

# Parental Focus Group Minutes



**Date of Meeting:** **Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> March (morning) via Google Meet**  
**Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> March (evening) via Google Meet**

**Present:** **Morning group:** Mrs Hindmarsh, Mrs Weakley, Mrs Stevens,  
Mrs Reed, Mrs Carey, Mrs Button

**Evening group:** Mrs Hale, Mrs Griffin, Mrs Brown, Mr and Mrs Evans,  
Mrs Young

**Apologies:** Mrs Beck, Mrs Fagan Jones, Mrs King, Mrs Joyce

## 1. **Matters Arising**

Miss Cronin welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked if anyone wanted to raise anything from the last set of minutes (January 2021).

## 2. **Review of lockdown 3 and return to school**

St Richard's have been trying to reinforce that we still need to be careful and aren't out of lockdown yet. There have been lots of learning points from Lockdown 2 with regards to live teaching.

Some parents requested for cameras to be on all the time (specifically for younger years), but it wasn't always possible due to safeguarding issues. Some teachers were working from home so were not able to have their camera on. Had to follow safeguarding rules. Miss Cronin explained to parents that the Safeguarding team did drop in to lessons remotely to monitor.

We do not intend to let go of the good practice learnt in remote education. More Chromebooks / laptops have been purchased for departments so they are able to increase IT learning in their curriculum. Departments have been encouraged to discuss 'Covid Keepers' – what worked well to strengthen teaching and learning.

## 3. **LFD testing and mask wearing**

Positive start. Pupils are happy to be back. We still have staggered lunch, break and home times.

Mask wearing – the pupils' responses have been really good. It is not mandatory to wear masks, however the Government are advising and we are encouraging. It is about helping others to reduce transmission. Over 98% of pupils are complying with mask wearing. Some pupils have requested not to wear masks (those who may have SEN or medical conditions) – they have been given a sunflower badge to show they are exempt. Seems to be working really well.

LFD testing went really well. Very grateful to parents/carers and grandparents who volunteered. Very smooth process. We were able to set up so many more stations and able to get through tests really quickly and smoothly. Everyone was fully back into lessons by Tuesday, 9<sup>th</sup> March. 96% of parents have opted to take the home kits as a protective measure.

Very few parents have objected to LFD testing at home.

4. **Support with Upper School and Centre Assessed Grades**

**CAGs:** St Richard's will be ranking and moderating all Year 11 pupils. Board decide on the grade, they can move it up and down. Keep evidence of pupils' work. Everyone is working really hard and putting in maximum effort. Pupils completing smaller assessments and everything has been broken down. Children who have access arrangements are being helped. Pupils have a timetable to show when their assessments take place. Have to do shorter assessments as pupils have to complete them in the classroom.

Mrs Reed thanked teachers for all their hard work. She was one of many parents/carers who felt their child was calmer as they understood what they were being assessed on and the relevant content to revise.

Trying to keep everything calm for Year 11. Looking at introducing intervention early for Year 10. There will be exams next year, but there may well be some element of CAGs. While children are very healthy at the moment, we have to be prepared for future lockdowns.

Hoping sixth form colleges will do some bridging work, otherwise there will be a big gap when pupils start A levels.

5. **How to support your child with Maths (TK)**

Miss Kent, presented a short powerpoint. Please click [here](#) to view.

Times Tables – strong timetables knowledge is crucial. Helps them with their confidence around Maths.

Often learn their times tables really well in Year 6. Use Times Tables Rockstars programme in Year 7. Will roll out into Year 8. Keeps them really fresh. If your child is struggling in maths, need to make sure times tables are looked at.

There are some very good Year 7 and Year 8 resources on Google Classroom. If pupils don't have access, their teacher can send an invite. There are help videos, resources, tips, key websites etc.

If your child would like extra maths practice, they should log on to Google Classroom.

Use MathsWatch and Hegarty Maths. We use these as they offer pupils instant feedback. They know if they are working out the problems correctly. Tells them instantly and saves them time. Pupils should always have their books in front of them. Need to do all workings out on paper. Will find it harder and spend longer on homework if they don't. Mr Evans praised the quality of Hegarty Maths.

Look back in their books. Should have examples from lessons. Using their workbooks will encourage them to record their work accurately. Practise topics and write down examples in class. Pupils should watch the instructional videos. Some try to cut videos out but it will help a great deal if they watch them. Will reinforce and secure the topics. Pupils can re-learn by viewing the video.

Questions to ask your child: have you watched the video? Have you got your book?

**Parents can help their children by:**

- Talking positively about maths at home. If parents are negative about their experiences with the subject, it reinforces negative ideas.
- Important to reframe the conversation about Maths.
- Be aware of stereotyping.
- Praise effort rather than the end result.

- View maths as a creative topic. There are lots of different ways to get to an answer.
- Praise mistakes – mistakes are normal, can be really valuable if we use them in a certain way. Why have you made a mistake? Work it out.
- Focus on the hard work that has gone on behind the scenes.

Miss Cronin asked Miss Kent what sparked her passion for maths? Miss Kent answered that it was a combination of enjoying the challenge and enjoying the creativity of maths. Having a mindset of not knowing how to solve the problem, but finding a way to do it. If you get stuck, you come back and try again. Miss Kent always tries to encourage enjoyment of maths. Pupils should understand what they are being taught and not focus so much on the rules. Connect things. People remember what they understand. If they don't like it, they probably don't understand it.

Please email Miss Kent, maths teacher, if you have any questions (misskentt@strichardscc.com).

## 6. How to support your child with English (AN)

Mrs Niitsoo presented a short powerpoint. Please click [here](#) to view. Repeating, revising, making mistakes is true for English too. English underpins everything pupils need in other subjects. Injecting enthusiasm.

What can pupils do to remain successful?

- Reading regularly at home. Fiction/Non-Fiction/Social Media – different opinions. The English department provide booklists.
- Bedrock
- Memorising Acronyms
- Develop opinions and sharing in class
- Completing homework

Year 7 – have a novel – how story telling started, poetry, Shakespeare, Media. Exciting curriculum.

Year 8 – lot of multi-cultural texts, fiction and non-fiction, exploring different viewpoints, Shakespeare, Media.

Year 9 – moving closer to GCSE skills, analysing texts, analytical texts, character and voice poetry, writing, Shakespeare, looking at GCSE papers.

Assessments are completed in the classroom in exam conditions. KS3 pupils may use books to refer to. Speaking and Listening is a very important skill and something we really want to strengthen.

Year 7 and 8 – assessments are speaking and listening. Speak with confidence. Use sign posting to help the listener.

Acronyms – helps if pupils memorise these (these can be found in the English slides).

KS3 homework – Bedrock and reading. Very important that pupils do these with passion. This term, have increased to 3 lessons a week.

Parents can help their child set up a homework timetable.

Reading for pleasure. Underpins everything. Encourage by carving out some time for family reading time. All sit down and read together. Be interested in the news - good listening skills.

Keep in touch, follow on Twitter – see what is happening in the English department. If pupils wish to complete more English activities, there are intervention groups and BBC Bitesize.

Miss Cronin asked if parents would like to request presentations from other subjects:

- Science (KS4), how they all interlink. Understand who to go to. Understanding how the course works and support available.
- History.
- Geography.

Miss Cronin will talk to staff about presenting in term 5.

## **7. Remote Education Survey - feedback**

Most parents were happy with remote education. Some were not happy with the amount of homework set. Miss Cronin explained that it was important to keep homework going as it proved difficult to get many pupils back into the habit of homework after the previous lockdown.

Some Year 9 pupils were asked how long they spent on computer games – approx 6 hours a night. Some pupils revealed that they completed their school work, did homework and then went straight on to games. Have tea in their bedrooms. Some pupils did everything from their beds during last lockdown. Some admitted that they would go to sleep at midnight. Mrs Bligh gave an assembly on sleep this week to address its importance. We noticed that many pupils were very tired when they came back to school.

Emphasised by a parent that on-line activity was pupils' social lives these days and we need to be mindful of this. Again, lots of pupils coped with online work really well.

Some parents are struggling to let children access educational websites/programmes without the temptation to go on games. Mr Hollingsworth has recommended Screen Time App – installed on child's phone/ipad. It shows parents how long the child has been on the device for and what websites they are accessing. If using a Windows 10 device, then parents are able to set up a child account and set up a safe group of websites. Please click [here](#) for more information.

Miss Cronin shared some of the Remote Education Survey headlines / results.

RAG coding – red/amber/green. Helped parents/carers to see what their child's engagement was

Year 10 reports will go home today (Wednesday).

School Cloud will be used for Parents' Evening for the remainder of the year.

## **8. Any Other Business**

Miss Cronin asked to send the Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco policy for parents to review before it is finalised. All happy to review. (Click [here](#) to view).

Discussion regarding collecting Home Test Kits from Testing Centre. A parent said it may be worth warning other parents that they were directed to a live testing centre where it could be possible to come into contact with possible Coronavirus infections. Other parents in the group reported positive experiences of picking up test kits and said they visited the centres during late afternoon/early evening to avoid contact with Covid cases.

Mrs Hindmarsh volunteered to help with LFD at school and reported being very impressed with the children and how they behaved. The organisation was fantastic and made pupils feel more secure.

Mrs Stevens asked if there could be more library access for Year 10? Miss Cronin will speak with our librarian, Ms Tocknell.

Mrs Stevens asked if there will be discussions following recent news topic of harassment of women? Miss Cronin confirmed that we are going to be picking up on it. We do a lot on the subject already via PSHEe. Will be followed up. Want to deal with it sensitively. Not over-worry pupils. It will be dealt with in a way that won't frighten pupils but also must not look at all boys/men in a negative way. The subject will come up in PSHEe and assembly. Will do in a sensitive way and develop through testimonials etc. picking up on use of language, in particular.

Work has been done with pupils regarding disrespectful use of language and will continue to be a regular topic.

**Term 5 dates:**           Wednesday, 5<sup>th</sup> May (9.15am to 10.30am)  
                                  Thursday, 6<sup>th</sup> May (6.00pm to 7.15pm)