



1st Year Parent Forum Monday 15th November 2018

Attendees:

- College staff: Mr D Rainey, Acting Principal, Mr J Cutting Associate Assistant Principal, Miss S McCrory, Director of KS3
- Parents

Overview:

The parents' forum meets to discuss aspects of Ambrosian life and plans, not least the education and welfare of the boys and gentlemen of the Sixth Form. Operating in partnership with parents, our school is an extension of the care and attention that is given to our pupils at home. Communication is very important to us and one way in which parents can meet the Principal in an informal relaxed setting is by participating in the parent forum. The process enables parents to give school leaders feedback on proposals, acting as a sounding board for new ideas and initiatives. This enables the College to develop new approaches to both academic and pastoral aspects of college life. This two way communication is an invaluable medium for the leadership of the College and it is also an opportunity for parents to have a voice within the College.

Mr Cutting, Associate Assistant Principal, is responsible for Parent Engagement and is the point of contact regarding Parent Forum.

Minutes:

The event was led by the Acting Principal, who commented on each of the topics below based on questions or queries which had been received in advance. There was opportunity for parents to respond which allowed for further dialogue. Comments ranged broadly, the notes below are a summary of key themes.

Is it possible for pupils to have access to a Virtual Private Network to access the school server, OneDrive, email etc to enable synchronising work at home and school more easily? In addition can the school share a common approach to presentation of work across all subjects?

In the light of a change in the computing syllabus, we realised boys often had not been taught the basics in terms of remote working. As a result, activities lessons taught by Mr Evans will run 'how to' sessions to upskill pupils in their ability to access emails, navigating the OneDrive & accessing MILK. In addition, digital literacy skills using software packages to ensure consistent approach to presentation of work will focus initially on PowerPoint, Word Processing, File Management and Image resolution and resizing. All students will be taught how to access the OneDrive in order to access documents at home.

After school detention criteria

All staff will implement the following behaviour management system to ensure a consistent approach for all pupils. There may be occasions that warrant escalating through the stages dependent on the severity of the offence.



Academic route

Stage 1: Class teacher DT

Stage 2: Subject leader

Stage 3: Thursday night SLT

Stage 4: Saturday Morning. (Missing Thursdays = Saturday Morning)

- NB – This relates to escalation of detentions only and not directly to the issuing of pink slips and the removal of credits.

Pastoral route

Stage 1: Pink slip

Stage 2: Detention Dinner/Afterschool

Stage 3: Thursday night SLT

Stage 4: Saturday Morning.

Possibility of a cooking club

Cooking club is an established extra curricular activity, taking place each week at lunch time with Mrs Coultas in the cooking room. Pupils interested in joining need to enquire directly to Mrs Coultas for further details. Twelve pupils attended the activity week commencing 12th November 2018. We recognise the value of having a 'cooking room' and plans are underway to revisit the current key stage 3 curriculum plan and staffing to allow for it to be used more in 2018/19.

Parents' evening

We trialled a new format at first year parents' evening. Leadership acknowledge KS3 have a higher number of subjects compared to KS4 and 5, where the new format would certainly work with fewer issues. The forum acknowledge the restraints when trying to review 14 subjects with 180 pupils will unfortunately result in some parents and teachers unable to fit in time for a one to one meeting. The length of parents' evenings cannot be extended by the school in the current academic year, as this would require revisiting directed time with union consultation. However, leadership may review this for 2019/20.

Advice to parents going forward– prioritise who you need to see based on academic reviews and email staff members they have not been able to see on the evening if necessary. Many schools do not allow staff to email parents and carers directly however St Ambrose value this method of communication in a digitally reliant society.

Parents of boys in other year groups stated that the new format was an improvement and commented on the calmness of the event in comparison with previous experiences.

Bullying

The anti-bullying policy is available on the school website for parents and pupils to review at any time and this is followed consistently should incidents arise. In addition, pupils have had anti-bullying assemblies in line with the annual national campaign this term as well as studying causes and consequences in their PSHE lessons.

Sanctions are in place as well as restorative practice to rebuild relationships where incidents have occurred.

House Tutors are the first port of contact regarding incidents of bullying, as they see pupils on a daily basis. They will endeavour to make themselves available as soon as concerns are raised and will feed through to Head of House and parents and carers where necessary.



Parents should always let school know where there are concerns with regard to bullying and safeguarding. There are systems within school for boys raise alarms. Advice on the evening was to use Mrs Burton where possible due to her role within school including a range of pastoral areas.

School Bus

School Bus timing: Unfortunately we do not have any control over the TFGM timetable. However, further information is available on their website or by contacting 0871 200 22 33 (Greater Manchester Transport).

The bus company facilitate student transport to school based on diagnostics and admissions – (post codes). Initially this academic year there appeared to be problems with parents dropping off outside their post code causing overcrowding and some pupils being refused admission due to the buses being full. Operators are now happy with the capacity of the buses and the issues seem to have been resolved.

How is the College addressing behaviour on buses:

We currently have bus monitors from 6th form who report to staff and leadership regarding incidents as they occur. Sanctions are always put in place, which have resulted in pupils being banned from using the bus services for a set period of time, reflecting the severity of the incident. Our relationships with different bus companies varies – we are never guaranteed access to CCTV on buses when applicable but we do request it when we feel it would benefit investigations in to incidents.

Homework:

A new homework policy launched this term aimed at addressing concerns raised by parents and carers. 'Next day' homework will be avoided where possible, except for MFL vocabulary tests. Research shows that next lesson vocab tests have a positive impact for MFL and therefore this will continue going forward.

The College does not operate a homework timetable as previous experience resulted in restricting the quality of pieces set. It is our intention that relevant tasks are set that will embed learning in the classroom with the aim of adding stretch and challenge where appropriate. Excessive amounts of homework should be a rarity, however we acknowledge there may be spikes due to end of unit test scheduling. We advise pupils and parents liaise with staff as soon as it becomes apparent deadlines cannot be realistically met in order to agree a way forward.

Changes to the homework policy have been made in light of the feedback given by parents at the forum.

Thank you to all attendees for the contribution.

St Ambrose College