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| **Greenway Primary and Nursery School**  **Parent Forum** | | **20.00-21.30**  **Thursday, 20th November 2014**  **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), Liz Fleming (Spruce), Paula Farnham (Spruce), Elliott Brooks (Sycamore), Nicky Woolner (Sycamore) | |
| **Apologies:** | There were no apologies. | |

1. **Welcome and introduction**

Nigel & Katharine welcomed everyone and all members of the group introduced themselves.

1. **Curriculum Evening on Behaviour Policy**

Katharine thanked all those who had attended and briefly outlined the content of the evening. She explained that DESC (Dacorum Education Support Centre) and the LA have offered to deliver ‘Step On’ Training (a positive behaviour management programme in which staff in all schools in the local cluster have been trained) for parents. Parents at the curriculum evening had expressed an interest and she asked members of the PF if they would also be interested. The response was positive and ***it was agreed that the PF reps would consult with their classes and report back on the amount of interest***. Paula Farnham asked for a brief description of what would be involved to pass to parents. ***Katharine will ask DESC to provide this***.

Charlotte Woollett pointed out that several parents said they would have attended if they had received clearer information on the aims and objectives of the evening – it was felt the initial communication did not do this.

1. **Rucksacks**

Katharine gave a brief history to the rucksack issue, which has arisen recently in Year 4. The new classrooms (those occupied by Willow and Chestnut) are smaller than those elsewhere in the school and do not have a cloakroom. This means space is limited, trolleys are used for coats etc. and there is not enough room for the large rucksacks that some children have started bringing to school. The result is that they end up on the floor, posing a health and safety risk. She has spoken to the children and explained that they may bring rucksacks, but that they need to think carefully about the size of the rucksack. In exceptional circumstances e.g. when children are going swimming, or on Fridays when they might be travelling to see a parent for the weekend, a larger bag may be needed. She has asked for everyone’s co-operation in this matter and the Year 4 teachers have reported that there are fewer large rucksacks now coming into school.

There was some discussion about book-bags not being big enough, especially for water bottles and large pieces of fruit. Also, when children are carrying a musical instrument a rucksack enables them to have both hands free.

***Caroline Green, Beverley Brooks and Liz Hopwood volunteered to investigate the possibility of there being a branded Greenway rucksack***. They will speak to other schools and look on the internet for suppliers. Elliott Brooks pointed out the importance of finding a robust product that will not fall apart quickly. ***Katharine agreed to speak to local heads about what they use in their schools.***

***Caroline agreed to get School Council involved in doing some sort of survey among children in KS2 about bags/rucksacks.***

1. **Snacks and healthy school meals**

Katharine explained the current situation: Children in FS and KS1 get a snack (fresh fruit or vegetables, occasionally raisins) daily, free of charge. Children in KS2 are allowed to bring their own snack. Despite school guidelines suggesting that the KS2 snack should be healthy, a wide range of unhealthy items are being eaten by KS2 children at break-time. The school would like to introduce a clear rule saying that KS2 snacks should match KS1 snacks i.e. only fresh fruit or vegetables. Katharine asked PF members what their views were. The response was a unanimous vote in support of the school’s stance and ***it was agreed that a letter will be sent out about the new snacks rule, to start in January 2015. PF reps will attempt to dispel any resistance that may arise when this letter goes out.***

There was some discussion about school meals and the fact that some parents have asked their PF rep to report that their children are not getting enough to eat at lunchtime. ***Katharine asked that those parents be asked to speak to her directly so that she can then liaise with Dean, the school cook.***

1. **New classroom**

Katharine explained the current situation – the contractors have left the site, the classroom is finished, furniture has been delivered except for chairs. She praised the contractors and explained that any delays were not their fault but due to other suppliers. The group visited the room and Katharine explained plans for the landscaping of the bed outside the room. She also explained the drainage problems that have been largely resolved. Ann Marie Costelloe raised the issue of drainage outside the nursery – there is either a very large puddle or mud! ***Katharine agreed to speak to John Rapson about it.***

1. **Issues raised by parents**

The following responses were given to issues raised by PF members:

* Class timetables can be found on the website – they are part of the powerpoint presentations that were given on ‘Welcome to your new class’ evening (under ‘Pupils’).
* No one has come forward to take on Running Club. Katharine updated everyone on the lack of a Sports Apprentice and our hopes that we may get one next year. She talked about the wide programme of sporting activities that we are currently running, the competitive fixtures, sports journalists and new noticeboard for sports information (outside Year 5). Liz Hopwood raised a concern about a perception that children in Years 3 and 4 miss out on sports clubs or activities because these are now going to Year 5 as the oldest children in the school. Katharine explained that while the recent competitive fixtures have involved the older children, there are still a lot of sporting opportunities available to children across the school. She also explained that some Ashlyns 6th form students will be coming to Greenway in the New Year as part of Mr Jones’ (Ashlyns head of PE) Sports Leaders programme. In the meantime, Elliott Brooks explained that he had taken his daughters to Dacorum running club as they run sessions for younger children who may not be old enough to take part competitively but are interested in running. Charlotte Woollett talked about a series of cross country events that Bridgewater gets involved in and ***Katharine said she would look into this via her links with BW***.
* There *are* plans afoot to address the issue of road safety and safer routes to school. There is a lot of red tape involved and things will be changing but it will take time.
* ***The school will buy an outside thermometer*** so the children know what the temperature is outside.
* We are aware that Beech classroom is often too hot. They have lost a whole wall’s worth of windows and the windows that look out onto the playground do not all open. ***Katharine agreed to speak to John Rapson about this again.***
* Children are selected for sports events by Mr Loczy, based on discussions with class teachers and feedback from PE lessons. The way in which selections are made depends on the nature of the event and whether it is competitive or not.
* Children in Year 4 will continue to have Pedestrian Skills training in the Spring or Summer term and children in Year 6 (next year) will have the opportunity to do Cycling Proficiency training.
* Some parents feel there are too many texts to parents. However, most members of PF said they find the texts very useful.
* The widespread dismay at the quality of this year’s school photos has been noted.
* The decision not to include Year 1 children on School Council was based on experience and on what happens in many other primary schools. Year 1 children are still able to have input into school council via their teacher.
* It is NOT possible to have a school meal on Friday only.
* The GSA used to sell school uniform and it was a huge job. It was suggested that parents who want to avoid the postage cost involved in ordering small amounts of school uniform club together. This could be co-ordinated by PF reps.
* ***Katharine agreed to look into the possibility of offering school t-shirts made of 100% cotton for those children who suffer from eczema or allergies.***
* The information provided about what children will be doing on school trips e.g. the Year 2 sports event at Ashlyns, is based on what we know ourselves about the event. Parents can look at the website after an event to find out more about what their children did.
* Regrettably, PE lessons are occasionally missed when a class is practising for an assembly and the hall is needed. There are two PE lessons a week so children will still be doing PE at least once in the week, and in KS2 they do an additional 15 minutes a day through an online based ‘5 a day’ exercise programme.
* There are no plans to mix classes at the end of the school year in year groups with more than one class.
* Ashlyns parents’ association has a Facebook page. ***We will include a link to this on our next newsletter to direct parents to it and raise the profile of Ashlyns School.***