

Notes from Parents' Forum

15th March 2019

RSE

Parents were concerned about the government's new proposals for Relationships and Sex Education, and what the school's position is on the new plans. Mrs Griffiths explained that Paul Barber, Director of the Catholic Education Service has given the following response:

"We welcome this commitment by the Government to improve Relationships and Sex Education in all schools.

"Catholic education is centred on the formation of the whole child and age appropriate RSE is an essential part of this. It is essential for creating well rounded young people, for equipping students to make good life choices, and for keeping our children safe.

"As such, the Catholic schools' sector is the only one in the country to have a comprehensive and holistic RSE curriculum for ages 3-19. The proposals announced by the Government today are compatible with the Catholic model curriculum.

"In fact, the Government's own statutory guidance recognises the Catholic RSE curriculum as an excellent example for schools to use and is one of the few external organisations the guidance referenced as best practice examples.

"The Catholic Church teaches that parents are the prime educators of their children and we are pleased to see the Government sharing this fundamental principle."

IXL

Parents asked about whether the school was going to renew its subscription to IXL. Mrs Griffiths explained that the school has decided

to spend the £900 membership cost in other ways which will have more impact on the teaching of maths.

Families are still able to purchase a membership with IXL privately. RBKC libraries offer membership of IXL if you sign.

First Aid

Parents wondered whether the school would consider first aid training for children. Mrs Griffiths agreed to look into sessions with the Red Cross or St John's Ambulance.

Beanie hats

Parents asked whether beanie hats can replace caps and berets. Mrs Griffiths explained that when introducing beanie hats the governors had expressly decided that they were only to be worn on the return from swimming.

Clubs for younger children

Some parents of children in Year 1 wanted more clubs available for their children. Mrs Griffiths explained that there are already 7 different clubs open to KS1 children and that children of such a young age must be given time to rest and play after a long day at school. There are numerous options for clubs and classes in the local community that parents can access if they so wish.

Absence letters

Some parents had expressed a dislike for the letters sent by Mrs Griffiths to those parents of children with attendance below a certain percentage. Mrs Griffiths explained that the school had a responsibility to follow up on low attendance (even when caused by sickness). Letters were standard templates used from the attendance policy (on the school website). Low attendance affects children's social and academic wellbeing and the school wants to help families who may be having difficulty.

More notice for volunteers

A parent requested 6 weeks advance notice of events that may need volunteers so that time off work can be planned for. The school endeavours to give as much advance notice as possible.

Change of day for PE

Parents asked why PE days change. Mrs Griffiths explained that class timetables are subject to change for a whole variety of reasons. Bookings for the swimming pool, and PE specialist teachers mean that PE days are likely to change termly. Parents were always notified in advance.

Request for weekly curriculum plans

Some parents would like the school to give weekly plans on what the classes will be covering. Mrs Griffiths reminded parents that termly curriculum maps and learning objectives were on the class pages of the website. She explained that to give weekly plans was not practical for several reasons. Firstly, teachers' time is much better spent preparing high quality lessons than writing weekly letters. Also, the content of lessons change on a daily basis according to how well the class have understood a particular concept. Thirdly, generic class plans cannot be usefully produced for parents, since children are working at varying levels of ability and different work is often prepared for different groups of children.

Streaming

Parents asked about the school's position on streaming different ability groups. Mrs Griffiths explained that the school does not stream pupils. Sometimes they will work in mixed ability groups, and other times they are given differentiated work to complete according to the way they have tackled a previous piece of learning.

Collective consequences

Parents asked the schools policy on keeping the whole class in from playtime when only a few children have broken a rule. Mrs Griffiths explained that sometimes a class may be late for break if the whole

group needs to practise lining up sensibly or putting equipment away quietly, for example.

Newman Fund

Parents asked for an update on how the money had been used. Mrs Griffiths reminded parents of the previous promise to do this at the end of each financial year. The end of the financial year is 31st March, and the figures will be given in the newsletter following that date.

Chess Club

Parents advised Mrs Griffiths of a chess club that was starting at Chelsea library and Mrs Griffiths agreed to include this in the newsletter.

Pancake sale

Parents suggested that the pancake sale on Shrove Tuesday could be held in the morning so they could take pancakes to work. While a nice idea, it is better for food sales to be held after school so that the children can benefit. Perhaps next year, a coffee morning could be held on this day in addition to the sale after school, but that would be at the discretion of those who were kind enough to give up their time to run the event.

Lost property

Parents asked again about lost property. Mrs Griffiths explained that all named lost property found by staff or children in the school is returned to the child and unnamed lost property is put in the lost property area in the basement.

Volunteer readers from secondary schools

Parents knew of certain secondary schools where older pupils were volunteering to work with younger pupils once a week. Mrs Griffiths explained that this was already in place at our school.

Hiring the school to raise money

Parents wondered whether the school had considered renting out the building at the weekends as a way to make money. Mrs Griffiths explained that the school was making the necessary arrangements to be able to do so, but the governors would only consider hiring the building to long term clients.

Job shares

Parents asked the school's view on class teachers job sharing. Mrs Griffiths explained that in certain situations, this arrangement was necessary. Having two excellent teachers is a positive for any class. Different teachers bring different strengths to the class, and children across the school are used to working with a variety of adults- music teachers, lunchtime supervisors, learning support assistants, and so on. Where class teachers job share, there is a system of communication between them to ensure continuity across the week.

Set reading days in Reception Class

Some parents requested that their children were given set days for reading. Mrs Griffiths explained that the children should bring their reading books with them every day so that they were always ready to read. Set days for reading do not work effectively when children are absent, if the day is running differently to an event or visitor, or if a volunteer reader is helping on a different day to the set pattern.