

**Present:**

Staff	
Jon Lawson	Assistant Principal
Scott Hudson	Principal
Joanna March	PA to Principal

Parent	Child(ren) in Year ...
Nichola Farley-McFadyen	7/11
Kelly Flemming	7
Stacey Hill	7
Penny Matthews	7/8/11
Rosetta Tickner	11

(Matters requiring action are highlighted in red. Initials in brackets show the member(s) of staff responsible for taking action.)

**1 Introductions/Welcome**

Jon Lawson welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Penny Matthews, who was attending for the first time.

Jon also introduced Joanna March, who is taking on the role of PA to Scott Hudson in September. As part of her role she will be attending future Parent Forum meetings to take the minutes. She will also be responsible for home/school communication, the main item on the agenda for this meeting.

**2 Matters Arising**

- **Increasing the membership of the Parent Forum**

Jon advised the group that he had been in contact with both parents who had been voted onto the Academy Advisory Panel to invite them to join the Parent Forum. However, both felt that they were likely to be contributing to the Academy through other avenues, so had declined the invitation. He also confirmed that their names had been published on the Academy website. Jon reported that he had developed a flyer to advertise the Forum and this had been distributed at the recent Year 7 Parents' Evening. This seemed to have been successful, with at least two parents expressing an interest. At future Parents' Evenings the Forum will be advertised proactively by the Sixth Form students. Jon also asked the parents present to extend invitations to other parents they came into contact with, and encourage them to attend.

- **Street Pastors**

Rosetta Tickner reported that she had advised the concerned parent(s) to e-mail Darren Gadsby with any concerns regarding Street Pastors and that this had been done.

- **Zebra Crossing**

This had been expected to be installed in May. Jon had pursued an update from Matthew Barratt, at the Northamptonshire Highways, who explained that there had been a delay and that the work would now be completed during the summer holiday.

- **Reporting**

Jon informed the Forum that a full review of reporting at the Academy is currently being carried out and that the helpful comments from the last meeting will feed into the review.

**3 Home/School Communication**

Scott Hudson introduced the Academy plans for an e-mail communication system that is likely to be implemented from September called 'Group Call'. He assured the Forum that the Academy is committed to communicating with parents in a more effective way than it currently does, and invited members of the Forum to provide feedback/ideas to support this, stressing the need to be mindful of what is reasonable for the Academy to manage, alongside what parents would like.

He confirmed that the weekly newsletter had now stopped as news was now put on the website. Feedback from the Forum members suggested that they liked the newsletter and its layout and that the website was not as effective at reporting current news. Some discussion followed about the website, which had mixed reviews. A summary of the points made/discussed is as follows:

- The website did not have a 'corporate' feel to it (a positive point) and retained the individuality of the Academy. Lots of feedback from parents who say that they like it.
- Some members of the Forum expressed a different view and felt that it was difficult to find out news/information.
- Most information **can** be found on the website, ie copies of letters, news, events etc, but you have to 'drill down' to find it and most parents don't have time to do this.
- The calendar has nothing on the dates – it would make more sense to have information on the calendar about upcoming events.
- News – there are too many places to find/search for news, eg priority news, news, school blog eg. Perhaps one single newsfeed? Jon Lawson responded that sometimes there was a need to communicate urgent information, ie school closure due to bad weather, and that was why there is a Priority News section on the first page.

There followed some further discussion on how the Academy could communicate with parents in a more efficient way. A summary of the points made/ideas/suggestions is as follows:

- Newsletter e-mailed out every week? Is weekly too much? Perhaps monthly, termly?
- Weekly newsletter with a link on the first page of the website – a group call e-mail to remind parents to check the newsletter?
- Would a newsletter be necessary if the website were better?
- What about hard copies of the newsletter? If the Academy really wants to keep parents informed, a hard copy is the best way.
- Perhaps a link on the website for events coming up this term?
- What about a termly newsletter sent home with reports?
- What about a termly celebratory publication?
- Perhaps important letters, eg the letter about Year 11 revision sessions, could be sent directly to the home address, rather than being sent home with the students. This would ensure that all parents received them. The cost of this was discussed at this point.
- A list of staff e-mail addresses on the website would be useful so that parents could contact individual teachers directly.

Scott Hudson then invited the members of the Forum to share their personal experiences of communication with the Academy, a summary of which follows:

- Some members felt that communication had been much better in the last year.
- Very positive feedback from several members of the Forum regarding communicating with individual teachers and Progress leaders.
- Some items of communication had reached a separated parent, but not others. Perhaps there is a problem with parent records? Are different databases used?
- There are too many letters sent out – one member felt overwhelmed by the number of letters. Other members, however, rarely received letters (perhaps students not taking them home, leaving them in their bags?).
- Some problems with communication from the PE Faculty, eg a Year 7 rounders match had been cancelled and students told about it at the last minute, but parents had not been informed, resulting in difficulty locating two students when parents arrived at school to collect them. Two members of the Forum felt that communication from the PE Faculty was disorganised and very 'last minute'. Scott Hudson pointed out that on occasions fixtures had to be cancelled at the last minute due to another school cancelling, poor weather etc. While this was accepted, it was generally felt that a better system of looking after the students until parents were able to pick up should be introduced. Perhaps Reception could be informed if PE/other staff had been unable to contact parents regarding cancellations, late arrival back at school from events etc.

**Action:**

Group Call system to be implemented in Term 1 of the next academic year. (SH)

Review all feedback/suggestions regarding home/school communication and implement/trial some of the ideas in Term 1 of the next academic year. (SH/JL/JM)

Review any new communication initiatives after six months. (JM/JL)

Discuss concerns over communication from the PE Faculty with Matt Gamble, Head of PE. (SH)

**4 AOB**

There was positive feedback provided regarding the recent Year 7 Parents' Evening. Jon Lawson and Scott Hudson took this opportunity to thank the attending parents for their time and it was agreed by all participants that the Forum provided a platform for a meaningful dialogue between the Academy and parents, resulting in effective action taking place. The Academy staff were then thanked by the parents for giving their time and taking on board the resulting parental voice.

**5 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> September at 5.30 pm. It was agreed that the main agenda item would be after school clubs/enrichment.

The meeting closed at 6.45 pm.