

Parent Forum

Minutes of meeting: 4th October 2011

Present: Mrs Heller, Mrs Maddens, Miss Brennan, Mr Klemenz, Mrs Mula, Miss Balanoiu, Mrs Stokes

Apologies: Miss Chandler, Mrs Boateng

The Forum welcomed two new parents to the Forum, who will be parent reps for Nursery (morning and afternoon); Mrs Tina Mula and Miss Ioana Balanoiu.

We have yet to find someone to take on the role in Year 6. The parent reps agreed to contact anyone they knew, who may be interested in the role.

The date and times for the meetings will stay the same, the first Tuesday of the month (term time), however the reps have agreed to each take a turn at leading the meetings, as it is not always easy for Louise Stokes to leave the classroom. Minutes will be taken and Louise will type these up and ensure they are forwarded to the governors. Mandy Maddens has agreed to lead the next meeting.

The Forum discussed, again, making the minutes of the meetings available to all parents. Research of other school Forums seems to indicate that the minutes of meetings are made available for parents to read, either online, on school websites, or via a newsletter. The Forum considered that this would be an effective way of keeping communication with parents open and ensuring that the focus of the Parent Forum remains in the minds of the families of our school. Mrs Stokes suggested that there might be the opportunity to include a comments section on the website, allowing parents to keep in touch with the forum with any suggestions they may have.

Mrs Heller asked if the governors could consider using a text, emailing service to families, particularly in instances of information coming out at short notice i.e. school closed because of snow, or broken boiler.

The parent reps discussed the possibility of opening up a meeting to the whole school, to encourage parents to use the parent forum and come forward with their suggestions and comments. Mrs Maddens suggested that it might be possible to advertise a meeting (after school) with a particular topic to be addressed...all parents/carers invited, with refreshments offered. This may encourage parents to offer help for upcoming events as well as participating in discussions. It would also ensure that the parent reps become known to the families of our children.

(Not discussed at meeting – perhaps the parent reps could have a table and offer refreshments during parent's evenings? Louise Stokes)

Mrs Maddens raised the issue of children travelling to school by car, she had a newspaper article stating that St John's had the 2nd highest level of children travelling to school by car in the city. The reps suggested that this may be due in part to the fact that we are a catholic school whose children may live out of the catchment area. Miss Brennan highlighted that the children are being asked to

consider how they travel to school during 'walk to school week'. Suggestions were made that families should consider parking a little further away and using public transport. Issues around the cost of parking when dropping off and collecting children from school were raised – could the council be contacted re parking permits/discounts for school time?

For those families walking or riding to school, the Forum would like the governors to look into supplying bike parking space and somewhere to store pushchairs (particularly for nursery parents).

Please could the governors update the forum regarding the 'waiting area' off the main path, for families, before the playground is open at the start and end of the school day. (See minutes – 01/03/11)

Miss Brennan suggested that the parent forum reps may be able to provide refreshments for families after whole school Masses and end of term assemblies. The other members agreed that they would be happy to do this.

The parent forum would like to organise social event to raise money for a Christmas school disco for the children. Mrs Maddens suggested that a 'Christmas Fayre' might be a nice way to raise funds. Please could governors consider this and if in agreement, organise a date. Could a date for a school disco also be arranged – this needs to be organised quite quickly as entertainers get booked up very early.

Mrs Maddens had previously suggested that we could raise funds regularly, by playing a blackout game with parents. This would be offered to parents (class by class) either weekly or monthly. Parents would pay to pick a football team, when the card is filled, the winning team is uncovered; they would receive half of the money raised on the card, the remainder going to the schools funds (Year 6 end of year celebratory trip.) The parent reps would be responsible for taking the game card on to the playground, (their class) and getting parents to have a go. The forum felt that this would be a nice, easy way of raising money and getting to know families.

Miss Brennan asked if the school was aware that 'Trafalgar Day', 21st October, is 'Heroes Day' and children in schools across the country are being asked to come to school dressed as their hero to raise money for our soldiers. Could the school become involved and raise some money for this worthwhile cause. The Forum would be happy to assist in this fundraising.

'Children in need' is also coming up soon and the forum has agreed to investigate some ideas to raise money and get the children involved in this event.

Mr Klemenz asked whether the school could consider holding the Christmas productions, either at a weekend or in an evening to enable all parents to attend. He also suggested that parents could be asked to buy tickets to see the productions, raising money for the school.

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 8th November 2011 at 2.30 p.m.