

SJS PARENT FORUM

Forum date/time **Friday 11 June 2021 13.30 – 14.30**
Prepared by **Rachel Holloway, Jo Tearle**

Purpose: *The parent forum is an important and valued communication link. It provides an opportunity for a representative group of parents/carers and the school to discuss whole-school issues that have been raised by multiple parents across different year groups. It enables positive feedback to be provided by parents/carers, and gives an opportunity for the school to discuss and seek feedback on new ideas and initiatives. Through their involvement in Parent Forum discussions, Class Representatives support other parents/carers to understand whole school and year group decisions made by the school. By working together, focussing on solutions and supporting each other to see different perspectives, we can continue to make Shirley Junior School a great place for children to thrive.*

Attendees

Jo Tearle – Deputy Headteacher
Russel Hack – ICT Technician
Hayley Newman – Business Manager
Jen Bleeck (PTFA Co-Chair)
Sarah Crookall - Secretary
Amanda Web - Treasurer
Rachel Holloway – Parent Forum Coordinator
Year 3: Jen Pillinger (Bumblebees), Nicky Balfour (Honeybees)
Year 4: Zoe Konn and Cath Dixon (Robins), Rachel Holloway (Wagtails)
Year 5: Michelle Elcombe (Arctic Wolves), Jen Cook (Huskies)
Year 6: Paula English (Rhinos), Liz Harrison (Leopards)

Apologies – Elissa Collins (Nightingales), Catherine Howard (Hippos), Sarah Scott (Honeybees), Nina Hickman (Honey Bees), Laure Drothier (Bumblebees), Poonam Pathak (Huskies), Nicola Howarth (PTFA Co-Chair), Vanessa Lee (Fireflies), Elspeth Fenton (Narwhals), Laura Scott (Nightingales), Sonia Malhotra (Hippos).

Agenda

- Intro and thanks
- Discussion points:
 - Periods – provision for girls in school
 - Communications – with Russell Hack (IT Technician) and Hayley Newman (Business Manager)
 - Uniform
- AOB – Trips and comms/payment

Discussion Points. Responses from SJS in green

Item	Response/Proposed Action
Periods	
Provision for girls in school	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If girls start their periods at SJS presumably they can talk to their teacher to get things sorted out? Do you know if sanitary products are freely available in the girls' toilets at school? Ideally this would be lovely to combat period poverty/awkwardness.• Issues around access to sanitary pads etc – where girls could keep things/access easily and discreetly.	<p>Sanitary products are freely available for Y5/6 teachers, and as part of our sex education, periods are openly discussed with the girls and teachers explain which cubicles have bins in them for sanitary products.</p> <p>We could definitely share this information a bit better with parents and will consider how to do this.</p> <p>Child to communicate with teacher if they would like to bring in their own sanitary products. Jo T to let teachers know that there may be requests.</p>

Communications

Lots of apps!

- It would be nice to get an acknowledgment when emailing the office. It's difficult to know if it's been seen/actioned or the message passed onto the teacher, as appropriate.
- I can't see any emails/communications on the mychildatschool app? Am I missing information?
- It's getting confusing keeping track of where information is coming from and which app is currently being used. Some messages still come though on MarvellousMe.
- It would be good to just have one app, which acts as a hub, with all of the information in one place, or at the least that links to the other locations.
- In an ideal world, I wish they could have a page for each year group on the website, where they put everything, weekly letters, curriculum info, home learning... Reminders, and notifications through MM, email, and the other App could link to the page. Just a thought.
- Just in regards to communication. There's MM and the new MCAS app. Plus weekly and communications etc on the website. Also I have had to reactivate my Facebook account where I didn't want to as there's even communications on there. Even so there's missed communication. It's all needs to be streamlined in one place.
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Parent emails sent to the office account will receive an automatic reply saying that their email will be dealt with within 3 days. This will notify the parents that we have received their email. All emails which can be dealt with by the office team will be responded to directly, and if not, the email will be passed onto the relevant person who should respond within the 3 days. The office account is continuously monitored and emails are actioned immediately upon arrival.

We have no choice but to use this app at the moment. It's a new app, rolled out across 30 trust schools, with teething issues that are currently being investigated. The app has not replaced email though. Hayley/Russell to make sure everyone also gets emails

MMe is supposed to be for messages and celebrations about the child's learning. Some teachers have got a bit trigger happy with it!

Hayley/Russell to send out user guide about MCAS and how to operate it. If there are still issues, option for list of issues to be collated and FAQs produced, or possibly drop in session.

Parent mentioned that it's useful to see what their child has chosen for dinner as per ScoPay – Russell to look into if this is possible on MCAS.

This has been looked into many times, and school feels like this is the best option at the moment. School to ensure that letters etc have key words in the title so that search function works better.

Hayley/Russell to ensure old information is archived.

We agree, and will look further into this next year. (Note the Facebook page is run by the PTFA and not the school and does not replace the school communications – it is intended to be a helpful place with info on events that the PTFA are running or information from the school taken direct from their communications.)

Uniform

Plus shoes versus trainers

- I really like the idea of the children continuing to wear the Sports Uniform however I'm not sure if this is just us but the sports top snag really easily and look very scruffy quickly. As this was originally intended just for PE this didn't really matter but they don't hold up to every day wear. Is there anything that can be done about this?

We are keeping the PE uniform, as mentioned in the Weekly Comms 21/05.

Higher quality, more expensive PE tops are available from Schoolkit, we will advertise these to parents as an alternative. Clarify that can be white polo shirt instead. Jo T - Clarify the rules in general for uniform and the options that are available – is a plain green t-shirt ok for e.g.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valid point made about the transition from a very casual uniform to blazers and ties at Senior School, has the school considered that? Concern about the kids wearing trainers and not proper shoes which shape and guide their developing feet. Do you or does anyone else know if there has been a direction from the school for trainers to be worn or am I free to purchase more structured school shoes? I strongly feel trainers are better for their developing feet and overall activity (provided they fit well) – especially girls. I hope we can continue in trainers. Great if there is choice going forwards to suit all. Asked my friend who is a podiatrist with 25 years’ experience about trainers or shoes. She gave me a really long answer which I’m happy to forward to anyone interested but in essence, fit and comfort are most important (for either shoes or trainers). So right width and length, secure fastening, not too heavy, not worn out, not heeled are the most important factors. Here is a nice leaflet from the professional chartered of physiotherapy society -children choosing footwear for children 2016.pdf (csp.org.uk) 	<p>Is there a cotton t-shirt with house logo option? Or school logo? Jo T to check</p> <p>We do not see this as enough of an issue to change back to normal uniform.</p> <p>Luckily, footwear for healthy feet is a special interest of Mrs Tearle’s and many happy hours have been spent researching!</p> <p>The most important criteria of shoes for children’s developing feet are a wide toe box, secure fastening and no heel. A built-up shoe can provide too much support and this can actually inhibit the muscles and bones in the foot from doing their natural job or developing as they are designed to, so is not recommended.</p> <p>The type of shoe is not as important as the criteria above. There are many school shoes that definitely do not meet these criteria, and also some trainers that do not, but this is less common as trainers tend to be roomier and fasten more securely.</p> <p>Jo T – put links to footwear info on website</p>
<p>Trips</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year 4 France Trip (in year 6): Comments that this is a great opportunity but more information is required to help make a decision. Clarification required over deposit and what ‘non-refundable’ means. E.g. if Covid restrictions or child can’t go due to medical reasons etc Can the deposit be paid by MCAS? What are the payment options if you are unable to pay? What and when are the next payments? Why does the deposit need to be paid so quickly? Could more information be provided on what the trip involves, what activities etc – may be an information evening/event – like those that have been run for previous years? Also, information on the trip that they will do in year 5 as parents may need to choose between them Year 5 Trip: This was quite a shock too and a lack of information about what it involves. Could more information be provided please? Could the school advise when the next payments will be due so that parents can plan finances? Useful to be able to pay using MCAS 	<p>Hayley took away actions to clarify these. Generally it was agreed that more information about the trips would be helpful.</p> <p><i>Post-meeting note – Year 4 France Trip (in year 6) has now been cancelled – Mme message went out regarding this.</i></p> <p><i>Comments still applicable to any new trips organised across year groups.</i></p>

Other comments received and answered separate from forum (**Responses from school in green**)

Importance of play

['Let children play': the educational message from across Europe | Children | The Guardian](#)

- Interesting link via Parent Ping today. I'd really like to know what importance our school is placing on play. For me it's more important than catching up on education, I want mine to catch up on their childhood. I know others will put education first and that's ok, I just need the assurance that play is being given a similar level of importance. **We certainly put a lot of importance on enjoyment, but unsurprisingly the government and our education trust, to both of whom we are accountable, see educational progress as the priority. We are delighted with how much the children are loving the new playground equipment though, and with how many opportunities there are for organised games at lunchtime. We also have after-school clubs running again and will be setting up holiday clubs so children can come and play. We are concerned with how much time they spend on social media outside of school hours and are planning on offering a workshop to parents next year on how to set boundaries and help them be less reliant on social media.**

Time for lunch

- Quite a few comments received across all year groups that child does not have enough time to eat.
- Concerned their child doesn't have long enough to eat as they are coming home with food left and they never usually leave anything!
- Both of mine (year 1&5) came home with half eaten lunches too... they always say they've run out of time! They are both fairly slow eaters and quite chatty, and never seem to manage to finish within the allotted time.
They have 20 minutes in the hall, which is the same as pre-pandemic. It's a balancing act between keeping the whole year group in the hall and getting the ones who have finished outside where there is more space, but children are allowed to stay and eat if they have not finished even if the rest of the year group have gone out. Please contact the class teacher to discuss your individual child.

Water/cup availability

- Lack of cups to be able to drink water if water bottle lost/forgotten. **Reminder passed on to teachers and office staff**

After school clubs/pavement blocking

- The after school clubs children and carers gather on Wilton Road, blocking pavements and house entrances. Can they wait in the playground somewhere instead to make it safer? **The after school clubs for the juniors wait inside the gates so we think this may be Infant after school clubs – please could you bring this up at Infant parent forum?**

Mme messages

- No Marvellous Me s coming out of Y4 class. Not sure if this is reflective of the whole year/school but had hoped we would see more about the learning via this method. **Reminder passed on to teachers**

Reading reflections

- The teachers do not seem to be signing the children's planners anymore to have a look at their reflections from their reading? This makes it hard to motivate the children to do the reading as they like the recognition that they are doing it. **Reminder passed on to teachers**

TT-Rockstars

- Year 4 – child only seems to have her 11&12 times tables on TT rockstars - can the teachers please add in all times tables so they can practice. **Please contact the class teacher to discuss your individual child.**

School dinner refunds

- When will refunds be sent out for hot dinners? **Please send this query to office@shirleyschools.co.uk**

Bikes/Scooters to school

- Can we start bringing bikes to school and have access to a bike/scooter shed? **Yes – the bike shed is back open if your child would like to scoot or cycle to school. We will put this on a newsletter.**

Shuffling year groups

We are planning on shuffling the children around to make new classes as they go into year 4 (current year 3s) and year 5 (current year 4). Weekly communication 21/05/21 contained a link to a survey on preferences.

Year 5 will remain in their current class groups as they move into year 6.

Swimming

- A parent is interested to know if they will be offering swimming to yr 5's at all this year? **If it becomes possible, yes.**

Bikeability

- What are the school's thoughts on hosting bikeability? **We are trying to find a way to fit it in even if that is as a holiday club**

You are a just a bit ahead of us with these, decisions and communication will be shared in due course:

- **School Hours** (Will the school go back to school hours of 8.45-3.20 with restrictions being lifted?)
- **Trips** (when these will restart, what is planned). Letters sent out regarding residential trips proposed in each year group.
- **Sports Day**
- **End of term activities**
- **Year 6 mock SATS**
- **Return of peripatetic music lessons (yes, In2Music will still run in Y4)**
- **Swimming for Y5 in 2021/22**

We are sorry, we are human and doing our best but will try to do better:

- **Gate opening** (not always prompt, sometimes keys lost so everyone clashes going in and out the same way). **If this is a particular day/morning/afternoon, I can investigate and support**
- **Cultural traditions home learning project – apologies there was not better communication about this, it was an oversight on our part. It was put on Google Classroom but we did not publicise this enough. We would like to use Google Classroom more for home learning but need to be clear and consistent about this before we begin to do so.**

Positive comments received

General

- Just wanted to big up the school. What they are doing to try and create normality for children is fantastic. Dinner in the hall and tables in the classroom, opening the bike sheds. All of this is so welcome. Thank you.
- I think the school has done an amazing job over this crazy time. Thank you!
- Thanks for all the school's hard work following the rules and keeping everyone working together
- Thanks to the school for doing such a great job keeping all the kids happy and safe.
- We've had a couple of wobbles on the gate recently and the staff member on gate duty has always noticed and subtly checked in which has been really appreciated, thank you

Parents eve

- Year 6 parents evening was great and well organised. Thank you to Mrs Davie.
- Thought the parents evening was very good, worked well in that it could not run over! Was nice to have a face to face chat with the teacher.
- Well done to the school in the way the parents evening were organised. Preferred this to last year's report.
- I've received a few positive comments about the way parents evening was organised. The whole experience was very positive, from booking slots to the timed meetings, and it all ran smoothly.
- Parents evening was great as everything ran on time and was easy to book and use.
- Parents evening was really slick and it was great to be able to have some feedback and targets.

Year 6

- Year 6 - Massive thanks to yr 6 for the amazing work on hook day.

Year 4

- Thank you to Miss Blake for her positivity as always and her weekly Mme messages – great little summary of what the kids have been up to in the week.

Year 3

- Wanted to say a big thank you to school for what they are doing. The mummifying a fish lesson will not be forgotten in a hurry! The curriculum newsletter was really useful to help understand what they are going to be doing over the next few months.