus on the child.

8. Pupil Profiles

Miss Cronin asked for any comments on the Pupil Profiles that are currently sent home 3 times a year.

- Parents felt 3 times a year is good.
- Don't always understand intervention codes/comments – suggested to explain in September newsletter. They also look like they are graded from A to F.
- Parents sometimes find one unusual comment and wonder if the teacher is talking about their child. Miss Cronin stated that parents must follow this up with the teacher.
- If my child is not reaching their target – how do I know if it is my child or the whole class? In other words, was the test too difficult for all?
- Evening parents were happy if Profiles were reduced to 2 in Lower School and 3 in Upper School; some felt two were plenty for all but different days as timing was crucial.
- Parents liked 2 evenings for Year 7 and did not see a need for 2 for Year 11.

9. AOB

When sent absence request on EduLink there is no acknowledgement receipt to show if it has been seen and approved. Can this be addressed?

Andrew Wright Seminar (DJB in attendance)

Supporting exams anxiety. All about getting your high brain to have control over your lower brain. Realising the importance of acting now – don't leave things to the last minute. Importance of controlling natural impulses and importance of patience. Strategies:

1. Good sleep
2. 10 minutes of exercise at least daily
3. 10 minutes of mindfulness daily
4. Map your zones – notice when you are both underwhelmed and overwhelmed.

Revision

All about practice.

Neuroplasticity – brains are plastic which means we can change it throughout our life.

At times habits can take over (e.g. worry) so you have to realise this is your lower brain, so turn a worry into a problem: get it out of your head/share with others/write it on a piece of paper.

Use it or lose it – if you worry continually you will keep feeling worried. If you stop learning the piano after 5 years your brain will forget it.

Expose yourself to information regularly. To do this write a key word on a flash card and read every day.

Key to tackling GCSEs

1. Deliberate practice. 20 minutes on the topic, then 10 mins break (walk/read just not on a phone) Then do another 20 mins piece of work on same topic but in a different way, then another 10 minute break.
2. Remember it is really important to rest!
3. Really important to have a plan to vary your work.

Miss Cronin requested any further feedback on rewards, PE kit, homework and items for the next agenda to be sent via her PA (pa@strichardscc.com)

Attached

Investors in Careers presentation (below)

Geography Club presentation (below)

Geography Club PowerPoint

Proposed PE kit

Investors in Careers

The kitemark for quality careers education and guidance, Investors in Careers, which St Richard's Catholic College currently holds is due to be reassessed. The reassessment fully incorporates the 8 Gatsby Benchmarks.

1. A stable careers programme
2. Learning from career and labour market information
3. Addressing the needs of each pupil
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers
5. Encounters with employers and employees
6. Experiences of workplaces
7. Encounters with further and higher education
8. Personal guidance

The reassessment is structured around four key elements:

1. **Commitment** – the college renews our commitment to Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) and The Quality in Careers standard.
2. **Organisation** – the college continues to have a stable careers programme, including how we are meeting the DfE statutory requirements.
3. **Delivery** – a programme of Careers Education is delivered that addresses the careers learning needs of each pupil. This is where we must demonstrate we are meeting all 8 Gatsby benchmarks.
4. **Evaluation** – ensuring that all staff involved in the careers programme – prepare all pupils for choices, decision and transitions. The CEIAG programme is systematically monitored, reviewed and evaluated to ensure it is meeting the needs of all pupils.

From September 2018 there are two assessed stages:

1. **Commitment: “committed to work towards the standard”**. This will involve submitting evidence and made a public commitment to establish a robust and coherent approach to our CEIAG provision.
2. **Organisation, Delivery and Evaluation** – external assessment leading to either:

Assessment date is Wednesday, 26th June.

- a. **Fully meets the standard** – have demonstrated a robust and coherent approach to our CEIAG provision, fully met the Quality in Careers standard national criteria, which also incorporates the 8 Gatsby Benchmarks.
- b. **Making good progress towards fully meeting the standard** – we have demonstrated a robust approach to our CEIAG provision and are making good progress in meeting the Quality in Careers Standard national criteria, which incorporates the 8 Gatsby Benchmarks. The assessor is confident that a clear plan is in place demonstrating the college will fully meet the national criteria.

If successful, the College will be given the award for a further three years.

Geography Club Presentation

SLIDE	WHO	SPEECH
1-2	Wojtek	At Geography Club we have been trying to help reduce our waste and plastic use here in school. We've given assemblies, got involved in plastic-free cooking, surveyed our waste bins to see how we are doing with recycling the right rubbish
3	Bethany	We have collected more than 7,000 milk bottle tops lids ... that are no longer on their way to landfill sites, or the ocean, they are going to be sold and ground down to be made into children's play equipment and the money from the sale will go to the children's ward at the Conquest Hospital so they can buy an MRI scanner which will help to detect cancer and leukaemia in children. This will save lives. Human lives. Keeping the milk bottle lids out of the landfill sites and oceans will help save marine life.
4	Sarah	Billions and billions of tons of plastic waste is choking our oceans, our rivers, and building up on our land. It looks horrible!
5		All of this trash belongs to each human being! Why is there so much?
6	Pearl	Single use plastic is to blame. We use about 2 million plastic bags every minute. In the UK, this has improved after the 5p charge for bags that was brought in by the government, but people are still using millions of single use bags every day.
7	Nivetha	How does it end up in the sea? There are three main ways. Litter on beaches, in cities, around our streets can be blown by the wind into the sea. Microplastics in shower gel and toothpaste are washed down the plug hole along with fibres from your clothes that dislodge in the washing machine. Finally, millions of tons of plastic is blown from landfill sites to the oceans. It spreads all over the world, so even uninhabited islands in the Pacific are covered in plastic waste.
8	Nico	This plastic is having a huge impact on sea creatures. Up to 1 million marine animals die every year because of this. When you add this to the numbers of land animals and birds you get a number of around 100 million. Sea life entangles themselves in plastic and they get stuck - causing them to starve. Other marine life mistakes it for food and they die from having it inside them as it can't be digested.
9	Pearl	The plastic gets caught around sea creatures and it stops their growth. They eat it thinking its food. It doesn't digest in their stomachs and they can starve. When birds eat the plastic, they use it to feed their chicks. It weighs them down so they can't fly, which means they die.
10	Bethany	Do you buy single use plastic bottles? You are not the only one. 480 billion were sold in 2016. That's 63 bottles per person - for every person on the planet! There is something very simple which could solve this...

11	Sarah	The problem is so large, it's not just contained to the sea ... it's affecting the land animals as well. Birds, squirrels, bears, even camels! The plastic is spreading everywhere.
12	Nivetha	It's not just large pieces of plastic rubbish that are causing the problem. It is microplastics. These are tiny particles of plastic found in tennis balls, clothes, glitter and tea bags to name a few.
13		Microplastics have entered our food chain. We are now eating it because fish eat plastic, we eat fish, therefore, we eat plastic. Obviously, you don't go to cut up a fish and see a massive Lucozade bottle coming out of it but you do still consume microplastic which is still plastic, smaller yet just as deadly.
15	Nico	In places, like the Maldives, they have a whole island which is made up of rubbish and people regularly burn plastic there. Burning plastic is very dangerous as it releases methane gas to the air which is harmful to the ozone layer
15	Bethany	The main problem with plastic is that most of it isn't biodegradable. It doesn't rot, like paper or food, so instead it can hang around in the environment for hundreds of years. Each year, 400 million tonnes of plastic is produced and 40% of that is single-use - plastic we'll only use once before it's binned. Examples of single-use plastic are carrier bags, drinks bottles, and crisp packets.
17 - 20	Wojtek	So what can be done? Reduce your use of plastic - here are some swaps you could make. Plastic toothbrush for bamboo toothbrushes. Plastic bags for a cotton bag. Plastic bottles for a reusable bottle Thank you for listening. (end on photo of Green School Award)