

Minutes Parents' Forum Meeting

Tuesday 26th September 2023 at 1:30pm

Attendees

Kate Barnes – Headteacher
Jayne Davies – Deputy Head and SENCO
Harriet Johnston – School Secretary
Cecile Greener – Year 3
Jane Read – 5RB
Alexandra Grant – 5W
Fleur Sinclair – 6H

1. Vicarage Lane issues, difficulties and dangers for pedestrians

The school aware of the overgrown brambles and the wasps' nest on Vicarage Lane. These have been reported to the council and we have requested that parents also report this. Unfortunately, the council have advised that the wasps' nest is on private land, and they are unable to help further. In regard to the traffic congestion and the speed cars are travelling, Mrs Barnes suggested that the Haslemere Active Travel group were contacted. She believes the people in charge there are called Liz Burton and Alistair Bayliss. Essentially, they are running a lot of schemes in and around Haslemere to encourage people to walk to and from school, they have installed lots of scooter and bike stands and helped to pay for badges which children can 'earn' if they make active steps getting to school.

Although this doesn't help the bramble/wasp situation, hopefully if we all try and encourage more people to walk, scoot, bike to school maybe the council will listen and keep the bushes maintained - or maybe the Active Travel group could put pressure on them and say this is hampering people being able to walk to school as it is unsafe.

We discussed whether we needed signage added to Vicarage Lane to remind parents as it is busy during school time and to drive carefully, particularly as children and adults often are forced to walk in the road due to the bushes and wasp situation.

2. Google forms for sporting events as this would be much easier for completion

The school will discuss this with Mrs Thompson as we also think this may be a very helpful tool.

3. Lunch spaces now all the children have to sit at picnic tables at lunch

We have plenty of space both inside and outside for children to eat their lunch but, with the help of the PTFA, the school are purchasing some additional picnic tables to make this even easier for children. Now we are entering the Autumn/Winter, children will move inside to eat lunch due to the weather change.



4. If there is an area of improvement it would be around removing the confusion that is normally reflected on our whatsapp chat, so what the kids should be wearing or bringing with them on any given day, what the homework is, where it can be found, how it should be submitted and when it's due. There's multiple modes of communication- website, Google classroom, notes in bags etc. Not all are well maintained. I suspect that if they pick one mode and are rigorous in keeping it up to date that it would be better.

The school will always correspond with parents via email or letter. We recommend parents always make sure to read the fortnightly newsletter as this is our primary means of communication, particularly in regards to forthcoming dates. In regards to whatsapp, we don't have any control on what is said/communicated on this parent platform, therefore school emails will always be the most reliable form of communication. If parents are confused about anything, please contact the School Office for clarification.

5. More access to musical instruments. Would be lovely to see a few more musical instrument classes being offered or just some taster sessions so the children can try different instruments to see if there's anything they would like to take up

Last term, the school were able to purchase a set of ukuleles and Year 6 will be using these in Music lessons this year. The school also runs a violin club during lunchtime (violins are provided and these can be taken home). We are also pleased that Sussex Academy of Music are likely to be restarting face to face lessons in the coming weeks and we are in discussion with them on this matter. We are always keen to showcase as much music talent as possible and Year 5 are visiting St Christopher's Church this month to listen to classical music in the afternoon, courtesy of HHH Concerts.

6. Swimming summer term seemed a bit as hoc and no swimming club this time? Any feedback? Parents feel would have been better off at the Herons like other schools, as some lessons were on 15 minutes long or cancelled due to scheduling.

We feel very fortunate to have a swimming pool on site and that children have access to swimming every year. At Key Stage 2, the legal requirement is that children must undertake one terms worth of swimming at some stage in Juniors. This actually means that during the four years of junior school children need to swim for one term and this is legally all that is required. We obviously have the ability to provide so much more than this and feel fortunate to do so. If we were to change to swimming at The Herons, the children wouldn't swim each year and it would likely be much more costly due to the swimming pool hire and coach hire. We do try to keep the pool open as much as possible although due to the age of the pool we have to manually mix the chlorine which can mean (particularly when the weather is very hot as chlorine evaporates).



7. Inter-school/district sports events. Parents would appreciate some feedback regarding how we decide what to participate in, how we prepare kids to take part and what the objectives are in doing so. The feedback from inter-school cricket, cross country and district sports last year is that our school is continually under prepared to take part in these events and the kids come away feeling they aren't good at a particular event or sport as a result. If there is a need for parent involvement to help get ready for these events etc it would be helpful to know so parents can drum up support. It's not very fun for kids to arrive enthusiastic only to quickly discover they come last in every event or don't know how the game works etc whereas the opposing schools have clearly had some practice before these big events. Important communicate that this is not a criticism - all realise we are very constrained on resources and time. This is more raising it so we can work together with the school to improve the offering for our kids.

We are aware this is an area of improvement and will discuss and identify ways we can explain our sport events more clearly to parents – particularly those in Year 3. Unfortunately, within these sporting events, we do compete against some very large schools so are often up against very stiff competition. We certainly do not want any children to feel discouraged, but we are aware that sometimes this may be the case. We have in the past reached out to parents to see if anyone could volunteer to help teach areas of sports in addition to the PE lessons, so if anyone is able to offer this, we would be very grateful.

8. Could school consider a teacher led boys football club after school? Could be open to all.

This is certainly something we can look into and we will raise this with Mrs Thompson when she looks at the after school clubs next term. We are really keen to keep Girls Football separate though as we know this is a sport the girls love to take part in but they prefer not to have the boys with them. We shall certainly look into this.

9. More languages and language activities.

We would love to invite more parents/volunteers in to school to talk about other countries/languages and cultures. We may look to run a French after school club or a French ECA. If any parents are able to offer their time, please do contact the School Office. As with all these things, we would love to do as much as possible but we your help.

10. RE - more information re the curriculum and whether we offer a non-biased viewpoint?

Our RE curriculum is set by the local authority and isn't a national curriculum. Our scheme of work is on the website and we are always happy to discuss the curriculum and any concerns or questions. We are not a faith school and although the Government require all maintained schools to have a Christian view/element we are careful to talk about religion by saying 'Christians believe...' rather than 'We believe...' and we always offer a fair and unbiased viewpoint, recognising that we have many faiths in school. If any parents would like any clarity on anything taught in RE please do contact us.