

## **Brookhurst Parents' Forum**

**20<sup>th</sup> January 2014**

### **Present:**

A Stanton (HT), M Hughes (DHT), L Houlihan (T), A.Kash(5), S.Orchard(F), M.Beynon(F), C Waters (1) L.Hassell(3 and 5), Andy Daniels (3 and 5), C.Osborne (L and F), H.Bloomfield(4), I.Kalm(3 and 4), A.Prosser(1 and 5), L.Bechford (1), S.Marshall(F, 3 and 4), K.Snell (Parent Governor – F and 2),Jill Davis (1 and 4), K.Savage(1) T.Swanson(1, 3 and 5), F.Davies(2 and 5), K.Goddard (2 and 4), S.Gray(F), N.Carroll(F), S.Marr(F), C.Kompatsiari(F), B.Ling(F) P.Hawkins (3 and 4) K Mothersdale - Parent Governor (3 and F), G.Knibb(2), S.Knibb, V.Kumbhase(1 and 6), S.White - Parent Governor(2 and 6) G.Parker(6), A.Brookes(5)

### **Matters arising from the previous meeting**

- **Mr Jacobs - Maths information sessions have now been arranged and published – (subsequently more have been arranged due to popular demand) - closed**
- **Mrs Archer and Mr Anslow – Both teachers are happy to receive suggestions by email on how to improve Sports day - closed**
- **Mr Hughes to find the pictures that were drawn of the teachers to include on the school website – ongoing**
- **Karen Mothersdale (Parent Governor) to scribe something to go into the school newsletter on the logo competition – ongoing**
- **Gail Lindsey to publish a comms map for parents**

### **Agenda**

#### **1. The sex education curriculum content for 2014**

Miss Houlihan outlined the current year 6 approach to sex education. In light of the recent withdrawal of national guidance, allowing more freedom within the curriculum, new ideas were presented to parents with the following key points discussed.

- There was an agreed consensus that the new curriculum appeared to be pro initiative. Parents generally felt that it was good for boys/girls to have joint sessions to understand what each other going through as well as single-sex lessons to discuss more intimate questions and concerns.
- Miss Hoolighan felt that the current birthing video was a bit strong and could possibly alarm some children. This was discussed and it was agreed that the value in children seeing a birth was only productive if set in within an emotional as well as physical context. A less shocking but honest alternative should be sought.
- The introduction of some aspects of sex education to younger year groups (pre-yr6) was discussed with the general agreement that the scientific language and terminology should be introduced.

- Communication with parents before the sessions should be sought (to address any specific particular parental views / with opt-out) and it was suggested that parental feedback (as well as pupil feedback) at the end of the programme should be sought to establish the success of the new approach.
- It was suggested that it may be worthwhile sharing practice across the cluster schools. Miss Houlihan is going to a cluster meeting in March.

## **Actions**

### **Miss Houlihan:**

- To source a more positive birthing film
- To consider consulting parents on the agreed content of the curriculum, perhaps via a short questionnaire.
- To consider providing guidance to parents on how to prepare their children for the sex education curriculum.

## **2. The distribution of sweets on pupils' birthdays**

Miss Stanton reported that the recent newsletter articles on the distribution of birthday sweets in school had provoked a significant number of email responses from parents, the highest number on any topic to date. Currently there is no policy in place in school to support or ban this practice.

The 'loss of individual parental choice', if practice changed vs 'the lack of choice' from parents who had this imposed on them by current practice was debated. There were suggestions made on the alternatives to sweets, which included stickers, pencils and other food items such as homemade cakes and biscuits. The purpose of the practice was also discussed. It was reported, by a couple of parents, that that the process of giving a treat to friends on their birthday endorsed the principles of sharing.

In general it was agreed that the practice should not change and that it was up to individual families to choose whether to participate in the giving of a birthday gift. However it was also generally agreed that the practice should be limited to the pupil's class only (30) and distributed at home time, to allow parents to monitor. It was also agreed that the gift does not have to be sweets.

Parents who do not want their children to receive the birthday sweets (gift) could provide the class teacher with box of alternative treats to give to their children at 3.30pm

## **3. Final Teacher Training Day**

Miss Stanton asked parents if they would like the final teacher training day of the year to fall on the Friday after the May polling day (22nd May) when the school has to close, which would create a longer half term break. The matter was discussed with the following points clarified. The school has no choice in becoming a polling station for the day and has to close the school. The teachers are already using this day as an 'extra' teacher training day

so would still have to arrange a 5<sup>th</sup> day. It was agreed to keep the current practice and the teacher training day will be at the end of the summer term.

#### **4. Communication from parents**

Miss Stanton raised the concern that some parents had written to the school using inappropriate and sometimes inflammatory language and suggested the idea of having a code of conduct for parents. This was discussed and it was agreed that inappropriate and inflammatory language was unnecessary. There was some debate on the value of a code of conduct. It was suggested that as the parents sign up to a contract when their child starts school, that this could be revisited to ensure that appropriate communication is included.

##### **Action**

- **Miss. Stanton to consider revisiting the home /school agreement to include a section on appropriate communication.**

##### **AOB**

##### **School Lunches**

There were a number of parents who were concerned that children are being pressured in to eating too fast as others are waiting for to sit for lunches. Other concerns raised by parents were that some children are being let in too late to eat their whole meal and late-lunch children are desperate to eat & very lethargic as so hungry. Miss Stanton agreed that this was an issue that was currently being monitored and agreed that the hall is not big enough for 420 children to eat lunch together. It was acknowledged that there is less of an issue in the summer, as children with sandwiches go outside to eat, but in the meantime the issue would be discussed again within school. A parent suggested that the out of school club building could be used for older children with sandwiches.

Miss Stanton reported that capacity will become a greater issue in September as Key Stage 2 children become eligible for lunches and a new strategy is being considered.

##### **Action**

- **Miss. Stanton to report on interventions and the new lunchtime strategy at the next meeting.**

##### **Date of next meeting**

**12th May 2014: 7.30pm – 8.30pm  
9.00am – 10.00am**