



Parents' Forum Notes

22nd March at 5.15pm,

1.	Welcome and Introductions Parents were welcomed to the meeting and all present introduced themselves. No set agenda, the meeting focussed on comments from Parents from the feedback form.
2.	Responses from Parents' comments: Mrs Veide (CVE) provided some updates to parents: Comments from parents' included: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ClassCharts is being used inconsistently as students are receiving merits and C3s in the same lesson.• KS3 Data reports these were not easy to understand and parents would prefer students to receive a grade.• Concerns that there is still no School Crossing Patrol on Ashdale Road. Parents were informed that DCC are responsible for manning this and there has been difficulties recruiting to the role. Academy staff are on duty at the crossing but are not legally allowed to stop traffic just to have a presence. Parents discussed parents parking on double yellow lines and the concerns about how busy the road is. Parents discussed contacting the local MP to intervene and suggested having a new crossing if they cannot man this. Parents also suggested asking PSCOs to have a presence after school.• Girls being refused to use the toilets.• Problems relating to students early passes where often the gates are locked and then this causes problems when all students leave the building.• Lack of parental involvement regarding SEN.• Poor communication regarding staff not returning calls. Not clear how to contact staff as messages are not responded to. Parents requested for all staff to have automatic response on all external messages, advising that staff only respond to emails during working hours. Parents also asked to be notified when staff are absent as this will allow them to know why they are not getting calls back.

<p>3.</p>	<p>Staff queries</p> <p>Parents expressed concerns about the amount of supply being used and added that this is causing concern for some Year 11 students who are considering the Sixth form, but are concerned about the lack of consistent teachers which is making them re-consider the options post Year 11.</p> <p>Parents were informed that the Academy should be fully staffed in September. There have been some issues with staff absences and with difficulty obtaining good quality cover supervisors but this is a national picture.</p> <p>Parents also expressed concerns about the high turnover of staff last year, 32 new staff started in September, and students are aware of more staff leaving the Academy which is very unsettling for students. Parents were advised that staffing seems to have settled and the high turnover is not expected to be repeated this year.</p> <p>Parents discussed when students are informed that teachers are leaving and who the new staff member will be as this is important especially for SEN students.</p> <p>Parents commented on rumours of students vaping before, during and after school. Parents were informed that students are educated on these concerns during Aspire lessons and if students are caught vaping they are dealt with in line with the Behaviour Policy.</p> <p>Parents suggested working closely with humankind who can deliver educational sessions to students regarding these matters. Parents also discussed how the academy could share information with parents to educate them on the concerns of vaping and other harmful substances. CVE to Action.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>SEN</p> <p>Parents discussed that Classcharts is not SEN friendly. Parents expressed concern about the way some teachers speak to SEN students and stated that the whole culture of the Academy is not SEN friendly. Main concerns related to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff do not return calls. • Inappropriate comments from staff during meetings. Ie when parent mentioned that the Academy is not SEN friendly staff commented 'you are not only parent who feels like this'. • Third SENCO in a Year – no consistency. • Time it has taken to have an SEN review- these should be completed Yearly, has detrimental impact on mental health. • Parents commented that some staff lack understanding of students' well-being and always assume the negative

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classcharts is more focussed on academic matter and there is no record of smaller achievement, an example being for some SEN students actually attending school is a positive. Students are given merits on classchart but no reason why and this is not helpful for SEN children. • Parents promised SEN contact at the end of every term – this has not happened • SEN an area for development for all staff. • Parents further commented on 'the caring side' of the Academy and gave an example of how students are spoken to when out of/late to lesson with staff too quick to assume students are truanting and should instead ask students if they need help or the reason they are out of lessons. Parents commented on the lack of respect for students and too many occasions staff assume students are doing something wrong.
5.	<p>Uniform</p> <p>Parents discussed issues with uniform deliveries over the summer, which caused stress for some students whose blazers were not delivered on time.</p> <p>Parents were informed that there would be two uniform sizing sessions for Year 6 parents.</p> <p>Parents' expressed concerns that the standards of uniform are poor again, CVE explained that students are challenged on incorrect uniform but there would be another push to remind students and parents of the expectations.</p>
6.	<p>Year 9/Options</p> <p>Parents discussed concerns that more students are being directed to science subjects and that Computer Science and DT are not offered at GCSE and instead students are put on BTEC courses. Some parents expressed their frustrations that students cannot complete computer science as this will have a negative impact if students wish to study this subject at A level as the course content is different. Action: CVE to raise matter.</p>
7.	<p>Sixth Form</p> <p>Currently 160 applications for the Sixth form to start in Sept 2023, open evening and taster sessions will be held.</p> <p>Parents expressed concern about rumours that students regularly take drugs and the use of vapes in the toilets. Parents were informed that there is a new toilet system, where a member of staff ensures toilets are used properly and students need a toilet pass during lessons. Parents were informed that all students receive education on drugs in Aspire and it is also part of the development programme. There is not a problem with drugs in the Academy.</p>
8.	<p>AOB</p>

<p>Parents expressed concern that there is no school crossing patrol outside the Academy. CVE explained that this is the responsibility of Durham County Council who are having difficulty recruiting staff. Academy staff are on site every morning and evening to monitor road safety.</p>
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