



Empowering children to lead fulfilling lives

Parent Forum: Monday 18th November 2024

Parent Reps: Mr Nicholl (Reception) Mrs Budd (Year 1), Mrs Page (Year 2), Mrs Wollaston (Year 3), Mrs Sjouerman (Year 4), Mrs Stow (Year 5), Mrs Cassell (Year 6).

Apologies: None received.

Actions from 25th April 2024

Class	Action	Status
Reception	Transition information for parents moving from Reception to Year 1 would be useful. Parent Reps are going to devise a plan for this	In progress
Reception	School to investigate ideas brought forward by parent forum regarding payments	Complete
Year 3	School to ask for parent volunteers to run after school clubs in the school newsletter (music, languages, gardening)	Complete
Year 5	School to investigate child care vouchers to pay for after school clubs	Complete. The childcare voucher scheme is now closed to new applicants. School has applied to Tax Free Childcare scheme and will inform parents when the scheme is open.
Year 6	Herts Catering to come and survey pupils	Complete

Items discussed

Year Group	Points Discussed	Actions
Whole school	Please can parents and carers be reminded that any questions or information for Time Out, HSA or FOM should be raised directly with the relevant organisation.	Parent reps to inform parents/carers
Reception	<p>Qu: Is there a plan to have a consistent teaching assistant?</p> <p>A: Yes. The school is in the final stages of the recruitment process for 2 new members of the EYFS team. We hope that they will be able to begin work very soon. In the meantime,</p>	



	<p>Mrs Talley will be in Reception every morning and Mrs Lorek works in Reception in the afternoons. Mrs Lorek will continue to work in Reception in the afternoons.</p> <p>Qu: Would it be possible to record parent workshop meetings?</p> <p>A: This was a discussion point at a recent meeting of the Senior Leadership Team. Going forward we are aiming to host the parent workshop meetings on an online platform (Teams / Zoom or equivalent) to ensure as many people as possible will be able to access them. We will also look into recording them and posting them on the website, however we need to investigate some IT considerations first.</p>	
Year 1	<p>Qu: Please can the school use washable paint instead of non-washable, or let us know that we need to provide painting aprons?</p> <p>A: The school only purchases washable paint from specialist educational suppliers. We also have aprons in school for children to use during art lessons. We are happy to remind teachers about this to ensure they are used when needed.</p> <p>Qu: Please can there be greater visibility around individual house points/warnings so we can support this at home</p> <p>A: House points are announced in celebration assemblies every few weeks and a running total is visible for children in the hall. The collection of House points is a collegiate and collaborative endeavour for each house, and as such we do not publish individual house points earned. If a child has received a consequence for any behaviour related incident in school, parents are informed.</p> <p>Qu: Please can you provide more clarity around how Religious Education is being taught, and different faiths are represented.</p> <p>A: RE is a statutory entitlement for all pupils registered in a school, including Reception year and post-16. It is locally determined rather than nationally stipulated within the national curriculum, allowing for variation in local faith and belief communities. The Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus provides the statutory requirements for RE in Hertfordshire schools. Our RE curriculum follows this and is delivered through the JIGSAW scheme, which has been carefully mapped to ensure appropriate coverage of the 6 major world religions and secular world views. For more information, please visit our website, where the curriculum is mapped out in full.</p>	



	<p>Qu: Please can there be better communications around staff movement? A: We always provide our school community with as much information as possible when a member of staff is leaving or moving position. We also try to balance this as best we can with the wishes of the member of staff involved. Often we will publish information in our Newsletter. When short term moves across year groups happen, it is not possible to update parents of this.</p> <p>Qu: Please can you confirm the TA support for Year 1? A: Currently Year 1 are supported by Mrs Ebbs, Mrs Himpfen, Miss Jackson and Mrs Talley.</p> <p>Qu: How do school cover staff illness and absence? A: This is determined on a case by case basis, but we have a wealth of highly skilled HLTAs to cover staff absences.</p> <p>Qu: Please can we understand how the regularity of use of sweets at all HSA events fits with school's policy/healthy eating approach? A: The school has a clear and structured curriculum to teach children about healthy eating and lifestyles. HSA events are organised and run by parent volunteers and it would be beneficial for parents to work collaboratively on this issue.</p> <p>Qu: Please can the school share if Mr Reid's former role has been filled, A: A new caretaker, Mr Dwyer, has been recruited. This has been announced in the Newsletter.</p> <p>Qu: Are domestic cleaners used to clean the school? A: Currently the school uses a mix of external cleaners and an in house cleaner. The school is cleaned every night, with priority areas such as the toilets and classrooms identified.</p> <p>Qu: Is it possible for staff to attend HSA events? A: Staff enjoy attending events such as the summer fete and the Christmas fete but this is not always possible. Staff have busy family lives, but also use non-school hours for marking, planning, staff meetings, training, meeting with parents, meetings with external agencies, lesson preparation, risk assessment preparation, after school clubs and sporting events.</p>	
Year 2	<p>Qu: Can the children have more frequent access to their water bottles? Please see answer below (Year 4) regarding water bottles.</p>	



	<p>Qu: Are children permitted toilet breaks? A: Please see answer below (Year 4) regarding toilet breaks.</p> <p>Qu: Can we find a way to stream or record the various parent workshops so that everyone can benefit? A: Please see answer above (Reception) regarding the move to online platforms.</p>	
Year 3	<p>Qu: Is there any possibility of holding the parent workshops before school starts or the evenings? A: Please see answer above (Reception) regarding the move to online platforms.</p> <p>Comment: Thank you Mr Comer for encouraging the children to play cricket at break/lunch time - it's great to see some diversity of sport opportunity. A: It's great to see children enjoying a variety of games and sports at lunchtime. I also get time to practise my spin bowl!</p> <p>Comment: Thank you to staff and pupils for another fantastic Harvest Festival. We know that so much hard work goes into this and the parents really enjoyed it. Great opportunity for the kids to learn about charity. A: Thank you. We thought the children were fantastic!</p> <p>Comment: A big thank you to Mr Jones and Mrs Gourlay for settling the children into KS2 so well. It was noted Mr Jones already seemed to have a good understanding of the children at parents evening, thanks for all the work that goes into this. A: Thank you for this wonderful feedback. We will pass it on.</p>	
Year 4	<p>Comment: Parents really enjoyed the year 4 class assembly and wanted to thank Mr Brittin for the assembly. A: Thank you for this wonderful feedback. We will pass it on.</p> <p>Comment: Thank you for the clearer guidance around how children will be selected for the inter-school cross country and netball competitions. A: We are pleased that this has provided more clarity for parents.</p>	



	<p>Qu: Could children who participated in the inter school cross country be recognized at Sports Day?</p> <p>A: Sporting achievements are recognized in Celebration assemblies, often with certificates presented. We are happy to try and recognise as many sporting achievements at the School Sports Day. We will bear this in mind for this year's event!</p> <p>Qu: Could the newsletter be reinstated weekly?</p> <p>A: Over recent years, the school administration burden has increased significantly and we are having to make some difficult decisions regarding admin time. Unfortunately we no longer have the capacity to produce a weekly newsletter. As the change to the publishing of the newsletter is only recent, we feel that it is important to give more time to the transition before revisiting this.</p> <p>Qu: Can children have their water bottles on their desks?</p> <p>A: Please be assured that children are given plenty of opportunities to drink water. Teachers manage water bottles in their classroom, using their professional judgement. We recognise the importance for children to stay hydrated and will send a gentle reminder to teachers to ensure that children have access to their water bottles when needed.</p> <p>Qu: Are children always permitted toilet breaks?</p> <p>A: Toilet breaks are permitted, where needed. We do try and encourage children to go to the toilet during break and lunch, particularly as they progress into the older year groups. If a child does need to use the toilet at other times, they are of course, allowed to do so.</p> <p>Qu: How often are the bins on Sauncey Avenue emptied?</p> <p>A: We agree that these bins should be emptied more often. If parents and carers are able to, we should be grateful if you could contact the council to request they are emptied more often: https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/recycling-and-rubbish. We will also contact the council to ask them to try and make sure that this happens more regularly. Hopefully together, we will see some impact!</p>	
Year 5	<p>Qu: Will parents be invited to a talk to find out about the residential trip?</p> <p>A: Yes. We will arrange this closer to the time of the residential, but in time for parents to make any preparations necessary. If a parent has a particular concern about a residential trip, please contact the class teacher directly who will be happy to meet to discuss these.</p>	



	<p>Comment: Thank you for the house learning day, harvest festival and other activity days that have been well received by children and parents.</p> <p>A: Thank you, we are pleased you enjoyed them, we know the children had great fun, and so did the staff!</p> <p>Qu: Are we able to pay for the residential trips using childcare vouchers?</p> <p>The childcare voucher scheme is now closed to new applicants. School has applied to join the Tax Free Childcare Scheme, which has replaced the Childcare Voucher Scheme. We are awaiting a response from the government in relation to this and will continue to chase. As soon as we are able to proceed with this, we will let parents and carers know.</p>	
Year 6	<p>Comment: Thank you to Mrs Noonan for parents evening and for the specific challenges and feedback for each child.</p> <p>A: Thank you for this wonderful feedback. We will pass it on.</p> <p>Qu: School funding is based on pupil numbers. Is year 1 fully enrolled yet? If not, can the school do anything to fill up the year group?</p> <p>A: There are still spaces in Year 1. Hertfordshire is still in a period of low birth rate and will be for a few more years. The school works hard to attract new families to the school, and was one of the few Harpenden schools to be full for Reception 2024. The low birth rate is an issue which is being experienced across all primary schools in Hertfordshire.</p> <p>Qu: Are there any new funds coming towards the school with the new government's budget?</p> <p>A: To date, the school has received a Core schools budget grant (CSBG). We don't have any further information about any additional funds being provided since the release of the new budget.</p>	