



Parent Council Minutes – 11.11.24

Apologies

Apologies were sent from Vicky Benson (6A).

Introduction and Welcome to New Members

We welcomed our new members and explained a little about how the council works. Established in 2018, the council has been instrumental in driving change and building links between the school and the parent community.

Many successes have been achieved over the years, including changes to homework, uniform, the school website and weekly newsletter and much more!

All parents consented to having their name and email address published on the school website as a point of contact.

Councillors were reminded of the 'hot topics' section of the website, where answers to many of the areas that are submitted as agenda items can be found: [HOT TOPICS | westleighjunior](#)

Trips and Residentials

The school had asked parent councillors to collect feedback about our offer in terms of trips and residentials prior to the meeting. Across the board, feedback was positive, and it was felt that both the residential and curriculum trips were well balanced. Wherever possible, paying in instalments and with plenty of notice was much appreciated, but it was felt that trips were affordable and there were no complaints about cost.

There was some concern from Year 3 parents that the overnight residential might be too much for some children – parents with children in older years said that, by the end of Year 3, the children are generally ready and really enjoy the experience. The school does provide an alternative local trip for all of our residentials for those children who do not attend. Many parents felt that the gradual increase in duration of the residentials as the children moved through the school helped build their readiness for Ilam Hall.

A request was made for more trips to London and to theatres, and potentially a further afield trip in Year 6, such as France. A small number of parents requested that we also provide a residential in Year 4, although it was explained that Coastal Schools is our outdoor learning provision for children in Year 4. More information can be found about this here: [COASTAL SCHOOLS | westleighjunior](#)

It was noted that we do rely on the goodwill of staff to attend the residentials – they are not remunerated in any way and often have to stay up through the night to supervise the children, so we do need to be careful with how much we ask.

Transport to Sporting Events

An item submitted for the agenda from two classes asked that we look into a school minibus (or alternative) to assist parents with transporting children to sporting events. Other schools do have this facility and some working parents find it difficult to get their children to the different events throughout the year.

The school have discussed this recently but there are some barriers, such as cost and space for parking/storage. We do have a couple of ideas but cannot commit to anything yet.

We need to look at cost versus benefit and different ways that we may be able to acquire a minibus, considering how many events it can cater for and whether or not we are able to charge (there are rules linked to licences about being allowed to accept contributions). There were mixed views within the council about this, as this could be a large spend of school funds whilst only benefitting a small number of children.

Other ideas included hiring a minibus per event or sharing a minibus within Portico Academy – both of which come with their own challenges.

School Dinners – Allergy Options

It was brought to the council that if a child has an allergy, they are unable to order certain meal choices through ParentPay – yet in the infants they were able to have these meals with adjustments made.

This will be discussed with the school office to see if we can work around this.

West Leigh Avenue Congestion

A parent requested that we open the West Leigh Avenue gate earlier in the morning as the area becomes very busy. Unfortunately, this is not possible as we are unable to supervise the playground any earlier than 8.40am. However, it is possible to walk round to Ronald Hill Grove and use the much more spacious entrance there, which is clearer due to School Street.

Councillors queried whether some parents might think this entrance can only be used by infants – we will put a reminder in the newsletter.

Participation

Positive feedback was shared with the council, as parents feel that they have seen an increase in the number of participation events, giving a larger number of children the opportunity to take part. We do try to have a balance of elite and participatory events, and give children the outlet to practise and develop their skills at our many sporting clubs.

Some parents asked about the Young Voices letter as some of the boys were at a choir rehearsal when the event was introduced in singing assembly. We will look into this.

Quality of Snacks at After School Club

Several parents raised the issue of food at After School Club. Children would like a more substantial meal and would like more variety, such as alternative fillings.

We do not limit numbers and allow booking until 8am on the day, which does impact what we are able to offer, as well as not having a kitchen on site. However, we do take this on board and will look at what we are able to do to improve this.

The date for our next meeting was set as 10th March 2025 at 4.30pm.