

Parent Council News – Monday 4th March 2019

Our school nurse is currently absent so unfortunately we have been unable to update advice on the nut allergy situation.

We have recently appointed a new website manager so we will resume publishing news on the website.

Teaching and Learning 3 Year Plan Presentation.

Parents were given a presentation on the school's three year plan for teaching and learning, the main focus of which will be teaching and learning for understanding and creating independent learners.

Consultation on homework is now complete and a new policy for September will be introduced. Some subjects will move to extended project homeworks, eg Humanities. The work will be scaffolded and will be displayed online for parents to see.

Memory and learning will also be a focus with memory techniques being taught to students. They will also be encouraged to do 'everyday reviewing', details of which are on the website so parents can see this too.

Teachers will also focus on metacognition – there will be greater reflection in the classroom with students thinking about what has been done and how they have learned during lessons.

Over the next year the school will run training for teachers and support staff to create a thinking classroom.

Another focus on lesson planning and delivery will be based on Bloom's Taxonomy.

Improvements will be made in KS3 transition from KS2. This will not just be pastoral but will build on children's skills from primary school. In the summer term the school will send English and Maths teachers to primary schools.

A new Literacy and Communication Coordinator has been appointed to build on this and develop literacy and oracy further. This role will also include an element of research to moderate the changes being made.

The parents present at the meeting commented favourably on these initiatives.

One parent commented that it is important to develop higher level training and skills for higher levels, e.g. college.

One parent asked about middle ability children and what the school is doing for them. It was explained that the school believes these changes this will benefit everyone.

In response to a question about subjects and staffing it was confirmed that there have been no staffing cuts nor has there been a reduction in subjects on offer at GCSE and A level. Indeed in MFL we have actually increased our offer and added Spanish.

The school runs a system of reading buddies and the question was asked if parents could be involved in this – could we have parent volunteers? They would need enhanced DBS for this and this adds a layer of complexity and costs money. If they have enhanced DBS, they could do this or parents might not mind paying. This will be raised in school.

A discussion was had as to how we describe children as pupils and students and which was most appropriate. Similarly do we refer to self-directed learning/study or homework? We will consult with teachers and children.

Parent questions asked:

How do you feel 1 – 9 target and feedback is going?

Both teachers and students are still getting used to them. The yellow sticker system has changed to allow for the fact that a student who has a target of 9 can never be above target. If a student consistently achieves work of a grade 9 standard then they can be given a 12 on the yellow sticker.

Question about the idea of a federation with feeder primary schools – is this UVHS's way of protecting schools from academisation?

The options of a hard federation, soft federation, or stay as we are were discussed.

There was a discussion about communication and how the school could improve information giving etc. to parents. Texts can be too short – parents generally prefer letters in those instances where more background is required.

Regarding the examples such as Momo – could Mrs Hewson go back to the County Council to check messages are accurate before sending out directives?

Regarding orienteering a request was made to check a letter will be going out to volunteers.

Regarding labelling and pricing of food in canteen – it was commented that some students struggle to read these when rushing in as it is too small – the school will change this.

Parents praised the performing arts department for the brilliance of the concert with the Royal Marines.