

West Leigh Junior School Parent Council Minutes 16.06.25

Apologies

Apologies received from Vicky Benson, Iain Fitcher, Martina Hunter and Carolyn Smith.

Uniform

We sought the views of the parent community on uniform as we are trying to reinforce expectations. There should not be any competition about what children are wearing, yet we are seeing an increase in fashion and branded items of clothing being worn. We must ensure that there is no hierarchy or expectation to keep up with fashion or trends in school, as not everyone is in the same financial position. It is a 'leveller' that removes an extra layer of worry for the children.

Some key areas of discussion included:

- When referring to 'branded' items we are referring to logos (such as Nike or Adidas) on uniform clothing.
- Socks. Yes, socks must be plain with no branded logo or stripe. Socks can be black or white.
- Shorts. Many shorts lately have been too short/too tight/branded with sport logos – the council were in agreement that these are not appropriate for school. Cycling shorts are accepted but must come down the thigh.
- Trainers must be fully black. They can have a logo, but that must also be black.
- Many parents feel that PE days have heightened the issues. PE jackets often go missing – however there is no requirement to wear the WL jacket. A plain, unbranded black hoodie or sweatshirt is fine.
- Some parents said that they have sent their child in wearing a branded item and nothing has been said, so their child has continued to wear it. We will pass this on to staff and ensure consistency in the messages given. We do want to maintain a positive relationship with parents and so need to strike the right balance between constant reminders and reinforcing key uniform messages.
- We were asked to check what our requirements are for summer dresses – the infants require specific models from M&S but this is not what is in the photograph on the website. Does it have to be M&S? We have decided that as long as dresses are yellow gingham, they do not need to be from M&S. We will update the website to reflect this.
- Leavers' hoodies were queried as PE kit – these can only be worn in the same way as a coat/jacket – therefore not in lessons or the classroom.
- The good provision of pre-loved uniform helps with the cost of jumpers/cardigans/skirts/dresses. The council agreed that this is a good way to promote an environmentally friendly/ethical approach to buying clothes and there is no stigma attached to this. Mr Aggus asked councillors to remind their classes that, if parents urgently need something from the pre-loved stock and there is not an upcoming sale, they can ask at the office.
- The cost of girls' uniform in comparison to boys' – however girls can wear black trousers/shorts if parents do not wish to purchase the dresses and skirts. These are also readily available in the pre-loved sales.
- Is there a transition period between Year 2 and 3 for the infant jumpers and cardigans? No, the children do need to wear the junior jumpers and cardigans.

The junior website has now been updated with links to plain, unbranded items such as PE shorts, leggings and jumpers if parents are struggling to find these.

We will be producing a clear explanatory video that shows correct uniform and addresses misconceptions. We aim to send this out before the summer as we know this will be when parents start to stock up for September.

Payments

We have noticed that some payments have not been made for recent activities, such as school trips, visitors and swimming. We understand that there may be reasons for this and asked for feedback so that we can hopefully overcome this difficulty.

We discussed the following:

- Clarity around use of the word 'voluntary' – can we not be clearer and make payments compulsory? It was explained that we are not cannot insist upon payment but only ask..
- We try to put on as many funded activities as we can – the recent events such as Boogie Bounce, Indirock, Quidditch, etc. have all been funded from Sports Premium.
- We have already canvassed parents recently about the cost of residential – but the overwhelming majority were in favour of keeping all three.
- Lots of parents said that they genuinely forget and would welcome more reminders, especially if they are not regular users of ParentPay. Mr Aggus explained that this would be much easier with our new communication/payment system, Arbor, which will be an app. This will be rolled out very soon.
- Some comments were made that swimming lessons are costly – but swimming contributions are very low when compared to private lessons, or other schools who have to transport children to a pool. Swimming contributions do not cover the cost of running the pool – we rely on private lessons and parties to cover this.
- Anticipated costs would be helpful – we will look to put these on the website for each year group.
- The cost of residential alternatives was raised, especially if the child is not taking part in the residential due to cost. We have to provide an alternative and try to keep the cost of this as low as possible – but Mr Aggus explained that we are very discreet and if someone is struggling due to financial difficulty, they just need to get in touch and we will help.
- Payments can be made in cash if required.

SEND

A request was made for more information about access to dyslexia testing. We cannot do this in school and this would have to be carried out by a private provider. We do use a dyslexia screening programme called Nessy, which can identify some dyslexic traits – but this cannot provide a diagnosis. All of our classrooms are dyslexia friendly through our universal provision. This includes neutral-coloured backgrounds and dyslexia friendly fonts on the interactive whiteboards, clutter free learning spaces and visual timetables.

Spellings

Some parents asked that we move the setting of new spellings to a Wednesday. The previous system was disjointed – we have now made it consistent across the school. We have to allow a day in between the testing and the setting of new spellings to provide time to reflect on any errors, as we

do retest any incorrect spellings below 8/10. This gives us the buffer to enable no cross over between the new and previous week's spellings.

Football

Do we have a B football team as well as the A team and friendlies? There is not a B team – we have a huge number of children interested in attending football and have to balance the elite nature of the sport with allowing opportunity for all. We do have a team but also provide opportunities for all those who show an interest at the trials to take part in fixtures throughout the year. Last year over 260 children participated in a sport competition or event.

Our arrangements will be changing slightly next year as we are hoping to open up some sports to a wider range of children. Some events will continue to be based on qualification, but there are others where we can be more flexible.

Meetings – Remote Access

We agreed that a small number of meetings could take place via Teams rather than in person – we will trial this next year with our curriculum meetings. These would have to be only via Teams, as hybrid would be impractical. We do feel strongly that many of our meetings need to be in person and we deliberately timetable these in the evening to help with working patterns.

Thank You

Thank you to all of our councillors who have continued to support our parent council throughout this academic year (and beyond – many councillors have served many years on our council). We say goodbye to our Year 6 councillors and ask that, if any of our current councillors are unable to continue to represent their class next year, that they let Mrs London know.

Parent councillors are invited to attend our 'thank you' prosecco and strawberries get together on 21st July at 2.30pm.