

## Parent Council Meeting 3 September

### Homework survey

Mr Paterson stated that there were 119 responses to the survey, which is the most returned survey we have had in the school, the results show that there seems to be a want for a change to the current homework provision. A question was inserted around homework or after school club, the school put that in to see what parents would prioritise more, 70 responses for after school clubs, XX for homework.

Miss McCarthy informed the meeting that she had asked some members of staff to come along to the meeting to give their insight around pupils and working within the Working Time Agreement. She would like us to be able to come to an agreement moving forward that was best for staff and parents.

Stewart reminded the group that there were two things that the Parent Council were looking for, one being consistency and application of the homework and two, preparing them for the homework they would receive at the Academy. Mrs Grant replied that the children don't get a lot of homework at the Adacemy. She commented that her children and other people children still get great results when not doing homework. Carrie commented that we shouldn't be striving for the bear minimum, we should be pushing for better. Mrs Grant commented that staff can't do more with hours they have, our provision needs to be focused in school, and we are still dealing with the after effects of covid. Mrs Grant went on to sat that teachers time needs to be on planning quality lessons. At the moment there are more levels within classes which is making it more difficult. Furthermore she said that Teachers would need to source up to 5 different levels of homework a week with little return. The best homework you could give your children is reading, timetables and number bonds. Laura commented that parents are not teachers, they don't know.

Miss McCarthy stated that we need to reach a compromise tonight. Carrie voice her concern that some children don't tell parents what they are doing on a daily basis, so parents don't know.

Mrs Hamilton informed the group that teachers can't do any more than we are doing, if the decision tonight is that we continue then we need to work out what we can't do in its place. Mrs Patrick stated that she is the EIS representative and the Working Time Agreement is about Teachers, Management and the Union and what's included in the 35-hour week. She needs to work with Miss McCarthy and agree before it can be sign off.

Stuart commented that the Parent Council have raised this issue at every PC meeting, what we need is more direction, we need to support the learning. Mrs Grant asked what form the homework needs to take, can it be on a platform with direction? Is that enough? Laura confirmed it doesn't need to be a sheet, it just needs to be relevant to what's the kids are learning now. Mrs Grant commented that she can't possibly explain to parent what they are doing every week. Going back to formal homework isn't a good use of our time. Carrie commented that the grids just don't work. Carrie commented that the homework that Mrs Hamilton gave last year was great but unfortunately Mrs Hamilton confirmed that the hours teachers are working and given the various levels we just can't do it, some Teachers are working with 5 levels in one class.

Mrs Diamond commented that the return of homework is poor and asked are we maximising use of Teachers and children's time. There is also no evidence that the homework has enough impact. Completing homework can also have a stressful impact on parent and children. Is there a better use of Teachers time for better impact? Carrie commented that teachers could encourage children more to do their homework. Laura stated that parent need directions. Going forward couldn't the homework be created so it can be passed on, Mrs Diamond said that it difficult due to the different levels. The make-up of each class is unique. Mrs Patrick commented that she doesn't see much value in marking homework, the important thing is what's been taught. Mrs Hamilton added that

feedback in the moment as you are doing it is the important bit and this is already done in class, instant feedback on the day.

A discussion around the format of homework took place. The grids aren't liked by parents, Mr Paterson informed the group that they pulled back from Teams as it was a lot of effort with little return. Parent want a guideline, perhaps a resource bank with a monthly note of what is being covered in class.

A discussion took place around children living in poverty re devices. Mr Paterson informed the meeting that he is happy to fill out the paperwork for anyone who would like to apply for a grant for a device. It was mentioned that there is a group that works towards closing the poverty gap and that anyone can join the group and the criteria can be discussed there. Mr Paterson thinks its P4 and above.

Miss McCarthy has spoken to other school and was informed that some schools put homework up on a platform and if parents want to access it then that fine but its not marked. Perhaps we could work to something similar. Carrie commented that she doesn't necessarily want it marked, perhaps once a month teacher could cast their eye over but that should be getting picked up in class, if there is a big drop. All you need is an extension of what they have done in class.

Eric noted that it's important to provide options to families and a weekly or monthly newsletter would be a good idea.

Miss McCarthy stated that that they will work towards providing an overview of what kids are doing that week, plus the word's kids are focused on. Stewart said that Teachers need to set the direction but it needs to be in line with what they are doing. Ruth will speak to the teachers, trial and see how it works out.

Mrs Patrick showed the group a Family Engagement document on Family Learning, which talks about learning at home.

Carrie would like a set task a month, as part of that research your topic. As long as the grid is relevant.

Ali asked if parent could use Twitter or WhatsApp group to communicate, Mr Paterson said schools are not allowed to contact parents using WhatsApp.

Laura stated that parents need more direction, its not about being pushy parents.

Mrs Paterson stated that the best thing parents can do is take kids to the library and let them choose a book.

### **PC Constitution**

Miss McCarthy stated at the next meeting we will review constitution for meeting, confirm Chair and Secretary. Any new members of the PC need to be added to the contact sheet.

### **ASDA Rewards**

At the moment ASDA are giving money back to schools for every pound that spent. Its not something that the school can sign up to, the app has to be downloaded by parent when they shop. The information will be passed through parent group chats.

### **Transport**

Carrie feels that the gap of when the bus gets to the school to big, the kids need to be in the playground to be safe. St Pats have gate monitors which is done in good will. The St Pats bus leaves later. Ruth commented that she pushed back but they said they are meeting their contractual obligations with regards to the timescales.

### **Curriculum evening**

Mr Paterson didn't feel that the Information evening was well attended. He would like to do a curriculum evening instead; the difference is less of a formal presentation and based on what they

are studying, the group felt this was a good idea. Mr Paterson is looking at putting a survey out and asking parents.