

Parent Forum

6th November 2023

Attendance; SLT, AC members & 9 parents in attendance

Mrs Lloyd welcomes all and explains the reasons for the forums. Mrs Lloyd introduces the academy council members and their role within the school. SLT introduce themselves and the house areas that they oversee along with their overall remit.

Mr Nigel Stephens talks about how this forum was set up and how can parents ask open questions. Mr Colin Newman shares that this allows new parents to speak with the Senior team and please come forward to ask questions and share.

1. How do we control mobile phones and overt use of phones in lesson times.

In some lessons it is useful to use the phones to access learning platforms with the control of the teacher. At times within some lessons that was being abused by students. We need to know when this is happening, but we cannot stamp out it 100%. We have asked staff who ask students to use a phone to be vigilant. If staff need mobile phones, they are being used correctly and not filming staff/students. This can prove tricky at lunch and break times. We have now 88 CCTV cameras in school, and we can follow up abuse on this. There was a whole school assembly about kindness and mobile phones. Mrs Lloyd has shared the expectations with the students and the sanctions around misuse of it. Mr Weller explains that students use Edulink for timetables etc and it is a habit. 5 mobile phones have been confiscated today, if they are confiscated 3 times or more, parents have to come and collect the phone from school.

Any lessons that do not require mobile phones?

Yes, not all lessons need phones. Just some lessons need them to be used if there are not enough laptops.

Can you communicate this out to parents as we believe that (as new parents) phones are not allowed and to be turned off and in school bags.

They do not have to have one. They are expected to be off and out of the way and not seen. On the off occasion some teachers may need it.

They will not miss out if they do not have a mobile phone.

Frequency? – it is not even once a week.

Pre lock down, we came up with the policy of no phones in school. This is still the case?

Yes, during break and lunchtimes they may have a sneaky look or they ask permission to check their timetable.

What about smart watches?

No, they can have these (for now) unless they are in exams.

Please if any parents hear of any filming that is going on in school, please can you report this to your child's house office.

2. Could a bus route to the school from the west side of town be looked into?

The school have looked at this before. The bus company will not put this on. As a school we can not afford to put a bus on. To hire a bus is expensive and not viable for the price that would be passed on to parents.

3. Are there any plans to address low level bullying in the school other than the recent assembly and kindness bingo?

The whole house challenge is based on kindness. Over the next couple of weeks, the students can get nominations and then that contributes towards the rewards.

The bingo cards may be a bit gimmicky, but it highlights that it doesn't have to be big gestures, just small things.

There will always be some low-level bullying, but I think we know the students well enough for them to report it. We then address it quite quickly. We will not give up on it and keep sending the message out about kindness and supporting each other. We cannot please all parents/students, but the vast majority say they feel it is like a community. Staff need to model these behaviours too and understand the importance of it.

The kindness competition is being drip fed in and just by saying 'good morning' becoming part of their day.

NST talks about the leadership team at the gate meeting the students in the morning. We do not want to lose that family feel as the school gets bigger.

VLL: When we first started no one played football as they were all on their phones. Now there are hundreds of kids playing football or table tennis. The chess house competition was such a success. Any given time they could play, they were sitting and playing chess.

4. Have the GCSE results been published?

Yes we finished with a P8 result of +0.04. A lot of schools saw a dip from last year. We stayed on par from last year and significantly better than 2019 which is the original grade boundaries.

There are some real success stories. The % of 7-9 was way and above what we have seen previously and Grade 9's was better than before. P8 for our high attainers finished on +0.35

What about disadvantaged students?

The disadvantaged students finished with a P8 of -0.07. We have a high % of PP students with a good attendance % - the best in the Trust.

What is it down to?

Because we know the kids and tutors make the extra effort along with teachers and house teams. The little things that help or they know they will get a smiling face. It is all of the little things that creates a positive environment. We have kept the house entrances since C19. We have built into directed time that all staff are on duty from 0825 so all tutors meet them outside to bring them in to their tutor time.

5. Is there a sixth form provision?

It is really difficult. The issue we have because we have grown, the space we would have put the sixth form is now being used for additional classroom space. There is no money from the Dfe but it is my vision for a 6th form here.

Is there any mileage with working with the college and a 6th form?

Yes, any provision we have would be in conjunction with them. Parents are welcome to write to the local MP and share your thoughts.

What was the admission uptake in Year 7?

136 students.

With the raising of the standards of the school over the last few years, then it has raised the aspiration of students to do their A-Levels.

6. Vaping in school. We all the know the hot spots. The kids are told they will be searched, and they get rid of it.

They wouldn't get told that they get searched. A lot of school do vaping alarms but we do not want to go down that route. We can only search blazers, bags etc.

The CCTV cameras have helped. If more than 2 students are in the toilets together then it will be presumed that they are vaping and will be searched.

What consequence are there?

It is variable. But there are sanctions. It is difficult to stop and is an issue across the country. We know the hot spots and have more staff there. We educate through assemblies and L4L lessons.

Are there any other drug problems?

They are no reports of it in school to our knowledge. We have worked in other schools where drugs were a problem. We do not hear of that here in school. These things seem to happen in little spells in a school environment. We educate kids on Stamford being a hotspot for county lines. Often when you do these sessions kids come forward, but we do not feel it is part of the current culture. Please share if you know otherwise.

7. I live on Kesteven road, most days I see students about 2:45 (before 3PM) walking away from school Is there any reason for that?

No the only other way they have gotten out is that they have forced a door or gone around the back door. They cannot get out of the front door. If it is the same students, please let the school know.

8. Some after school sessions (i.e Cyber security competition/Badminton) have been cancelled last minute, how do you engage students to join these sessions?

They are normally very keen and very popular. If it was a competition, then it may be that there weren't enough entries for the whole event. Mr K's activities are popular. But we will look into why this happened.

Can you share an updated session 6 timetable with parents?

Yes, they are all on the school website and can be shared with parents again.

9. Can we have the Prom prices out as soon as possible.

Yes, we can get this out.

10. Are there going to be Year 11 photos?

Yes, the Year 11 photos are done when we return after Christmas. It is normally a group photo.