

## **Notes from Parents' Forum**

**25<sup>th</sup> November 2019**

### **Year 6 Leavers' Sweatshirts/T-shirts**

Parents who were organising the leavers' gift were wondering whether the school would allow the children to wear them during PE lessons. This would not be permissible, but the children could wear them on school journey.

### **Sacred Heart Admissions Policy**

Parents asked whether our school would be petitioning Sacred Heart due to their new random allocation procedure. Mrs Griffiths said that our school would not. The policy for Sacred Heart had been under consultation for some time, and that our school was a feeder school. Random Allocation has been used by other local secondary and primary schools for some time.

### **Teachers' attendance**

Parents asked why a teacher was allowed to have time away from school when children were not allowed to. Mrs Griffiths explained that teachers employed by the school were allowed time away for family weddings. This amounts to no more than three days (one day either side for travelling). Where the school engages a teacher on a temporary contract from an agency, their time away can be arranged differently.

### **Gender imbalance in some classes**

Parents wondered whether the school could control the number of boys and girls that were admitted. Mrs Griffiths had previously investigated this with the local authority, and they explained that this is not allowed, due to equality law.

### **DBS checks**

The issue of whether peripatetic music tutors needed a DBS check was raised. Mrs Griffiths explained that all club leaders and tutors at our school were expected to be DBS checked to comply with the school's very thorough safeguarding procedures.

### **Silence on the stairs and in the corridors**

A parent suggested that the school's new policy of silence around the school was unfriendly. Mrs Griffiths explained that the new policy was introduced due to the fact that our limited space made noise around the school very distracting for learning. In addition, pupils with additional needs, such as autism, can find noise disconcerting and disturbing.

### **Pupils as monitors**

A parent asked for an explanation of when and why the children were given responsibility of monitors. Mrs Griffiths explained that as well as Year 6 prefect roles, other class monitors were used by staff when certain jobs needed to be done. For example, handing out books and giving out lunch boxes. Monitors were also used on the stairs to remind children to walk silently to their class.

### **Adults on duty at morning playtime on the roof**

A parent asked whether more than two adults should be on duty at playtime. Mrs Griffiths explained that two adults is usually enough- but that when an incident occurred, such as a grazed knee, staff could ask other members of staff to help if needed.

### **Teaching Assistants**

Parents asked why there was not a teaching assistant for each class in the juniors. Mrs Griffiths explained that Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6 share a teaching assistant between them. Some classes have Learning Support Assistants, who specifically support pupils with additional needs. This has been the case for 5 years, due to budget cuts. All schools are experiencing similar issues.

### **What is the number of PE sessions per class per week?**

Historically, junior classes have 2 sessions and infant classes have 1 session. Last year, the school introduced 2 sessions for Year 1 as a transition arrangement. Reception have outdoor access, and it was felt that an extra session of PE would benefit the transition process.

### **Childcare Vouchers**

Fit for Sport accept childcare vouchers as payment. Parents asked Mrs Griffiths whether other clubs could do the same. Mrs Griffiths would ask the school's business manager to look into the possibility of this.

### **Walking Bus**

A parent asked whether there could be a walking bus to another school so that children could access wraparound care. Mrs Griffiths had asked the company whether this was possible, but at the moment they do not have the staff available to offer that service for the small number that would require it at Oratory.

### **Reception settling arrangements**

Some parents mentioned that it was inconvenient for there to be a reduced timetable for reception for the first few weeks of the Autumn term. They commented that other local schools did not do this. Mrs Griffiths explained that there needs to be some sort of arrangement for new starters. Our school is different from others in that we do not have a nursery. The reception children do not know the school or the routines and therefore there needs to be a gradual start. Mrs Griffiths would welcome any further ideas about how this could be better organised for parents (eg: mornings/afternoons etc).

### **Clubs for Reception children**

Reception parents are hoping to organise a French Club in a local space, and wondered whether our school could offer a classroom for hire.

Mrs Griffiths explained again that the school has a policy which restricted the use of rooms for clubs afterschool so that each classroom is used one evening a week only. This enables the teachers to complete assessment, planning, and preparation for lessons the following day with

minimal disruption. The school currently has a range of clubs on offer, and although more clubs would be welcomed by parents, it ought to be recognised that the core purpose of the school is to provide quality first teaching. If teachers cannot use their classrooms after school, then the learning of their classes would be compromised.