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| **Greenway Primary and Nursery School**  **Parent Forum** | | **20.00-21.30**  **Monday 9th March 2015**  **Library** |
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| **Minutes** | | |
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| **Present:** | Katharine Ellwood – Head teacher, Nigel Wiggins – Governor (Chair), Caroline Crozier – Deputy Head.  Parent Forum Members: Natasha Goss (Nursery), Ann Marie Costelloe (Reception), Jaki Culley (Elm), Clare Burlingham (Elm), Helen Hanbidge (Beech), Isobel Hall (Cedar), Caroline Green (Pine), Liz Hopwood (Maple), Beverley Brookes (Silver Birch), Kate Moody (Chestnut), Charlotte Woollett (Willow), , Elliott Brooks (Sycamore), Nicky Woolner (Sycamore) | |
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1. **Welcome and apologies**

Apologies were received from Liz Fleming (Spruce), Paula Farnham (Spruce).

1. **Behaviour parent workshop 18th March**

Katharine circulated the letter that is ready to go out about this. Feedback was positive.

***Parent forum reps will rally support and encourage parents to attend.***

1. **Rucksacks**

The ‘working party’ reported back and showed the group a selection of rucksack samples. It was agreed that the quality was good and the water bottle holder was particularly appreciated. There are two sizes: the smaller one will be suitable for Foundation Stage/Key Stage 1, the larger one for Key Stage 2. The bags would be branded with the school logo. There was some discussion about whether these will be a compulsory part of school uniform or optional. It was generally felt that rucksacks are an alternative to book bags and the aim of introducing Greenway branded ones was so that bigger, non-uniform rucksacks would eventually be filtered out.

***Katharine will show them to staff and governors for approval. She will also get information on price and investigate storage options in classrooms.***

1. **Snacks and healthy school meals**

Clare Burlingham reported that some Y5 parents have said their children are hungry by lunchtime for two reasons: a) fruit/veg healthy snack is not as filling as previous snacks and b) they have to wait the longest for lunch. They have suggested children be allowed to bring in some kind of carbohydrate snack e.g. pitta, bread sticks etc. Katharine said she was not opposed to this in principle and was just mindful that it didn’t signal a return towards unhealthy snacks. She also pointed out that Y5 get their lunch by about 12.40pm most days.

***School to draw up a list of ‘carb’ snacks options to be made available to KS2 parents.***

Clare raised another issue for Y5 parents relating to the size of portions offered at lunchtime. Again, some children have said they are still hungry after lunch. They have also reported they feel the ‘best’ puddings have often run out by the time they get their lunch. Katharine has spoken to Dean about both these issues. The portion size has increased and children who had previously complained have reported to their parents that they are now getting more food. Re puddings, Dean operates a system whereby he holds back a certain number of the puddings so that the above issue doesn’t arise.

There was a final dining room issue about water jugs: some children have reported that water gets ‘recycled’ from half empty cups into the jug, also that food sometimes gets into the water jugs. Katharine explained the way in which jugs are filled from the drinking water tap in the dining room and suggested the possibility of having ‘water monitors’ from upper KS2 to refill the jugs regularly.

***Katharine will check with Herts Catering about the menus and rotation system. She or Caroline will do an assembly on dining room issues so the children can be reminded/reassured about portion sizes, water and puddings. She will also talk to School Council about the idea of dining room monitors.***

Clare reported that one parent had commented on the frequency of birthday sweets being handed out and a feeling that this was becoming a problem. The group discussed various solutions to this, although didn’t find one that would please everyone and finally agreed that it was a personal issue and ultimately one for individual parents to deal with.

1. **Postcards/Bookmarks**

Katharine reported that the new postcards have arrived and some have been sent out to children in recognition of their achievements. Elliot Brooks (whose daughter has had one) confirmed that they have been very well received.

She also shared the bookmarks which have recently arrived and explained how one will be given to every child in the school (the date of this has yet to be decided). In future, a bookmark will also be given to every child joining Greenway in Reception (or other ‘in-year’ new joiners).

1. **Parent/Child questionnaire**

This went live on Friday. Katharine asked members to remind their classes to complete the parent version. Children in Nursery, Reception and Year 1 will be asked to complete theirs at home with the help of an adult, the rest of the classes will complete theirs at school. Numbers completed in the various classes will be made public, as last year, in order to encourage parents to fill theirs in.

***Members will encourage parents to complete.***

1. **Talk for Writing**

Katharine asked members to remind everyone of the need to do this as it makes a big difference to the children’s written work during Big Write. Various members admitted that they sometimes struggle to get it done and also pointed out that some of their children are not good at knowing what they’ve got to do, explaining it to parents, or bringing home the slip of paper with the homework on it. There was some discussion about sending it home earlier, although Katharine explained that the programme works best if the talking has taken place just before the Big Write session.

***Katharine agreed to talk to teachers about ways of tightening up on the communication of the task.***

1. **Petition about traffic on Shootersway**

Katharine shared news of proposed housing developments in Berkhamsted, in particular on Shootersway/Durrants Lane. A local resident has drawn up a petition about the need for traffic calming measures and is urging as many people as possible to sign it. It is open until 31st March.

***Members will pass this on to their classes and encourage people to sign the petition.***

1. **AOB**

* Playground space for older children – one parent has said Y5 boys in particular are finding they need more space to let off steam, but are getting told off for being ‘too rough’. There has been a suggestion that the old swimming pool could be developed as an additional space for playtimes. There was some suggestion that it could be developed as a nature garden or eco-area, but this would be hard to manage as a play-time space given its distance from the main playground. Katharine also pointed out that next year the school will be at its biggest and numbers will then decrease. Staggered playtimes and lunchtimes etc. have been introduced to mitigate the impact of our current numbers. Astro-turf was mentioned but this would be an expensive project to meet a short-term and time-limited need.
* Food at WACCY – some parents have said their children are not getting enough food at WACCY. Again, Katharine has spoken to staff at WACCY and is assured that there is a varied menu, with portion sizes being generous. The children get a light snack on arrival and a hot meal at about 4.30pm. She feels there may be an issue around the choices some children are making about what they will and won’t eat and asked members to remind parents that WACCY is providing a generous tea, but that this does not have to be their children’s only evening meal. If parents have concerns about their children being hungry after WACCY they should contact Katharine so she can track individual pupils and monitor what they’re eating.

***School will monitor food offered at WACCY.***

* Nursery parents/footpath congestion – some parents have said it is difficult to pass Nursery with a buggy as Nursery parents are congregating on the path. Caroline said Nursery staff have not noticed a major problem and members of the group with Nursery children said they generally congregate inside the gated area.

***School will investigate the possibility of concreting/using slabs on the corner to provide easier access past Nursery.***

* Child shows parent – some parents find it difficult to get to and requested that it be moved to different days. Katharine/Caroline reported that it has been on 3 weds, 2 tues and 1 thurs this year. It will never be on a Friday or a Monday and the days chosen are dictated by other meetings/staff commitments. They reminded members that the teachers are always happy to let parents in to look at books on another day if they can’t make Child shows parent.

***Members will feed this back to classes.***

* World Book Day – some parents feel this has become too commercial, that there is pressure to create/buy costumes and that the purpose of the day (promoting a love of reading) is getting lost. There were suggestions such as wearing pyjamas and bringing a bedtime story book but Katharine said she was reluctant to change the current format as the children respond very well to it. Various members agreed that their children love it and that the atmosphere in school on the day was quite special. Katharine reminded the group that dressing up is not compulsory and also that it happens every year so there should not be an issue around having enough notice to plan a simple costume.
* E-safety – Helen Hanbidge, who attended the recent e-safety workshop at Westfield, wondered what messages the children get about this at school and in which year groups. Caroline explained that all children use ICT and all get the usual messages about passwords, personal information, stranger-danger etc. in lessons. There is also an annual ‘Safer Internet Day’ and schools have e-safety weeks, during which the messages are further reinforced. Katharine directed members to the school website where resources from the workshop are available.
* Pedestrian skills/Cycling Proficiency – Katharine confirmed that these will take place for Years 4 and 6 respectively.
* Netball pitch markings – this is due to be done imminently.
* Swimming time trials – a letter went out about this on 9.3.15.and Katharine agreed to follow up on whether Greenway has been affiliated.
* School production in Year 6 – Katharine said we are having discussions about a possible production for Year 6 next year.