



Parent Council Minutes 2nd November 2022

Parent Councillors from the following classes were present at tonight's meeting:

3T, 3L, 3C, 4R, 4B, 4F, 5M, 5K, 5N, 5J, 6W, and 6D.

Apologies were sent from 3S and 4G.

Mrs Woolf explained that WhatsApp is a useful tool to communicate to the parents in classes, however if it is required, the office can send a message on behalf of parent councillors to their class.

Photos

Apologies were given by the school for the error in communication. The question was posed as to whether parents want to return to the original system whereby the infant and junior school take sibling photos on alternate years, as this would reduce confusion – however it was agreed that most parents would like the juniors to continue taking photos every year as they prefer these. This will mean that permission slips will be needed – but the juniors have promised that it will be a smoother process next year. We will aim to put all information (from both juniors and infants) within one letter from both schools.

Communication

Mrs Carr has made a note to share the changed PE days within the newsletter each half term.

These should also be recorded in the timetables within the communication books – we appreciate that this was not done by all classes and we will ensure that this is done. All of the PE and swimming information is on the website – please direct parents to this and do let us know if there is anything missing that we can add.

Some messages are just for the children – such as poppies, school shop, etc. We share these with the children to help them develop responsibility.

We will add times to events on the newsletter when they are known.

More information will be given about clothing requirements for Coastal Schools and Forest Schools – parents shared that this was confusing this term.

ParentPay emails have the information repeated – Mrs London will look into this.

Attendance

One class representative shared that some parents had expressed a problem with the abrupt tone of the attendance letter. Mrs Woolf explained that this had come from government level – since Covid, attendance has been a real problem. The average attendance at West Leigh in previous years has been around 97% - we currently have children in school with 60-75% attendance. If parents are concerned about individual cases, please see Mrs Woolf.

Clubs

We had not anticipated the popularity of Baking Club and will ensure that parents are given warning in future about when booking will open. A parent asked whether food technology could be on the curriculum – this is already the case and full details of our curriculum can be found on the website.

We will also aim to publish a draft club timetable at the end of each term but this will be subject to change – a lot of our external providers wait until the start of each term to confirm their arrangements.

Holiday clubs are down to external providers and what they can offer. We do run some clubs such as multi-sports and First Kick during school holidays.

Some parents said that they were not finding out about all clubs – some do rely on the children listening for opportunities that they are interested in, as staff running the clubs will come round to classes and ask children who are interested if they would like a letter. Mrs London will speak to Mrs Dennison and Mr Markham about the best way to do this.

ParentPay

It is possible to have ParentPay set up for more than one parent if needed – please contact the office.

PE Trainers

These must be fully black, with no white sole. They are now a part of our uniform and it is important that we eliminate the need for children and parents to feel that they must follow trends and buy particular brands or styles.

It was raised that the plain black trainers may be more expensive – but LJ shared that she had found many quite inexpensive styles and was willing to share these if required.

Online Calendar

There is an online calendar on the website. This is updated with all dates from the newsletter.

We will speak to our media manager about the possibility of syncing this with phone calendars.

Alternative to Signed Slips

A request was made for the ability to sign and return permission slips online rather than as hard copies.

We will look into this as we can see the benefit in some areas – however the system will need to work for how we work in school. There will also always be the need for hard copies in some cases.

Lunches

Hot dinners always have to go in first as the kitchen need to serve these continually. Each year group has a day where they are in first – packed lunches and hot dinners go in together on this day. Following this there is an order for the hot dinners and packed lunches – unfortunately someone has to be last each day! However we do seat all children by 12.50, so all children have at least 20 minutes to eat their lunch. The rota is changed each half term for fairness.

Year 5/6 Exits

It was asked why we do not allow Year 5 children to exit via the Year 5 gate onto the street rather than through the main entrance. We have tried this and it was very unsafe, causing lots of congestion on a very narrow stretch of pavement. Parents and children can congregate safely on School Street and it means that the playground is cleared promptly to allow the after school clubs to begin on the playground.

Year 3 parents mentioned that they are often out late – we will address this.

Spelling

Spelling Shed is new and an exciting way for the children to learn their spellings. In addition to the games for the children to play at home, we also teach a dedicated spelling lesson each week. Children must also write the spellings as well as playing the games, in order to learn them properly. Tests take place on the same day each week, and Y3/4 record their score in their communication book by highlighting the words they got wrong. Year 5 and 6 are told their score and it is their responsibility to recall this and let parents know. A review test will be taking place this half term to see how well the children have embedded these spellings. If children need to move group, no catch up will be needed as the programme is cyclical and content is revisited. We will review the success of the programme at the end of the term.

Reading

Staff are currently consulting about reading and there may be changes to come – we will keep parents informed about these. This will happen rapidly.

Teachers are given dedicated time to hear children read – the demands of the curriculum are unfortunately squeezing the time that teachers have to hear children read in class. However, within the day there are many opportunities for the children to be heard read, such as during layered reading and in comprehension lessons.

Bikeability

This is returning after Christmas for Year 6. It will take place during the school day – details will follow. Unfortunately there is no place that we can add further road safety provision into the curriculum – parents will have to follow this up at home.

Heat Wave Plans

We did open up indoors during lunchtimes and in fact the school building is cooler than many homes. We cancelled sports day and this was not well received by some parents.

TTRS Battles

Mrs London will speak to year group leaders about adding in more battles to motivate the children.

Parent/Teacher Conferences Online

We prefer not to offer online consultations as the quality of conversation is much better in person. We would rather accommodate and offer an alternative appointment if a parent really cannot make the dates offered.

PE/Sports Cancellations

These are not always first to be cancelled – if something different or special is happening on a certain day, then the lessons cancelled will just depend on what is on the timetable for that day.

Y5 Toilets

Some children have reported that the toilet doors are being opened from the outside. We will look into this.

Parent Workshops

We would be grateful if parent councillors could ask their classes if there are any workshops we could offer to support them with their children's learning – which subject areas would be most useful?

Table Manners

Mrs Woolf asked parent councillors to find out if parents wish us to continue working on table manners with the children in the dining hall – there is a lot of ‘lollipop’ eating as well as calling across tables, speaking with mouths open, shouting, etc. If parents do not think this is an issue, then we will stop – but if they want us to continue pushing this, then we will.