

Minutes of meeting Overdale Schools' Parent Forum Picnic

Tuesday 12 June 2018

Present: Helen Ashley, Mandy Patel, Mel Elliott, Sureya Sheikh, Karen Cooper, Karen Stuart

The group enjoyed a picnic outside and discussed some ideas and items they would like to see on a future agenda.

1. **School trips** – parents are often asked to help on trips but information about those selected to go can often take a long while to be given out and sometimes those who are not needed are not told. Working parents often need to book time off work and more notice is helpful. Also would it be an idea to have a reserve list of parents who might be able to attend visits at short notice?
2. **Staff illness/absence** – the point was made it can be unsettling when children /parents are not to be given updates about when staff may return to school. Would it be possible to keep parents informed about return to work plans?
3. **Communication** - in this modern age of information technology and social media parents would like us to explore more ways of keeping in touch and reducing our use of paper letters.

Here are some suggested methods:

Wats App – many groups of parents use this to communicate instantly with each other about what is happening in a class or year group. Parents can be encouraged to set them up at the beginning of the academic year.

Twitter – increasing numbers of teachers are using Twitter to keeping families informed about what children are doing in school and class reminders.

Facebook – is available, but probably needs to be kept a little more up-to-date.

Paper letters – often get misplaced or lost

Parent Mail via Parent Pay account – this is a really useful way of keeping parents informed about what is happening in school.

School website – this has the facility to take bookings – ie for Parent Evenings, clubs, trips etc

This could be a way forward in the near future to reduce paper letters. Mel Elliott is able to help with this. We could do a 'dummy' run test this method.

We understand Woodland Grange Primary School (part of the OAK Multi-Academy Trust) do not send paper letters and Mrs Stuart suggested perhaps we can visit the school and investigate this option.

4. **Homework policy review** – following on from parent forum discussions about homework a teacher working party was set up to review the policy and a pupil survey conducted by the school council. The results will be reported back to a staff meeting and the review completed in due course.
5. **Dates of future meetings** – parents agreed it is best to offer meetings at different times of the day in order to ensure we reach as many parents/carers as possible. The dates for the next academic year will be arranged in September 2018.
6. Thank you for all your valued contributions and ideas throughout the year. This year Overdale Junior School Parents' Forum joined with Overdale Infant School to create a joint parent forum organisation. We hope to develop this further in the coming year.

Karen Cooper