

Brookhurst Parent Forum Meeting note 5th March 2013

Prepared by:
Karen Mothersdale
Chairperson:
Penny Hawkins

Present:
J Anslow (T) C Cobbold A Connell, P Hawkins, S Holmes, M Hughes (DHT), T Kewley, K Mothersdale, S Rix, J Sahota, K Snell, A Stanton (HT)

Summary

Matters arising from the previous meeting, including an update on year 1 communication:

School to make parents aware of the Calculation Policy, probably via a note in school newsletter. **Action taken: Calculation Policy is now on the website.**

Maths evenings for parents should be run again **Action taken: ongoing.**

Action: Gail to check what has happened to the Communications Survey which has disappeared from the website

Year 1 Communications

Feedback from year 1 parents was extremely positive about the 'yellow books' containing bullet points of topics being studied each week during year 1. M Hughes confirmed that these were taken direct from the planning so the main additional work was the photocopying, cutting and pasting of the summaries into the books.

Parents confirmed that this had facilitated 'learning conversations' with their children and believe it helps to reinforce what they are learning at school.

J Sahota suggested that perhaps this information can go on the learning platform in the future in order to save paper / time. Perhaps this could be piloted?

Would parents be able to respond on line, in the same way that they could in the books? A Stanton cautioned about managing expectations of teachers responding to individual parent 'posts' online.

Home Learning Policy

The Home Learning Policy had been updated to include the use of Year 1 'yellow books'. M Hughes stepped through the policy again for the benefit of the attendees.

Action 3: Gail to tidy up the formatting of the policy and publish on the website.

School Website / Learning Platform

Learning Platform

J Anslow returned to school especially to talk to the Parents' Forum about the Learning Platform. In summary:

- There is now a replacement learning platform based on Microsoft SharePoint technology
- All children have access to it
- Staff are getting familiar with it and it is expected that in the future it could be used for homework and communication.
- It has facilities for emails and Blogs
- Plans for parental access keep getting pushed back by the County (thought to be connected to Microsoft licensing issues)
- Staff training is being prioritised, with training for parents planned later
- The current focus for parental training is E-safety and E-awareness
- Some browser issues also still need to be resolved as well as parental support (as there currently isn't any via County)

Action 4: J Anslow to provide IT updates to the newsletter, perhaps once per month, to keep parents informed of developments / progress with the learning platform and other IT related topics

Website

A Stanton advised that Gail, plus some parent helpers, had worked hard updating the website. She announced that a Brookhurst App was now available from iTunes (free) and that she was expecting that they would be the first local school to have their own App. The purpose of the App would be to provide more immediate feedback on matters and would be faster than people logging into the website.

Action 5: All attendees to try out the App and feedback ideas to A Stanton on how useful it is and how its use can be expanded

Parents commented that they had very much appreciated the new use of text alerts when schools were closing due to snow (and the snow building competition held once children returned to school!).

P Hawkins advised that the Parents' Forum page needed some content, outlining the purpose and scope of the forum.

Action 6: P Hawkins to write something for the Parents' Forum page and T Kewley agreed to review it

Car Parking

There were thought to be 2 Community Police Officers now operating in the Milverton area. They would do patrols from time to time to help enforce the need to parents to park safely and considerately. Bill Gifford, local counsellor and Brookhurst Governor, was also keen to help. A Stanton confirmed that parking has been a problem for > 12 years. A parent mentioned that it was not a problem solely caused by Brookhurst parents, but that Caterpillars' parents were equally likely to succumb.

Ideas mentioned for encouraging better parking:

- Photos may be taken and appear in the school newsletter

- Curb side cones
- Child pressure on parents to park more safely
- Parent patrols, in high visibility jackets, operating on a rota system
- Stickers on windows of car who have parked poorly
- Parking camera (fake or real)
- Walking bus from further away

Action 7: J Sahota to look into the possibility of securing funding to help implement measures to improve parking

Action 8: Mary to contact Highways about cutting back the bushes next to the side parking

Action 9: A Stanton to consider inserted a fence next to the side parking to prevent parents from overhanging the pavement and causing a blockage to pedestrians

Action 10: Mary to feedback to council that school bin collections at drop off or pick up times represent a health and safety hazard and that these times should be avoided

Update on School Communication Survey suggestions

Home-school diary

These are still under review with an alternative system expected to be in place by September 2013.

Timing of school report / learning reviews

Staff have stated their preference for writing reports in the Spring Term, so this will remain the timing for this academic year and continued to be reviewed. No additional written comment will be provided in the summer term for the learning review meetings, however teaching staff will be requested to use the report to focus the learning review. This will encourage discussion around whether learning targets have been achieved and help to 'close the circle' on the report comments.

Comments / Suggestions from parents

A Stanton confirmed that they were still considering the right vehicle for this. Currently parents could use the Admin email address. Perhaps this could be included in the school App? Parents fed back that they appreciated the listing of staff email addresses on the website.

Newsletter

P Hawkins commented that parents had appreciated the improvements to the school newsletter.

Parents' Forum Representative

P Hawkins commented that the Parents' Forum generally had most representation from KS1 parents with very few representing other year groups in KS2. There was a suggestion of whether to have year group or class parent representatives in order to ensure the widest possible views from parents are being considered.

A Stanton commented that this had been tried for the BSA but had eventually been abandoned.

There was some discussion about the best day / time of the meeting.

Ideas for increasing attendance were:

- Parents' Forum tab on the new App
- Those who have attended to spread the word / bring a friend
- Poster for the notice board containing details of the agenda and timing of future meetings

Action 11: P Hawkins to put the agenda inside the notice boards before future meetings as well as publicise in the newsletter and website.

AOB

Firework debris still on the field

Action 12: Steve to be asked to clear this up

Brookhurst School sign near the top entrance is dirty

Action 13: Steve to be asked to clean the sign

Keeping notice boards tidy and up-to-date

Action 14: C Cobbold to take a key to the notice boards and swap out old notices and ensure the rest are tidy!

Communicating ideas to the Parents' Forum

These can be sent to the Admin email address, with a subject heading of Parents' Forum. They can then be passed onto P Hawkins.

Action 16: P Hawkins to update the Parents' Forum website with this suggestion for communicating ideas to the Parents' Forum

Date of next meeting

20th May 2013 – 7.30pm