

Parent Forum

6th February 2023

Mr Nigel Stephens (Parent Councillor) opens the meeting and thanks everyone for coming to this evening's SWA parent forum. It is acknowledged how great a turn out it is with up to 10-12 parents attending.

Both the Senior leadership team and Academy council members introduce themselves to the parents in attendance.

Mr Nigel Stephens begins asking the questions that have been submitted prior by parents.

1. *Please can we have an update of the 6th form proposal. Is the expansion of the science block part of the plan for the 6th form?*

Mrs Lloyd answers. The science block is not part of the 6th form proposal. The local authority realised the need for the school to have these 2 ½ years ago due to increasing numbers. Unfortunately, due to C-19, it has taken this long for the funding and works to start. By the time these are finished we expect a need for more to be built. For the school to start planning for any 6th form developments, we need to have a stable number of students coming through each year, such as a consistent entry of 150 students.

2. *Are the adverts for academy councillors open to all parents with children at the school? Do you need any particular skills to be considered?*

Mrs Lloyd answers. Yes, the positions are open to all parents who have children in the school. The appointment is a fixed term appointment, and it has come to the end of Nigel & Colin's term, hence the advert. They are also more than welcome to reapply. With regards to skills, there is a commitment to attend 6 meetings per year and there will be an area for the parent to oversee. You will need to write a report on this area and present it to the other council members and Senior team.

3. *Will the intervention sessions for the year 11's continue through the holidays? Can year 10 students go the sessions.*

Mrs Twigger (Assistant Principal) answers. There are no revision sessions over half term as the mock exams start straight after and we feel student need to prioritise their own revision at this time. However, during Easter and may half term, there will be sessions running. These will be sent out to parents in the coming weeks. Year 10's can attend intervention sessions, but they must remember that the areas covered will be for the GCSE exams and some topics may not have been covered yet by their teachers.

3.1 Is it voluntary/compulsory?

Some students will need to come if it is coursework that they need to complete as part of their exam. Others will be asked to attend if they are not reaching their target

grades. If you would like your child to attend, then always contact the subject teacher and they can add them.

4. There was talk of a gym at the school. Will this be open to the public?

Mrs Lloyd updates the parents about the current gym that has been set up for students. While we would love to open it up to parents and the community, it is not big enough for that purpose. Also, we would need to take into consideration changing facilities etc as part of safeguarding the students. We are, however, looking at upgrading the sports facilities so that we can encourage more community groups to use the school and it will also benefit the students. We have funding agreed in principle for a 3G pitch also, which will take time to install/build. Plenty to look forward to.

5. When the school hires out classroom, school field, where does the money go, how much revenue does the school make from it?

So, this is a real growth area of the school with a lot of marketing taking place over time. We are almost at full capacity with lettings and while this sounds really promising, the overheads are high. With increased fuel costs and staffing, there is very little profit left from the revenue generated. The idea behind lettings is for it to cover itself, perhaps make some money in time, but also to open up the facilities to the community to use. We are the cheapest in the area for rates and we have some very long-standing clubs using our halls every week. We are also looking at renting out the sports hall on Saturdays for party hire and even private hire (i.e hire a netball court/basketball court etc).

6. When will the 6th form be up and running?? Carpark for the 6th students has that been thought about.

Anything like a 6th form will be properly planned. All infrastructure will be taken into account.

7. School uniform shop, I have said before but it really needs to be in Stamford to make it easier and more accessible for everyone, I know the school have tried with having uniform to try on for sizes.

Following on from the last parent forum, we set up in school where a sample size of each garment can be available for students to try on, then ordered online and delivered for free to the school. There has been very little uptake on this.

7.1 What about a more local supplier?

We are tied into a contract, and we would then have to buy back all the stock that our current suppliers have, and this is not viable for the school to do.

8. How does it affect SWA with Casterton dropping their size of school year?? Don't want SWA to get too big and lose its personal touch.

Well, CCR are reducing their Year 7 intake from 210 to 180. Currently for Year 7 in September we have 131 first choices which does not leave much space for any 2nd choices. If we want to expand for a 6th form, we need to get the intake. With our numbers, we are still classed as a small secondary school even though it may not feel like that for some parents. We are still taking a lot of midyear transfers from other schools. The personal touch will not be lost under Mrs Lloyds leadership. She is on the gate every morning and after school. Regardless of the numbers, things like this will not change.

9. Why does the school only offer one language? Would a different language that would be more useful to the students be better, one that they could use more??

Yes, we offer Spanish and French now. We have to phase Spanish in, so only the current year 7's are studying it.

10. My eldest is in year 10 and I don't recall her ever being offered a field trip.(I might be wrong my memory isn't great) It would be great to consolidate her learning in this way.

The current year 10 group will have missed a number of residential trips due to C-19. However, their Geography trip is part of the coursework and is compulsory. All residentials and trips are all back up and running.

11. Is it possible to look into reducing the minimum amount that can be added to the ParentPay account?

Mrs Lloyd looked at this today with the Finance team and £5 is the minimum we can set it at. Other schools in the Trust have it set at £15.00.

12. How will the new housing development to the north of Stamford affect the school?

Of course we expect to see an increase in numbers to the school, but we also get access to Section 218 money which will help support the school in expanding to accommodate the increased numbers. (The group discuss local information about the development and infrastructure).

13. What is the year 7 intake looking like this year, will the school be oversubscribed making it difficult to get a place?

Answered earlier.

14. What can be done to speed up the service in the canteen, there are often long queues to get served at lunch times?

We have introduced a Grab 'N' Go hatch for students to use which should speed up the waiting times. We are also nearly finished completing the fingerprint so students can get through the till quicker too.

Mr Stephens opens up to the floor for any other questions.

Parent: Your progress 8 result last year was really good. You must be very happy with it..

Mrs Lloyd mentions that the school Progress score finished on +0.13 last year. (Progress 8 score is explained to the parents for any that are unsure of what it means). The school has made huge improvements over the years and expects this to continue.

Parent: Can the year 11 hoodies be worn as uniform?

Mrs Swain explains that they cannot, as they are not given out until the last day of term.

Parent: For the year 11 prom, many parents and students have been unhappy with the venue. Is there anything happening about this?

Mrs Swain is setting up a survey in Friday's year 11 assembly for the students to vote to either have it at the Danish Invader or at school. Once we know the result, we will inform parents and students. It will still remain on the same date.



Meridian
Trust

Meridian Trust Head Office, Fen Lane, Sawtry, PE28 5TQ
01954 234438

info@meridiantrust.co.uk

www.meridiantrust.co.uk

There are no other questions. Mr

Stephens thanks everyone for coming and another forum will be

booked later in the year.