

# Parental Focus Group Minutes



**Date of Meeting: 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023**

**Present Morning session:** Mrs McGiness, Mrs Tompsett, Mrs King, Mrs Weakley, Mrs Button, Mrs Sutton, Mrs Moore

**Present Evening session:** Mrs Griffin, Mrs Allen, Mrs Cole, Mrs Evans, Mrs Frostick, Ms Guest, Mrs Read, Mrs Young, Mrs Barrow

## **Apologies:**

### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

Miss Cronin welcomed everyone, thanked them for attending and gave a brief overview of the agenda. Miss Cronin confirmed she will send a letter next week confirming strike action updates.

Parents commented that it would be nice to welcome some new faces to the PFG. Miss Cronin confirmed that parents are welcome to attend any of the PFG meetings without further commitment. A suggestion was made to send the PFG minutes via email to all parents but others thought it might be information overload. They are available on the website.

### **2. Matters Arising from minutes of 24<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

- The canteen no longer uses single use plastic cups so pupils have to bring in water bottles for use in dining area.
- Dragonflies received a cheque for £1,700 on 19<sup>th</sup> January. The lady who represented Dragonflies will come to the Lauren Carvalho talk. She will also ask Dragonflies to run an eight week support session for some of our pupils in Upper School.
- RJ to be reminded of the parental helpsheet for maths – to email out this term.
- Other items on the Agenda.

### **3. Maths Presentation on how to use Hegarty Maths to support your child**

Mr Rome offered to give parents a presentation on Hegarty Maths.

If pupils need help regarding a specific question, they can use the 'get help' button. Mr Rome explained that if a pupil would like more practice on a particular topic, they are able to do the task again. The wording of the question remains the same, however, the numbers in the question change. If the set of questions are too difficult or too easy, in some cases pupils are able to step up/step down to a different set of questions.

Parent query: A query was raised by a parent who explained that their child doesn't always know how to do the set homework as the teacher hasn't yet taught it in the classroom. Mr Rome and Miss Cronin explained that this is called flipped learning and that teachers sometimes use this method to see how much of an understanding the pupils have on the topic, before teaching it in the classroom.

Parents asked if a flip-learning homework task is set, that teachers let pupils know in advance or leave a comment on the homework so that they (and parents) are aware. Mr

Rome advised that if it doesn't specify, the assumption is that they have learnt it recently in class. If it is flipped learning it should be specified. Mr Rome and Miss Cronin will remind staff.

Mr Rome explained to parents that teachers are able to monitor how many questions pupils have attempted, how long the homework has taken them and if they have watched the videos.

Pupils can access work for all year groups on Hegarty. Some topics have different levels, so you can scale up or scale down on topics.

A parent asked if Mr Jacobs' maths tips sheet from the last meeting could be shared with parents.

Mr Rome mentioned to parents that if teachers ask pupils to come back at break/lunch to practise a topic, it is a supportive measure rather than a punishment.

**A question for the Maths department - How do pupils skip a question on Hegarty Maths if they cannot do it?**

#### **4. School Update (Miss Cronin)**

Busy three weeks with attendance still affected by coughs/chest-type illnesses though numbers not so affected as before Christmas.

Train strikes affected numbers attending in Week One but mainly in Upper School. Most Lower School pupils made the effort to get in. Grateful to parents/carers for driving pupils in.

Year 9 Parents/Carers came in for their first parents evening in the school. Most were pleased to meet staff. Curriculum Evening is next week. Pupils are working hard but some are slow to engage in clubs. Mrs Barrow requested that the extra-curricular timetable is resent. It is attached [here](#). Plenty of clubs besides sports.

Snow day in Term 2 was raised as a few parents/carers were disappointed pupils had to work on Google Classroom all day.

Miss Cronin explained that we were caught out by the number of primary schools closed and staff illness. It was more important to open school for the majority (over 750 pupils attended). Miss Cronin did appreciate the disappointment hence the flexibility in the first week of this term with train strikes over 3 days.

Parents requested greater access to a child's Google Classroom so that they could help with revision.

Mrs Young agreed to bring some of the revision files she had put together for her daughter to a future meeting so parents/carers can see how she supports her child.

#### **5. KS4 Curriculum Model 2023/2024**

Miss Cronin reminded parents that Year 9 Curriculum Evening is Thursday, 26<sup>th</sup> January. A parent raised that the Statistics GCSE is on Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> June following the DofE weekend. Miss Cronin will speak to Mr Harwood and see who is going on the trip and whether it is possible to change the DofE weekend.

Parents discussed that some schools have different option models but they appreciated you can get on to A' levels without doing some subjects at GCSE (i.e. Business Studies, iMedia Studies).

Miss Cronin gave parents the Option Model document and explained that pupils can only take one subject from each block.

BTEC is now a more challenging qualification than it used to be. They are not regarded as inferior qualifications to GCSE. They have exams and are equivalent to GCSEs.

Travel and Tourism is not being offered this next year as a year is needed to prepare for the new course.

Design and Technology has changed: it is now 50% practical and 50% theory.

MFL GCSEs have also been made more difficult and, due to this, less able pupils are not choosing to study them to GCSE.

A parent queried the fact that if a subject is popular, some pupils may not get on the course. Miss Cronin confirmed that pupils may not get their first choice if demand is high. In the same way if a course is not popular it will not run.

## 6. Pupil Profiles

Miss Cronin handed out pupil profile examples. She asked parents to feed back, in particular, are parents getting the information they need to know how their child is progressing?

Evening parents really like the layout. It is very clear in showing how a child is getting on.

One parent said she would prefer grades but was happy when it was indicated that Year 10/11 had grades.

Year 9 Parents Evening was supported by the Profile – always useful to have something to bring to the Parents Evening. Parents found it helpful.

## 7. Feedback and Assessment Policy

Miss Cronin handed out the Feedback and Assessment draft policy and asked for feedback on the Assessment section, in particular. As a parent are you clear of how your child's work is assessed, the progress they are making and what they need to do to improve their work? Please feed back comments to [palmt@strichardscc.com](mailto:palmt@strichardscc.com).

## 8. Wellbeing (DB)

Mrs Bligh asked if any particular themes have been discussed at home.

A parent said there was a concern around nude photos being sent between pupils. Mrs Bligh confirmed national statistics on this particular subject are going up. Children know they are running the risk but still do it. St Richard's are providing so much information on this topic at school, but it is also important to recognise that it is not all children. Depends on the age and circle of friends.

Mrs Bligh confirmed there is good responsible use of the WHISPER app. Children also come and speak to trusted members of staff.

Parents spoke about there being a difficult balance when explaining and checking information with their children. Mrs Bligh made it clear that if the school heard a child talking about a risky subject then parents would be called.

St Richard's do lots of work on misogyny and relationships (all genders). Staff have to be careful talking about a big subject. Staff do not talk about their personal lives.

Year 9 and Year 10 may be more vulnerable with regard to Andrew Tate. Year 11 have usually reached a maturity level to understand how wrong it is.

How do we collectively work with inquisitive children? What do you believe? We will put something in a newsletter but we will continue to work without giving anyone any glamour.

Parent comment: regarding police in the press at the moment. We do a lot on consent in PSHEe. Miss Cronin will ask Mrs Vanvuchelen to run through some information on PSHEe at the next meeting.

No safeguarding concerns around consent at school. Pulling down trousers/slapping bottom – the school will say it is sexual assault/bullying and it will be referred to the police. It is child on child abuse.

Children are understanding more and more what is acceptable in society now.

Police Liaison officer comes in to school every Tuesday.

Children need to also understand that they can trust the police/teachers/priests... it is a minority of people who have committed crimes.

WHISPER app - it is anonymous but helpful with reporting.

Snapchat location is a safety concern but it has been spoken about in school. Talk about the consequences of doing these things. We also do a lot of work on making the children feel safe if they need to let someone know if they have made a mistake or they have done something they shouldn't have.

Parents spoke about difficulties with electronic devices and children.

Parent concern: Edulink – there is a button that can easily bring up the pupils' address.

Miss Cronin said she would look into this and alert Mr Hollingsworth.

Mrs Bligh showed parents some Pupil Information on Wellbeing created by Mrs Ellis and expressed her thanks. Parents can talk about the site with their child to see what help is available to them if they feel they need it.

## 9. **Presentation on Supporting Your Child (Lauren Carvalho)**

Letter will go out to prompt people to let them know that this presentation is to share Lauren's experience, it will not be a lecture, it will give helpful information on how to get your child to open up to you. 70 parents/carers and staff have shown interest so far. Lauren has done a couple of presentations in churches already.

Dragonflies charity has been running for 20 years and some of our children have had support for bereavement. Would be useful to hear about a package of support that is put together for children.

Parent question: how long is the presentation likely to be?  
DC: approximately 1 hour with time for questions.

Concern from a parent regarding enough time to digest the information before going home and receiving questions from children. Miss Cronin will ask Lauren to give pointers and tips.

Miss Cronin confirmed that this presentation is for adults only.

## 10. **Any Other Business**

- **School Jumpers** - Miss Cronin showed morning parents some sample jumpers. Two from Price and Buckland and one from M&S. The jumpers were passed around for parents to feel and comment on.

A parent asked about whether the school had thought about blazers. Miss Cronin explained that when lots of academies went to blazers, parents preferred St Richard's to stay with jumpers. Uniform also needs to be affordable. Pupils have not voted in favour of blazers when asked.

Parent comments on jumpers:

- M&S jumper: Yes - really liked this jumper, but some thought it may be too thin
- Price and Buckland (lighter colour, thin): Parents didn't like the quality of this as it felt very thin.
- Price and Buckland (thicker): Yes - but most agreed that they would need to see how it washes.

Miss Cronin explained that we would probably be looking to change jumpers in approx 1.5 years to improve the quality.

- Can Extra-Curricular sheet be re-published so parents/carers can see the offer beyond sports.
- Year 11 Parents Evening – staff really helpful. They were positive and encouraging to parents and pupils.
- Unseen poetry is a challenge in English. Parents need advice on how to help with this.
- Can we have the maths helpsheet.
- Maths revision workbook is not on Parent Pay.
- Mrs Barrow recommended Running Space – a support team helping people in Bexhill, Hastings, Eastbourne in dealing with issues related to suicide.
- Shortage of science teachers - Parental concern that their child doesn't have a permanent teacher. Miss Cronin explained that Mr Tadros and Mr Lahache have been going between the classes so that all saw a specialist for at least 50% of their lessons. Mr Filsell is now back from paternity leave and is supporting too. Miss Roycroft kindly taught 3 Year 11 science classes for the first fortnight as a group. It

is difficult at the moment but we are doing all we can to recruit an appropriate specialist.

- Topics for next meeting:
  - Achievement points
  - PSHEe and Sex and Relationships Education
  - Other topics – please email Luciana at [mrsfrangellal@strichardscc.com](mailto:mrsfrangellal@strichardscc.com) or [palmt@strichardscc.com](mailto:palmt@strichardscc.com)

### **Attachments**

[Options Model Sheet](#)

[Year 10 profile \(with intervention\)](#)

[Year 10 profile \(no intervention\)](#)

[Reporting Cycle 2022-2023](#)

[Feedback and Assessment Policy](#)