

Parent Forum Minutes – Wednesday 8th March 2023

Lunches

Query:

Concerns were raised over the types of desserts being offered for school lunches and it was requested that only fruit or yogurt was served.

Principals, the catering company that the school uses, have to ensure that they meet the specified requirements set by the school food standards in terms of content and nutritional value of their meals. I explained that the dessert portion is small but this is something that we will monitor and feedback to the catering company. It is worth noting that when the children were previously offered fruit or yoghurt, there was a huge amount of waste as children were not eating either.

After school clubs

Query:

Can we run an Italian after school club?

We are at absolute full capacity for after school clubs at the moment but Italian is on the list for when we are able to cater for a new club.

Uniform

Query:

Can the girls choose to wear trousers? (Especially in the cold weather.)

This is a decision that needs to be made by the governors. I will raise it with governors in our next meeting. During the cold weather, girls can wear tights and both their blazer and duffle coat if they would like to. Children can also bring the school beanie hat to school to wear for playtimes during cold weather.

Extra-curricular activities

Query:

There was an enquiry about requests for payments of activities recently.

We place great importance on providing the children with wide and varied opportunities to enrich the curriculum and their learning experiences. This includes workshops, trips and visitors and we do rely on payment from parents for these experiences as they are not included in the school budget. If any families are facing a challenging financial situation, then they can of course let me or the office know that they are currently not in a position to pay for these events.

Query:

It was then asked if parents could make a larger contribution for trips and workshops.

We are eternally grateful to parents wanting to raise much needed funds for the school. When requesting payment for enrichment activities, we must keep to the set cost of the event for auditing purposes. However, if families do want to contribute funds to school, just a reminder that the most valuable thing that can be done is to continue contributing

to The Newman Fund in whatever way you can.* Please see details for The Newman Fund on our school website here:

<https://www.oratory.rbkc.sch.uk/parent-involvement/#top>

*A reminder of what The Newman Fund goes towards:

- ✓ Reading books, and information texts to support curriculum topics
- ✓ Furniture for classrooms
- ✓ Art materials such as clay, paint, paper, charcoal
- ✓ Music specialist teachers from the Tri Borough Music Hub who are experts in their field
- ✓ Playground equipment such as cricket bats, netball hoops, and bikes and trikes for Reception
- ✓ School trips (which are always subsidised despite parents' contributions)
- ✓ Materials for practical science experiments
- ✓ Maintenance materials to keep the school bright and clean
- ✓ Computer equipment which constantly needs updating
- ✓ Speech and language therapy and Educational Psychology services to support learning
- ✓ St Luke's playground for lunch playtime to give children space to run and play
- ✓ The level of swimming lessons offered (which are higher than many other schools)
- ✓ Partnerships with curriculum specialists such as Ivydale Technology (D.T. workshops) and Westminster Archives to enrich subject areas

We are hugely grateful for any contributions that we receive and, as you can see from the list above, it benefits the children immensely.

Query:

There was a request for drama workshops where the children learn about theatre production and how a performance comes together.

The children have taken part in a variety of drama workshops this academic year which they have thoroughly enjoyed. These are linked to their learning and then enthuse the children further with whichever topic they are based on. This is something that we will continue to provide for the children. When our Year 6 children prepare for their end of year performance, they will be learning about theatre production.

Parents' Evenings

Query:

There has been high demand across all year groups for more in person slots for parents' evenings.

I explained that in the summer term we will be returning to 100% in person parents' evenings, as most other schools also have, so that all parents will have the opportunity to meet their child's class teacher face to face.

Other

Query:

A comment about audio quality and difficulty hearing the children during assemblies.

Whilst we do have microphones connected to the speakers in the hall, we are focusing on presenting skills (particularly voice projection) with the children as this is an important skill to develop. The microphone can certainly be used where appropriate, but can sometimes cause more distraction than benefit for the children.

Query:

Some parents requested more information about the content of our PSHE curriculum and asked for this to be included in weekly learning summaries in the newsletter.

I will remind all class teachers to ensure PSHE is covered in their weekly learning summaries. We follow the 3D PSHE scheme of work, combined with Catholic resources from Ten:Ten (<https://www.tentenresources.co.uk/life-to-the-full-primary/>).

We also have the termly curriculum maps under the 'Learning' and 'Year Groups' tab on the school website which provides PSHE coverage too:

<https://www.oratory.rbkc.sch.uk/year-groups/#toggle-id-4-closed>

I will also liaise with Mr Alton, our PSHE lead, about providing a PSHE parent workshop next term.

This same query asked if the school was aware of the Period positive initiative.

The children start learning about the changes that take place during puberty in the summer term of Year 5 (Y5 parents will be communicated with about this closer to the time). We are also now looking into the Period Positive initiative.

Query:

A query about swimming lessons and children getting cold waiting to get back in the water for their turn.

The classes have recently swapped for swimming and so in the initial lessons, the swimming coaches need to assess where the children are at which can take a little longer. Now that this is completed, the children should be in the water and swimming more consistently. This is something that the class teachers will keep monitoring and feedback to me.

Query:

Can weekend homework be more maths or reading comprehension based as parents would be less likely to be involved?

The Y4, Y5 & Y6 weekend homework is intended to be more 'project based' and so different to the children's more maths and English based weekly homework. The children are provided with clear step by step instructions and are always provided with a wagoll (what a good one looks like) to guide them so they should be able to get on independently, although parental involvement can also be beneficial. I mentioned that the instructions would also specify whether pictures or diagrams should be drawn or printed etc going forward.

Query:

Could an after school club be set up in order to help the children prepare for 11+?

Unfortunately, we do not have the space to provide this. We don't prepare the children for 11+ in school and this is something that, for those that wish to, parents need to organise outside of school.

Query:

Could the school join the School Street Programme in which streets are closed to traffic around schools during drop off and pick up times?

We have applied for this in the past, but the feedback was that they could only close off Pond Place as Cale Street is too much of a main throughfare to shut off. I predict that this will still be the case but this is certainly something that we will relook into.

Query:

Can we make some more links with Sacred Heart secondary school to ensure we are a confirmed feeder school?

Sacred Heart give priority to all catholic schools within neighbouring boroughs, which we are. However, I am keen to strengthen our links with Sacred Heart and so will be reaching out to them to enquire about our communities working together.

Query:

Can the boys wear something different for First Holy Communion?

The boys always look incredibly smart in their school uniform with their red sash. Taking their First Holy Communion as a class within school is a very unique experience and incredibly special as members of our Oratory community. It therefore seems fitting that they wear their Oratory uniform with pride!

Query:

There was a query about the process of selecting the next head of the PA.

We won't be holding any sort of election for the head of the PA, though the association is something that is of course open to all parents who are able and willing to provide important support to the school, for which we are always grateful. We don't need to confirm arrangements for this yet, but please do continue to offer support to the PA in whatever way you can and do let me know if you are keen and able to support.