

Parent Council News – Monday 19th November 2018

School's response to issues raised at last meeting:

- School Parliament elections. Next year new students will be selected on a yearly vote to allow a greater number of children to participate.
- Assembly rota – this is now on the school website. Parents requested more details and it was suggested that it could be on the calendar, not a separate page. This will be explored.
- Revision Preparation Evening – SLT looked at different dates but it could not be moved. Whole school inset in January will involve working with teachers on revision skills and SLT will consider moving it to an earlier time next year.
- Homework – see below.
- A request for the price of canteen items to be more clearly displayed has been passed on.
- Some parents felt that the new report system is not as personal – point taken on board by SLT and this is being reviewed.
- The yellow sticker system will be changed for target 9s to ensure they can still get 12s and 3 merits. We discussed the option to not set anyone a target of a 9, but this is set by FFT and students are judged against this. Also there was a discussion of prior years and what a grade 9 looks like. Year 7 CATS are used internally. FFT comes from KS2 so Year 6 is high pressure to achieve grades.
- Mental health – see section below.

UVHS Ofsted Report:

The Ofsted report was circulated to parents.

ADe reported that the Ofsted visit was challenging but SLT are pleased with the result.

UVHS results are good and this is the starting point for any inspection. Our broad and balanced curriculum was praised and will also be viewed positively in future Ofsted inspections as this is now a focus. Extra-curricular activities were also praised.

The question was asked if we fast track students? No. Sitting GCSEs early risks the student not achieving the grade they are capable of with an extra year's study. We also do not skip years as this also has social implications. When do Ofsted return? Probably not within 5 years and not on the appointment of a new Headteacher. The question was asked if the school was disappointed not to get outstanding? No – it gives us the space to continue our improvement journey.

Homework Update:

Over the past few meetings we have had a lot of input from parents about homework. We have also surveyed every student in the school and delivered training to staff where the student survey was widely discussed. As a result of these discussions the SLT has drafted a plan to set extended pieces of work for some subjects. This will be written into Schemes of Work and will facilitate preparation for exam style questions. These extended pieces of work will be scaffolded so students are clear on how to progress with these. There will be extensive feedback at the end of the piece of work. KS3 and KS4 maths and Languages will continue with regular homework in the form it is set now. This should help student develop independent learning skills and hopefully help teachers with their marking load.

Annual subject homework plans will be published in the calendar so they extended pieces of work are not set in the same period.

In the weeks before GCSE and A Level exams KS3 students would get different kinds of homework such as researching topics and reading background information for their work.

Scaffolding is key and this will be shared with parents.

One parent asked if we will use online homework. This is on the cards. There was a discussion about 'One Note' (Microsoft OneNote is a computer program for free-form information gathering and multi-user collaboration) – by the end of the year, details of students' homework will be published on this platform. Scheme of Works will also be visible to parents as will Assessment Objectives.

There is scaffolding in lessons and as part of lessons and this will be shared with parents.

During the work on extended pieces of work teacher will check the progress of students working on extended pieces of work

Parents were happy with this idea.

Ofsted was happy with the setting of homework at UVHS on homework, but we want to change and improve.

There was also discussion about the proposed appointment of a literacy across school coordinator as literacy becomes ever more important in education and the world beyond.

Mental Health:

It was agreed that this is a big issue in all schools. UVHS is leading the way in the local area. Year 11, Year 6 and Year 2 had training on resilience last academic year. All staff now need to be trained in mental health first aid. Unfortunately there is no government funding whatsoever. The school is working with MIND and RBU is working with primary schools linked to UVHS. There will be additional emotional resilience training for Years 10 and 11 and Year 6.

At school we have the Engagement Centre which works on social/emotional aspects of learning with vulnerable students. This is extremely effective. One parent suggested that this work could be better communicated to parents. A concern was also raised that the work on mental health will benefit future students but that some will not have had access to this.

Any Other Business:

Banning of nuts from school - we have 8/9 students in school with severe nut allergies. All staff are trained in the use of epi-pens. One student is affected by an airborne nut allergy. This is very serious and the school has taken medical advice. One parent felt that the decision had been rushed and that information was too vague and possibly inaccurate. This will be taken back to SLT.

There are still ongoing problems with the transport, bus pass situation. This is run by county and the school has no say in how this runs. It is very clearly unsatisfactory but we have no influence over the issue. This also impacts negatively on 6th form transport.

It was suggested that year 13 Parents' evening be moved to a date earlier in the year next year. . Currently Year 13 Parents' Evening is in March, after the university application date deadline. It was felt this is too. This will be discussed by SLT.

Trafford Centre trip – some concerns about the trip and how economic status could become an issue. ADe acknowledged that this cannot be seen as an educational trip but the students love it. On a positive note one parent noted that the trip may help with students considering money and budgeting.

One parent asked if music timetables are on our website and we advised that this is not the case at the moment. Currently all music timetables are published in the music corridor. All times are posted seven days in advance.

Orienteering success – this is mainly run by volunteers. There is still some discussion to be had by the school and the orienteers. The school is extremely grateful for the participation of these people.