



# Parent Council Meeting

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2024



**Present:** Lucy Stanley, Katie Rudge, Sarah Copeland, Alison French Carr, Emma Welsh, Emma Richards, Sandhar

**Chair:** Laura Jackson **SMT:** Gemma Thelwell and Jodie Hales.

A list was compiled of all current members and the class they represent. A letter will be sent to all parents highlighting gaps to invite new members to join, and to inform parents who their representative is. New members will be welcomed during the next meeting on **Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> November at 1.30pm in the Hub.**

## Points raised by parents via their class representative:

### Scooters on site

A reminder will be sent to all on the Weekly News, particularly aimed at children who are new to DPS, that children are to walk not scoot once in the school grounds and leave their scooters in the scooter park at the Hanbury Road end of the path.

### Inspirational Adult Day and Picnic

The general consensus among parents was shock that Mothers' and Fathers' Day events have been replaced by Inspiration Person Day. Families who attended the picnic and enjoyed the afternoon but don't see it as a reasonable exchange. SMT explained that following the Mothers' Day event in the Spring Term it was communicated in June that Fathers' Day would be replaced by Inspirational Person Day in a bid to respond to feedback from parents. Within our community we have children who have lost a parent, live with one parent or their parents are separated with Court Orders in place. Whatever the reason these days often create an emotional trigger for children and adults in our community. It's always difficult to explain to children why their adult can't come to school and children with adults present also find this difficult to compute. There are also working parents who are simply unable to attend and feel disadvantaged.

SMT stated that particularly children further up the school don't actually want their parents to come into school, much less extended family members. Additionally, we have to be mindful that the timetable is tight, we have so many things to fit in, also ensuring children are given the opportunity to add sport, music and a wide variety of visiting speakers and workshops into their day. All these things take away from the curriculum and valuable learning time.

It was agreed that the picnic after school was friendly and family oriented and timed so the majority of families could attend if they wished to. However, parents found that Mums and Dads sat together while children went off to play. All understood this was not the purpose or intention of the picnic. Parents want to spend time with their child in the classroom, their learning environment. Understandably, as a teacher its not easy to host 30 adults who come and go at different times to see other children. Parents don't always know how school works and often don't conform. They arrive without knowing which year group or class their child is in or where to find them! This becomes logistically difficult to manage. Safeguarding always has to be a consideration.

SMT and PC all agreed that Mums' Day and Dads' Day events were not the answer and some kind of compromise needs to be reached. PC suggested inviting parents for a WOW! Assembly or Endeavour Awards. There were some concerned raised over this as not all parents would be able to attend leaving disappointed children and guilt riddled parents.

Walkabout is a termly, informal invitation for parents to take a look around their child's classroom and see their work, guided by their child. This year, we will promote Walkabout more widely. More information to follow.

**Date for Autumn Term:** Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December. 3.15pm-3.45pm EYFS/ KS1 and KS2 3.30-4pm

### Space in after school Clubs and Darby's

Darby's currently offer 186 spaces and have recently employed 3 new members of staff to enable 34 children on the waiting list to be offered places this week with a start date after half term. School is tied to room sizes and staff ratios. In previous years Darby's have used a classroom but this was not fair on teachers who are all in school beyond 3.30pm preparing their classroom and resources for the next day.

School has built relationships with a number of afterschool club providers. Clubs are held in suitable places around school and teachers volunteer run Teacher Lead Clubs, some to links with League and Borough competitions. Children can access sport and creative clubs and provide an extra hour of care at the end of the school day.

### **School Lunch and Dinners**

Some parents are requiring specific lists of what their child is being offered or eating during meal times at school. Darby's, KS2 meals and Universal Free School Meals in EYFS and KS1 are all carefully monitored and designed by the Government. Lots of meals are created from scratch on site, for example, sausage rolls and desserts, made to strict guidelines with specific ingredients. PC and SMT agreed that this point comes more from parents than children.

The Arbor App offers main course choices which are on a 3 week rolling menu. Children will understand what's on offer and know that they also have vegetable accompaniments with salad and bread on a help yourself basis. A more detailed menu is on the school website. Children also have the option of bringing a packed lunch from home if they do not fancy what is on the menu. Parents can also see what their child has chosen on Parentpay. Nursery parents were unable to access this information on their parentpay accounts – this will be investigated.

It was raised that EYFS children especially are hungry at the end of the school day. They have an early lunch and busy afternoon so will understandably be hungry by pick up. All children eat quickly in a bid to go outside and play! Free fruit is offered to all EYFS and KS1 children at breaktime and KS2 can bring a snack or buy Tuck. There is always milk from Cool milk if children are registered.

### **New website**

We have discovered that the new website is not mobile friendly. Our IT Support Team are currently working on the formatting. KR kindly offered to go through the website on her phone and send a list of what needs looking at.

### **Meeting Format change to Parent Council**

To encourage efficiency and improve communication it was suggested that there was a change to the format of the PC meetings. It was agreed that this was not necessary and the pre meeting for the PC to discuss points raised and create an agenda works well. Members should endeavour to attend meetings in person to offer a complete and balanced view and representation.

### **Something positive please!**

SMT asked if there had been any positive points that could be shared with staff.

- Virtual Reality Workshop in Year 3 was a brilliant experience
- Transition was good and children have settled well at the start of the new academic year
- Induction sessions in the summer term for new Reception children are good.
- Reception welcome in the KS1 hall works well for all on the children's first day
- Stay and Play sessions for new Nursery children and parents have proved to be successful in setting the children in.
- Nursery have made a great effort in settling in the children, offering personalised feedback at pickup
- Year 1 and Darby's staff were praised for ensuring a child has been able to come back to school soon after surgery, all working hard to ensure they feel included. A thank you from parents for all being so accommodating.

### **Selection of Councils and Reps**

Eco Council and School Council are elected 6 monthly and previous reps support new.

House Captains and Sports Reps are selected yearly.

There were some concerns about the application process and continuity with classes. Children and parents felt in some cases there was a lack of fairness. Not all children would feel confident to stand in front of the class and present. SMT explained there has to be an element of confidence as it is required when representing the class and presenting information back to their peers. There are lots of jobs around school children can get involved with. Year 6 especially have lots of opportunities.

### **Year 5 and 6 Permission to Walk Home Independently**

A request for school to teach children road safety to ensure they are able to walk home without an adult came from a Year 5 parent. As it was felt children don't always listen to their parents and instructions may be better coming from school.

SMT stated parents need to do their own assessment of their child's abilities and consider their particular route. If parents want to consent to their child walking home without them this is the responsibility of parents. It was suggested by the PC that they walk the route with their child to point out safe places to cross the road etc.