



Parent Voice Meeting Run by parents, for parents

Minutes from Parent Voice meeting at Parsons Hall (7.30pm): 22/3/17

Attendees:

Parents – 10 (inc. the 2 parent governors)

Parent Governors - 2

Agenda:

1. Review of minutes from previous meeting
2. Matters arising
3. Policies – newly adopted; NONE
4. Policies – to be reviewed; Behaviour
5. Year 4 residential
6. AOB

Review of minutes from previous meeting

Agreed as a true representation of the meeting and approved

Matters arising

- A parent suggested possibly sending a letter/parentmail out regarding the change to the class photo format as a precursor to the new pictures coming out, as some parents may be expecting the previous style/format
- Cloak room response was read out by the chair – “We have looked into this and unfortunately there isn’t anywhere else for the trolleys to go that everyone can access easily first thing in the morning whilst hanging up coats. We had hoped the vast majority of children in KS1 would have free school dinners then we wouldn’t need to have lunch trolleys at all and we could fit in extra pegs”
- Mrs Alison’s trip to Singapore – a parent governor stated there was information on the homepage of the school’s website about the trip (scroll down to the bottom of the page), with a couple a photos too!

Policies – newly adopted

None at this meeting

Policies – to be reviewed

Behaviour Policy –

- A parent governor explained that historically there had been some inappropriate use of social media by parents (naming staff and/or other children in a negative manner). Therefore the school would like to add some information to the current behaviour policy, including an example letter to be sent out to any parent who doesn’t follow the expectations of the policy

- Some parents asked what 'inappropriate use' of social media would include. A parent governor explained that it would include using staff and/or other children's names in a negative way. A parent suggested the school send out a letter/parentmail explaining what inappropriate use of social media would include
- A parent stated they were unsure of what to do if they had a concern/query/issue relating to school. A parent governor explained the school's website has contact details, an e-mail option and the formal complaints policy. Mrs Thom is also available to speak to in the mornings. A suggestion was made to create a basic flowchart/simple one page guide for parents if they had a concern/query/issue. All agreed this would be a good idea (see attached for an example). Another suggestion was a 'comments' box in the reception area for any parent who had a concern/query/issue, but felt they couldn't approach a member of school staff (maybe for confidence reasons)
- Parents read the example letter; several felt it was worded very strongly and this would possibly irritate/upset/antagonise the parent it had been sent to. A suggestion was made that a 'more gentle approach' would be better – an invitation from the school to the parent to come into school to discuss the reasons why the parents felt the need to put their comments on social media, and a solution to the original issue sought

School response - Below is the suggestion now added to the policy;

The parents involved will be telephoned and invited into school for a meeting with the headteacher/deputy headteacher to look for a resolution to the issue that is causing distress.

If parents choose not to accept this invitation then a letter requesting them to attend will be sent. (See letter appendix 4)

Parent Voice Format

- A parent governor gave a brief history of Parent Voice (previously attended by Mrs Thom, who arranged the agenda, chaired the meetings & took notes), now run by parents who take turns chairing, writing the agenda and taking notes/minutes. This was discussed as quite a daunting and time-consuming task to many parents
- A few parents felt that Parent Voice needed structure, and some sort of representation from school (either staff or a parent governor at each meeting). A parent governor added that they were at parent voice as a parent, and could not always guarantee their attendance at every meeting. There have been some guidance written for chairing and taking notes/minutes, this was shared
- A parent governor explained that at a recent Governors meeting there was a discussion around the Parent Voice Facebook page. The decision had now been made to make the Facebook page an 'information out' only platform, to encourage parents to attend Parent Voice meetings if they had a contribution to make. Therefore, comments made would need to be shared in person at a meeting
- One parent felt it was important that parents who were unable to attend had their views shared (either via the Facebook page, or through speaking to other members). They felt this would show trends of any concerns/issues shared by multiple parents
- The chair explained that once the notes/minutes had been written, they are sent to Mrs Alison for her approval and feedback. It was made clear that notes/minutes were not changed, just added too
- A suggestion was made, that due to the complexities for a volunteer chair, that the school produce the agenda, copy any handouts/policies to be reviewed and the previous meetings minutes, and the chair then collects them from the office on the morning of the meeting
- It was suggested that a Parentmail was sent out one week before the next meeting as a reminder to parents and the possibility of a questionnaire to gain an understanding of parents views of Parent Voice

Year 4 residential

The chair read out an e-mail sent by Mrs Alison –

I wonder if you would like to discuss at Parent Voice tonight initial thoughts on Y4 residential for next year? The reason I suggest it is that this year we managed to get a deal – which isn't available next year – for PGL to pay for the coaches. This meant that the cost was kept down to £112.50 for 3 days 2 nights at Claythorpe Lincolnshire . Next year it is likely to be just under £200. Obviously a big increase. We have looked at maybe somewhere nearer so parents can drive their children over e.g. Everdon, but it is still a significant price increase £170 ish.

- All parents felt the price increase was far too much for the length of time the children would be away
- It was suggested that further research could be carried out into other locations to compare prices (maybe 4 or 5 other venues – Irthlingborough? Grendon?) , and possibly shorten the length of the trip to keep costs down

School response - We will look into a range of options and aim to give PV the figures for the next meeting

- One parent asked if FICPS could donate towards residential trips. This was discussed, and parents were reminded that current fund raising and monies were going towards the new playground equipment for all children

School response - FICPS don't tend to give to one year group specifically because they say all parents support them so all children should benefit. They do give every year group £100 towards transport costs of day trips for each year group.

- Another suggestion was that the year group whose residential it was could possibly do some fundraising for their year group towards their residential

AOB

- **Parent governor**

The chair shared with all present that a current parent governor had resigned from their position, therefore a Parentmail had gone out today for a nomination for a parent governor

- **Communication**

- Several parents felt that communication from school to parents regarding dates/events was often sent too late/not enough notice. Many parents added that due to work commitments, it was difficult, at short notice, to arrange time for events such as gold award

- This parent voice meeting's agenda was not shared prior to the meeting via Parentmail

School response - Once the Chair has agreed the agenda could they send to Tracie Larkins to ensure it does go out to parents?

- The titles on Parentmail were discussed, several parents commented that the title was often mis-leading, as the content often contained more than the title suggested. Would it be possible to have a broader title if the message contains more than one piece of information

School response - I have taken that suggestion to Tracie Larkins.

- A few parents felt frustrated that 'communication' had been raised in several previous Parent Voice meetings, and that there needed to be some resolutions to some of the issues raised. With regards to sharing information - a parent governor did explain that information is available to parents in a variety of ways - on the school's website as well as on Parentmail, and each child has a DB Primary page with some class information within it

- One parent questioned why some sports clubs are listed on the school's diary, and others are not?

School response - We will look into this.

- One parent asked if it would be possible for the text sent out regarding gold award stated the child's name, because when you have 2 children attending school, it is not clear which one it is for

School response - I think this is because it is one message that is then sent to 15 recipients as sending individual ones is more expensive and time consuming. I will ask that we add – ‘do feel free to check with the office which child’.

- A discussion took place around when your child first starts at school and the information given to you as a new parent. All agreed the ‘pack’ you receive is good. There was a suggestion of an additional leaflet/booklet/sheet to include information on – what ‘houses’ are and the colours, what value beads and merits are & how they are earned, how to use DB Primary, a simple guide to reading (how often at school & home, that parents need to fill in the log every time), the purpose of library books (a book to share as a family, not to necessarily read by your child), use of Tapestry, a simple explanation of the behaviour systems in place. It was discussed as “things the children might tell you, but don’t have all the facts!”

School response - As we will have a new FS leader and the new parent pack will need updating I will suggest we add explanations for those points raised.

- **Frequency of PE in Foundation stage**

One parent asked about how often PE takes place in Foundation Stage (FS). There was a discussion around the importance of PE, and how FS have access to the outdoors as part of their everyday learning. Parents were reminded that if they have a concern – it can be easily answered by the class teacher

Next Parent Voice Meeting: Wednesday 17th May, 7.30pm at Parsons Hall. Chair – Cheryl, notes - Kelly

What to do, as a parent, if I have a question/query/issue or complaint about my child's education

STEP 1 – contact your child's class teacher or Mrs Thom (family link worker) to discuss your concern immediately

*You can do this in person, leave a message at the school office, via the telephone or on the schools website 'contact us' section by e-mailing a message addressed to the person you wish to contact.
Mrs Thom has a direct e-mail - <mailto:acornsuite.irchester.northants@dbprimary.com>*



STEP 2 - If you feel that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the class teacher, or that your concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, you should make an appointment to discuss it with the Deputy Head Teacher (Mrs Loasby) or the Head Teacher (Mrs Alison)

You can do this in person, leave a message at the school office, via the telephone 01933 353848 or on the schools website 'contact us' section by e-mailing a message addressed to the person you wish to contact



STEP 3 - Should you have a complaint about the Head Teacher, you should first make an informal approach to meet with the chair of governors – Mrs Julie Lea

You can do this in person at the school by leaving a message at the school office or via the telephone 01933 353848 for her to contact you



STEP 4 - Only if an informal complaint fails to resolve the matter should a formal complaint be made to the governing body. This complaint must be made in writing, stating the nature of the complaint and how the school has handled it so far

You should send the written complaint stating the nature of your complaint and the resolution you desire to the: Chair of Governors, c/o Irchester Community Primary School, School Lane, Irchester NN29 7AZ