

Parent Council News – Monday 18th November 2019

Welcome and Introductions were made by Alessandra Desbotttes (ADe)

There was a discussion of the issues raised at the last meeting:

- **Form activities** – we have ensured all form teachers have provided the timetable for form activities for the week and this is in all student planners. A parent confirmed that their child’s form teacher has done this.
- **Use of teams for homework setting** – is progressing well. There was a discussion about why we are still using planners and these will continue to be used whilst teams ‘beds in’ but it will be discussed before next year. Students don’t need to write their homework in full in the planner if full details are in teams.
- **School trips** – the process has been tightened up. Now students will be selected on criteria including, attendance on prior trips, attendance in school, punctuality, behaviour points and a ballot will take place if the trip is still oversubscribed. Payments were discussed and it was noted that school has a policy regarding educational trips and visits and subsidising costs of these. The policy is available on the school website. (Educational Visits Policy).
- **The ski trip with current Y9 & 10 was then raised by a parent** – some are unsure of why school offers this and questions were raised on cost. It was noted that this will take place in the school holidays and has been agreed by SLT.
- **Safety at bus stops** - was mentioned and no progress has been made at Penny Bridge. The idea to survey the safety at bus stops in the whole catchment was raised.
- **Bus turning bay at UVHS** – the county council has visited the school to survey the site. There is potential to build a new turning bay in the area where Woodgarth is situated and a car park in the cage by S Block.
- **Train service** – discussed the appalling nature of the train service and parents praised school for encouraging safety, sensible behaviour and ticket purchasing at the station after school. Questions were raised about being able to contact the station when trains are delayed.

Presentation about Independent Learning from Alison Smith and Alessandra Desbotttes:

- Discussed the new teacher planners to show there is a focus on learning not just doing tasks.

- New homework policy is intending to get students to think more about what they are doing with their own learning.
- Teams – can be used to add resources, message a group, chase homework, and can be used to monitor teachers setting homework.
- Parents raised the question about some points in the year students are overloaded or not getting enough and asked about the planning of this.
- ADe said there will be ‘homework holidays’ near to exam time to ensure staff are able to focus on GCSE and A Level marking when homework set will be set over a longer period.
- Literacy (A Smith)
 - Literacy is an indicator for success.
 - Tier 2 vocabulary needs to be taught explicitly.
 - Command words are in planners and teachers will be explicitly teaching these in class.
 - Writing is a focus – planning an answer and writing together helps our students.
 - Y7 are spending lots of time in the library and using dictionaries to help literacy. -All of these actions are part of a three year plan and it is still early days.
- Revision – we have the everyday reviewing techniques on the school website that students and parents can use. ASm, ADe and PAn are delivering lessons to GCSE students on how to revise and memory techniques.
- Parents raised the idea of asking students what methods work for them and using this to evaluate success of these methods.

AOB:

- The issues of overcrowding in the dining room came up – a letter has gone out to say there are no longer early lunch passes available for school clubs. (grab a bag or packed lunches are being used instead). Additionally another till has been put in the small dining room. These changes have made a big difference already. The rota for lunch times is on the website. Karen Wren is leaving the staff after over 30 years’ service and we will see some changes after Christmas.
- Communication for this meeting could be improved; we will send a text reminder before and try to encourage more attendees.