



MINUTES OF PARENT VOICE GROUP MEETING

Date: Wednesday 27 September 2017

Present: Jo Kane, Clare Martinez, Marion Jones, Julia Moore, Michelle Loveland, Lisa Cross, Nicola Maynard, Nicky Arnold, Kay Beighton, Pascale Collins, Clare Whitaker, Helen Gozzett, Laura Smith, Fiona Kelly, Jayne Bridgeman, Samantha Cottam, Vicky Cornish, Go Donovan, Emma Gunton, David Campbell, Belinda Davies, Zoe Oddy, Sharon Madden, Lisa Shorney, Ann Jesney, Claire Lane, John Everard (Vice-Chair, Trustee) Jo Everett (Vice-Principal, Director of FRC), Carl Wakefield (Principal), Isabelle Courcha

Apologies: Sarah Norris, Clare Goodfellow, Sharon Jay, Rachel Mahoney, Jackie Larcombe, Adele Hinton.

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Item	INFORMATION, MAIN POINTS AND ACTION	BY WHOM	BY WHEN
1. Introduction of meeting	Mrs Courcha welcomed all parents/carers present and introduced Mrs Everett (Assistant Vice Principal-Director of FRC) and Mr Wakefield (Principal). Mr Wakefield presented John Everard and Clare Whitaker (Plume Trustees). Mr Wakefield also added that he has been a Plume parent himself since last July.		
2. Review of previous minutes	<p>- Following a discussion on fund raising, Mr Scott and Mrs Cross are to revive the Plume lottery.</p> <p>Mr Wakefield said that as funds are coming in, we need to be secure with procedures and so far, it has proved quite tough from a data protection view. With the new GDPR, it is a huge task but we will continue to persevere.</p>		

3. Discussions with Mrs Everett, Director of FRC	<p>Action Point - Mrs Cross and Mr Scott to feedback on progress with this in our next meeting</p> <p>- Mr Wakefield was to write a letter to parents to inform about the possibility of sending in any old/outgrown/no longer used uniform at the end of the summer term.</p> <p>Mr Wakefield explained that the end of last term was not the right time to do this to benefit from the new intake. He added that priority had also been given to a huge number of events including the hugely successful annual 7-10 Awards and Sports Awards Evening.</p>	Mrs Cross and Mr Scott	29-11-17
	<p>Action Point: Mr Wakefield will send the letter by the end of the first half term.</p> <p>-Mr Scott was to liaise with Mrs Kent to arrange reception of second-hand goods at FRC.</p> <p>Mr Wakefield said that this would now be MRC.</p> <p>- Mr Wakefield was to email the positive comments from the Parent Voice group to the Pastoral team.</p> <p>This was done by Mr Wakefield who also informed Parent Voice members that he is now line managing the Pastoral Team this academic year.</p> <p>Mr Wakefield introduced Jo Everett, Assistant Vice-Principal and Director of FRC (which is in itself the size of an average secondary school) and invited Parent Voice members to put forward any questions concerning FRC</p> <p>Mrs Everett started the discussion by giving feedback on a previous Parent Voice concern about the effectiveness of our notification of events. Mrs Everett has been working with Mr Jon Buitekant (Website manager) on the Plume App as an effective way of distribution of notifications. Mrs Everett added that parents/carers need to go to Playstore +iTune to download the App – Plume Academy App – to have notifications sent this way. A few PV</p>	Mr Wakefield	20-10-17

	<p>members who were familiar with this and used it were positive about this. However, not everyone is currently aware of this facility.</p> <p>Action point – message to parents/carers about the Plume App and details on how to download it.</p> <p>Mr Wakefield said that the academy also uses Twitter (now at 280 characters) and Facebook as well as the website, which is constantly updated.</p> <p>PV members said they receive all notifications for Parent Voice via all the channels mentioned successfully.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Thank you for the work experience – it was an excellent opportunity for my Year 10 son.</i> <p>Mrs Everett said that this had been very successful and that feedback had been positive. We are constantly looking to improve this as it is such a valuable experience for our students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>The transition activities during the holidays were really useful. A lot of homework was given but it has not been marked, and doesn't seem to have been followed up. It is a shame as it is a good thing and other schools do not send summer homework for transition</i> <p>Mrs Everett will check this and bring it up to the relevant curriculum areas and feedback will be given.</p> <p>Action point - to follow up the marking of the transition tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>The Year 11 Parent information evening was very useful for us</i> <p>Mrs Everett said that we are constantly looking at how to update and improve this evening. It is a very important evening and it needs to be tailored to its purpose.</p>	Mrs Everett	29-11-17
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	<p>Mr Wakefield added that the Parent Guide is also being developed with the view to be really informative for Parents/Carers</p> <p>- <i>I am a bit confused about the email we received about the change in homework setting for different year groups?</i></p> <p>Mrs Everett said that the main aim of homework is to develop and add to students' learning. Even though the form of the setting of homework has changed for some year groups, homework is still being set. Prior to this, faculties had set dates on which they could give homework, but now this has become more flexible. Setting homework via 'Show My Homework' still applies to Years 7 and 8.</p> <p>- <i>As a parent of a year 10 student, I feel it is still important that homework is set in that manner?</i></p> <p>Mr Wakefield added that the academy is following the OFSTED recommendation of setting homework 'as and when appropriate'. He also added that, in the current conditions of 'action short of strike action' due to teachers' workload, many schools are not setting homework any longer. As an academy, we still set homework and adhere to the OFSTED requirements of homework being set as and when appropriate. Currently, the setting of homework via Show My Homework is not compulsory for Year 9, 10 and 11, however, it is more prescriptive for years 7 and 8. Nevertheless, I know that a number of staff still set it for their classes in years 9-11 as they like to do so and enjoy using the SMHW framework.</p> <p>- <i>My child has 2 teachers in MFL in Year 9 and both set homework</i></p> <p>MFL set either 2 short pieces of homework or one longer one per week. Remember that if you have any concerns, please get in touch with the actual class teacher.</p> <p>- <i>I feel my child is getting too much homework?</i></p> <p>Mr Wakefield said it is always a struggle to get the balance right, however, the consistency of setting of homework in recent years has greatly improved. However, and once again, if</p>		
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	<p>you are worried about anything, please remember the importance and availability of direct communication with our staff.</p> <p>- <i>What is the turnaround for marking homework?</i></p> <p>Mr Wakefield said that there is in general a 2 to 3 week window in terms of marking books. Homework marking should include clear marking, individual and bespoke feedback and any further points aimed at helping the individual student to make further progress. If you have any concerns in relation to this, please engage in direct dialogue with your child's teacher, don't ever hesitate, and you can do this at any point in time. Mrs Everett also added that there are various methods of feedback which are not always visible as discussions may take place in the classroom and be in the form of verbal feedback.</p> <p>- <i>I have a son in Year 8 and his English homework, a nine week project on Private Peaceful, has been edited on Show My Homework. We had planned activities to supplement his learning - can staff edit homework given at any point?</i></p> <p>Mr Wakefield said that staff can edit and change deadlines at any point in time but the students are usually notified or informed during lessons.</p> <p>- <i>I have a question about homework given through 'My Maths' – does anyone look at it?</i></p> <p>Mr Wakefield assured that My Maths is monitored by teachers, although individual conversations are difficult. Also, there is a formal assessment every half term.</p> <p>- <i>I am not sure that my son's aspirations have gone down now that he is in Year 8 and I am seeing a difference. For instance, if targets are set at 80%, he won't bother to try to get higher scores?</i></p> <p>Mr Wakefield said that setting targets of 100% or too high can often be discouraging for some students and reaching 80% translates into a very good grade at GCSE. We need to set realistic expectations – for example our target for attendance is 95.5%, which is an ambitious target, however, setting this at 100% would not be realistic or achievable as a whole academy even though it is for some individual students. This is the same in lessons</p>		
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	<p>and for assessments and should it be befitting for an individual student to aspire to achieve 100% then that is what we would expect him/her to aspire to achieve,</p> <p>As a parent, however, you can have conversations about this at home also as children progress through the various academic years. Aspiration is also about taking responsibilities and realising the importance of making at least good progress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>About Maths homework, are there any parent friendly resources we could be recommended to help us support our children better?</i> <p>The maths curriculum has never been more challenging. – year 7 and 8 expectations in maths are now the same as the old GCSE, and in general, students have to work that much harder than in previous years in order to achieve the same grades as in previous years. We will be in touch with the maths faculty and will report back to you in our next meeting.</p> <p>Point of Action – Mrs Lewis/Maths Faculty - advice to Parents on possible parent friendly resources for home support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>I have a question about the Year 10 English Mock exams – are these being regraded?</i> <p>Mrs Everett said that regrading with the new grading system is now taking place. Prior to this summer’s exam results, we had no comparative data and no previous years’ benchmark to use. Mr Wakefield added that this would be the case for the next few years at least and that this is the difficulty faced by staff and students alike at the Academy as well as nationally.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>My daughter, a Year 13 English Language student, asked for past papers to practise and it was not possible as her teacher said that these were used for mocks and assessments?</i> <p>Mrs Everett will contact the English Faculty to ask what can be made available to students if they want to practise the new exam at home. Mr Wakefield reiterated that if parents have any questions they should not hesitate to get in touch with the individual teacher. The</p>	Mrs Lewis/ Maths Fac	29-11-17
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	<p>triangulation of home-student-academy is of paramount importance. However, another parent said that they had found it useful to check various websites.</p> <p>Action point - Year 13 English Language past papers/resource advice for exam home practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>My son is a Year 9 student, and losing the Show My Homework tool is a tough transition from year 7 and 8.</i> <p>Mrs Everett said that at FRC homework is not necessarily put on Show My Homework but it needs to be recorded somewhere by students if it is set and the student diary is a good source to use.</p> <p>Action point- Mrs Everett will email staff about the need for Year 9 students to record their homework if it has not been put on Show My Homework</p> <p>Mr Wakefield added that we should help our students become independent learners. There is a huge step after Year 11 and developing independent learning is crucial. Transition over time will bed in, and we will always take into consideration the age of students and the appropriateness of what is expected from them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>I have a question regarding revision starting in Year 9 (as in the letter we received before summer). Is it possible for students to take their books home to revise, or are they allowed to take pictures of their books?</i> <p>Mrs Everett said that students are allowed to take their books home and are able to take pictures of various pages in their books. They can also go on BBC bitesize and other websites etc. for extra practice at home. Mrs Everett will email staff about students bringing books home to consolidate their learning at home.</p> <p>Mr Wakefield said that students are able to take their books home but it must be made clear that it is the student's responsibility to bring it back as not doing so can cause problems in lessons and many staff have highlighted this as an issue.</p>	English Fac	29-11-17
		Mrs Everett	29-11-17

	<p>Action point - reminder to staff about enabling students to bring books back home when possible to support home learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>I came to collect my son from MRC last week, and it was a chaotic mess, a disgrace, leading to concerns with road safety. Could staff on duty be nearer the pedestrian entrance?</i> <p>Mr Wakefield said that student safety as they enter or exit the Academy is of the utmost importance and that the academy strives to ensure this. There is a staff presence at the gate at MRC before school and there are 6 staff managing buses in the evening, as up to 200 students taking buses at MRC or FRC. Since summer, there also has been a general increase in traffic, both around MRC and FRC. The academy has supported the reinstatement of the lollipop lady at the top of Fambridge Road to increase student safety there. We also continue to book in the external services to conduct safety assemblies and the Fire Brigade and a set of road safety plays are booked in for the next few weeks. These are just part of a broad, rich and diverse personal development programme.</p> <p>Action point - CWA/SLA/JEV – to extend safety measures/staffing for students exiting MRC</p> <p>Mrs Everett added that as well as the road safety events which are planned, the safe and responsible behaviour of students leaving the school are and will be discussed in general assemblies.</p> <p>Action point - check on duty rota that staff on after school duty are moved down the alley, facing the opposite path.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Do staff wear High Visibility jackets while they are on duty?</i> <p>Mr Wakefield said that staff do not currently wear these.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>About the uniform and the length of girls' skirts - at what point do you say they are too short? Is it still 5cm above or below the knee?</i> 	<p>Mrs Everett</p> <p>Mr Wakefield Mrs Everett Mr Lane</p> <p>Mrs Everett</p>	<p>29-11-17</p> <p>From Sep 17</p> <p>Oct 17</p>
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<p>4. Agenda items as per discussion</p>	<p>Mrs Everett said that the requirements for the length of the skirts has not changed. She added that individual conversations happen with students who need to be spoken to about this, as well as shoes. Students make these choices and staff do mark their cards which eventually will lead to detentions. Mr Wakefield added that Nicola Pruden, our assigned Standards and Excellence Commissioner, stated on her last visit that the academy's uniform is the best she has seen recently. Parents doing tours this week and last week were extremely positive about uniforms and how smart our students looked too. The length of the skirts is the remaining challenge and although we continue to tackle this, the vast majority wear it well. Staff do challenge, but students need to take responsibility for doing so too.</p> <p>Mr Wakefield also said that the standards of tours around the academy has been superb and he receive many comments to praise our students about their impeccable manners as well as their positive attitude towards their school and their learning....again, as well as their standard of uniform!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Uniform – new Year 7 student – the booklet says no trainers but a lot of their friends wear converse?</i> <p>Mrs Everett said that leather or fake leather was accepted but no canvas, and that many students wear traditional school shoes. If not sure, please get in touch with the school, and we will advise you.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>It may be worth adding this to the prospectus?</i> <p>Mr Wakefield advised that the prospectus will be updated after the next Ofsted visit. However, we also mention it during the year 6 Parents' Evening</p> <p>Action point: include the requirements for shoes in the Year 6 Parents' Evening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>I have a question about the PE kit. My son was asked to bring white socks but it is not part of the uniform list?</i> <p>There may be a good reason for this and Mr Wakefield once again highlighted the importance of getting in touch with teachers regarding any specific and individual queries.</p>	<p>Mr Lane</p>	<p>June18</p>
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	<p>- <i>I just wanted to mention that the College students look much smarter</i></p> <p>Mr Wakefield agreed with this. However, he also said that other sixth form institutions are going a different route and not adhering to this smart dress code. How is this translating into the current climate? Learning is the most important criteria and we need to conduct a review of the possible impact of this on our actual numbers.</p> <p>- <i>My son is very proud of wearing smart clothes to come into college and it has had a definite positive impact on his work ethic</i></p> <p>Yes, and it has done so on many College students. However, we need to take into account the perception of youngsters. Other institutions are giving more liberty with this and we need to estimate the width of who we are trying to entice into the College. Therefore, we can't allow this to be a factor against students' decisions after Year 11 and as they aspire to make choices.</p> <p>- <i>My son in year 8 has been charged a couple of times by the canteen in error, but was not well received by the office. He was disappointed and it took him half an hour of his lunchbreak.</i></p> <p>Mr Wakefield said it certainly was very unusual as MRC office staff work tirelessly for the optimum comfort and wellbeing of students. However, he said if anything like this should ever arise, then parents should always contact the respective Head of Year/Assistant Head of Year.</p> <p>- <i>What is the current policy on school visits?</i></p> <p>Mr Wakefield explained that currently, each school makes their own decisions regarding trips and visits. The decision made by the academy not to run school visits abroad has not been made lightly but with the absolute fact that we are responsible for the welfare and safety of students while on these trips. We also take the advice of the Home/ Foreign and Commonwealth Office as well as the local authority and currently we view international challenge as a risk we cannot mitigate against and is therefore too high a risk. This has been</p>		
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