

## Parent Council Meeting – 27<sup>th</sup> November 2024

**Chair:** Fiona Wyeth

**Present:** Laura Harrison, Liz Chapman, Sarah Warriss-Simmons, Jessica Pizzotti, Emma Daniel, Sarah Thomason, Claire Whitlam, Clare Albert, Claire Brady, Rosie Ogletorpe

**Absent:** Governors, Siobhan Branch, Teresa Pepper, Robert Price

<b>1. Parent code of conduct</b>
Signed by all class representatives present this evening
<b>2. Feedback from parents about removing the stagger for January 2025 so all children arrive at the same start time 08.30am and all finish at 3.25pm</b>
Feedback and suggestions from class reps included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Y6 preferred having an earlier start and the same finish time but adding 5 mins to one of the breaks</li><li>• Y5 were happier with the earlier drop off as this works better for working parents but would prefer a 10 minute window for drop off. Raised concern that anxious children may feel rushed</li><li>• Y4 feedback was the same as Y6</li><li>• Y3 would prefer a drop off window of 10 minutes minimum and concerned about the queue which goes back down to Lordsfield. Also raised the concern about anxious children feeling rushed with a shorter drop off</li><li>• Year 2 feedback similar comments to other years with concern about safety of children queuing up the road and proximity to cars driving up. They would like to go in earlier and wait outside classroom but appreciate this may not be helpful for those with additional needs who go in earlier in order to settle and may find others waiting outside disruptive</li><li>• Year 1 – no concern re stagger/removing this although some concern raised that 5 minutes is too quick to get all children in, concern raised around safety of queue up the road and at the gate when waiting for school to open</li><li>• Year R : One class did a survey for parents opinions and 60% were happy with timings and removing the stagger. Remaining 40% made suggestions around a 15min window to drop off and if pre Covid plans should be considered</li><li>• Other feedback was that the short window for drop off makes it difficult for childminders and those with multiple children and getting to each drop off area so suggestion was to open the gate 5 minutes earlier so parents can be outside at 8.25am waiting but teachers wouldn't be expected to have children in the classroom earlier</li><li>• Concerns around the queue back to Lordsfield Gardens and the safety of this with the traffic passing quite close and children dipping into the road to get further up the queue. Concerns also raised around the waiting area by the gate as some children can find this challenging which can impact behaviour</li><li>• Some parents asked about the procedure pre-Covid and if an option to go back to this. Mrs Wyeth raised that this did have it's own issues with younger children often getting lost in the busy drop off</li></ul>

- Concerns around those children who struggle with anxiety or who are neurodiverse and find the start of the day challenging, how best to enable them quiet time to settle in and not feel rushed
- Children coming in with parent and waiting on the playground. Mrs Wyeth explained that this then becomes an issue for school as they then become responsible once on site so need to ensure safety for those children who enter school without a parent/guardian
- Mrs Wyeth commented that the one-way system has worked well and has eased congestion around the Year R classrooms. It also protects our youngest children by ensuring their area is calmer with less through traffic
- Mrs Wyeth also mentioned that part of the planning for the new pre-school will include an additional entrance nearer to Lordsfield Gardens so this may also ease congestion

**ACTION: Mrs Wyeth will take suggestions and comments back for discussion with the Governors**

### **3. Friday early finish and shorter breaks**

- Mrs Wyeth explained that schools are required to provide all children with 32.5 hours of time in school each week and confirmed that currently children get just over this. It was explained that the 32.5 hours is not affected by the early Friday finish
- Mrs Wyeth explained that the early Friday finish enables the children to have their teacher for all of their classroom time rather than losing their teacher for a session each week (to teacher planning as teachers are entitled to 10% for this) which can be disruptive and also difficult for those children who need consistency. For the teachers if they are in class consistently it improves the flow of learning with the children and they are able to plan and prepare with year colleagues and it is beneficial for their wellbeing and therefore retention of staff
- Mrs Wyeth explained that the two teachers who previously covered PPA time for teachers are now able to teach their specialism and the children benefit from music and French lessons in Key Stage 2. During the time French or music are taught the class teacher is able to do interventions/additional learning support for those children in the class who need extra time
- A parent asked about timings of afternoon breaks and Mrs Wyeth explained that these are at the discretion of the year groups (to best fit in with learning) and to provide a movement break for children (explaining that this needed to be flexible when the weather is wet etc)
- Mrs Wyeth was asked if children missed their breaks as some children report this happening when some of the class had not behaved. She said that this would not happen frequently as the majority of the children could be sent out with the other class
- A parent asked whether 45 minutes was long enough at lunch break to ensure children have been able to eat and also to get outside to play/run around. Mrs Wyeth explained that this was enough with most children having 20-25 minutes to eat and then the remainder to play

**ACTION: None noted**

#### **4. Healthy eating – snacks, birthday sweets and survey results, wrap around care**

- Mrs Wyeth explained that she has done a lot of reading and research on healthy eating and current NHS guidance for 6-12 yr olds. A parent who is a dentist has also been keen to support discussions around this as has a dietician
- Discussion around what constitutes a healthy snack and that a source of protein may be better than a white bread roll. Mrs Wyeth is keen to broaden the healthy snack list and took suggestions from the Council
- The issue of how to monitor healthy snacks was discussed as some children feel upset if not all children follow the rules as it feels unfair. A parent raised concerns around a snack being removed from a vulnerable child because it is not on the list of healthy snacks and how it is challenging for children if the healthy message is not adopted at home and Mrs Wyeth agreed that this needed to be handled sensitively (fruit and vegetables can be offered as an alternative and the item eaten at lunchtime)
- Concern around not losing the healthy food message in the birthday sweet discussion and looking at this as a bigger picture of promoting healthy eating within the school
- The importance of starting the healthy eating message from year R and re-thinking the year R picnic to ensure healthy options provided there and highlighting this for new parents
- The importance of language and not ‘banning’ certain foods, messaging should be that no food is bad but some foods need to be limited to treats and healthy options highlighted
- Suggestions made around dieticians and dentist parents doing talks for children on healthy eating, making good choices, caring for teeth etc.
- Mrs Wyeth fed back that the school survey results were 89% in favour of keeping birthday sweets. Mrs Wyeth will look at the messaging around this to try to promote that nothing banned, there are alternatives that could be brought in, and if sweets are given suggest moderation and eaten with a meal. She would incorporate all this into the Healthy Eating Policy and share this with the Council
- Mrs Wyeth advised that in the wrap around care, food has been revamped and what children are now/will be offered is more in line with healthy eating – cereal or toast with water or milk at breakfast club; cheese, carrots, bread sticks and crumpets at after school club.

**ACTION: Mrs Wyeth will look to produce an expanded snack list**

**Mrs Wyeth will look at preparing communications to parents to explain what trying to promote with healthy eating**

**Mrs Wyeth will look to arrange some education sessions for children around healthy eating**

#### **5. School meals – portion size, creating a culture guidance, photographs of meals**

- Mrs Wyeth confirmed that portion sizes are different for key stage 1 and 2
- Mrs Wyeth confirmed DfE culture guidance is being followed
- Mrs Wyeth advised pictures of school meals are being taken so these can be shared after Christmas

**ACTION: None, pictures of meals in progress.**

<b>6. Disposable packed lunches for trips</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mrs Wyeth confirmed that children can bring their usual packed lunch box for most school trips and will be no longer being asked to put their lunch in a plastic bag in recognition of reducing the plastic waste burden</li> </ul>
<b>ACTION: Mrs Wyeth to ask Admin team to amend day trip letters</b>
<b>7. Increasing wrap around care, bookings for wrap around care - breakfast club (BC) and after school club (ASC)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A parent raised a concern around limited provision and so unable to plan to use the BC and ASC as never sure if there will be a space</li> <li>The issue of the financial cost to parents of having to book a term in advance was raised and that for shift workers they may not know their shifts to be able to book that far in advance</li> <li>It was acknowledged that the short time frame given for when bookings will open, does not necessarily enable parents with childcare vouchers to move money across in time</li> <li>Feedback is that some children are not enjoying ASC, with restrictions on activities. Whilst there is recognition that children need different things and some will want structured play and some will want to be active outside</li> <li>Positive comments around the teacher and LSA led after school clubs had been received</li> <li>Feedback from Mrs Wyeth that there have been issues with staffing levels for wrap around care so by opening for half terms gives parents certainty of booking and school ability to plan staffing. Explained that staff will have different skills so there will be variation on what is offered during wrap around care. Explained the content of wrap around care is monitored and staff have been told that they cannot use the TV to fill the time. Explained it is challenging to supervise multiple activities especially if some children want to be inside and others want to be outside, so some days may suit some children and not others depending on the activity. Mrs Wyeth will continue to drop into sessions and to talk to staff about what can be offered regularly</li> <li>Mrs Wyeth advised there will likely be increased provision for BC and ASC in the future with the new pre-school provision as year R may be able to join this provision for wrap around care</li> </ul>
<b>ACTION: Mrs Wyeth to report back on activities for Wrap around care</b>

Agenda items not covered and deferred to the next meeting:

1. Advanced notice of inset days
2. Use of daily mile track and amphitheatre
3. Outdoor PE in bad weather
4. Path outside of school
5. Donations from parents to support learning
6. Support offered to families

**Date for next meeting:** Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> January at 7.15pm (PLEASE NOTE slightly earlier start time)