

**Shillington Lower School**  
**Minutes of Parent Forum Meetings held 9 March 2017**  
**Focus: Uniform**

Present:

Juliet Parker (Headteacher), Richard Winslade (Chair of Governors), Carol Summerfield (Governor), Tracy Molyneux (Governor and parent), Blair Austin (Governor and parent), Chloe Bishop (parent), Lydia Sweeney (parent), Karen Bohr (parent)

Mrs Parker welcomed everyone to the Parent Forum and thanked them for attending. She said that the idea of a Parent Forum was to provide an opportunity to capture feedback from parents on school-related topics.

The focus for this meeting is school uniform. This had been reviewed in 2014 via a parent consultation questionnaire when parents were asked for their opinion on two options: retain the current school uniform, and ensure compliance, or replace shirts/ties with polo shirts with the school logo and jumpers/cardigans with sweatshirts/cardigans with the school logo

Parent had been in favour of retaining the current uniform. However, due to non-compliance by some parents, and taking into account the professional views of school staff, the Governing Board (GB) wished to revisit the issue.

Department for Education guidance states:

“The Department strongly encourages schools to have a uniform as it can play a valuable role in contributing to the ethos of a school and setting an appropriate tone.”

The GB feel that our school should continue to have a uniform and would like parents'/carers' views on changing the uniform to a white polo shirt and logo red sweatshirt/jumper/cardigan, with embroidered school logo. However, they recognise that uniform costs are an issue for parents and want to keep them to a minimum. Examples of current costs are: elasticated tie £2.40, normal tie £2.50, PE shirt £4. Using Tesco as a supplier costs could be: sweatshirt (with logo, round neck) £7.50. sweatshirt (with logo, v-necked) £7, knitted jumper (with logo) £7, knitted cardigan (with logo) £8, polo shirts £4.50.

Mrs Parker invited views on both the school uniform and PE kit. Views included:

Three parents initially wished to retain the tie – the believed it looked smarter. Another parent was initially in favour of the polo shirt, etc option – although the parents made every effort to ensure uniform compliance their child soon “looked a mess” with shirt hanging out under jumper, etc.

Mrs Parker and the Governors put forward reasons in favour of a change to polo shirt etc:

- School is now more active and a polo shirt is more appropriate for morning fitness sessions.

- Polo shirts would make changing for PE easier, especially with younger children. Time used for buttoning shirts and fastening ties (with staff help often required) can be better utilised on learning activities.
- Elasticated ties tend to be stretched by the children – and then not visible under their jumper.
- Polo shirts will require less ironing.
- Polo shirts for both summer and winter uniform would reduce costs for parents.
- Even children who look neat in shirts and ties at the start of the day become untidier during the course of the day.
- Nursery children (if we are given permission to change the age range) could wear the same uniform which would make them feel part of the school and save parents buying new uniform on starting school.

Parents were persuaded of the benefits of changing to a polo shirt – they hadn't previously considered it from the school staff's views. However, they would like a logo polo shirt and a logo jumper/cardigan - not a sweatshirt which they felt looked untidy.

### **Questions & Answers**

Parents asked when a new uniform would be brought in – September 2017 but with a 12-month transition period when both uniforms would be allowed.

Parents asked if a logo polo shirt and jumper could be displayed, or a photograph be used, to show parents what the new uniform would look like. Mrs Parker agreed to look into this.

Parents asked if the school would stock items of clothing – Mrs Parker replied that she didn't think so. This is difficult as not only does it take up storage space but it is hard to gauge how much of each size to stock. Many local schools use a commercial company for their uniform and parents order direct. However, these companies charge more than Tesco, which is the option the school were considering using. Tesco had been suggested by a parent in the 2014 survey. Costs are reasonable, although subject to a £3.50 delivery charge per order (unless a Delivery Saver customer; click and collect is not available with embroidered items). However, this is still cheaper than delivery costs of some schools' suppliers. It was suggested that the PTFA may wish to consider co-ordinating a uniform order perhaps twice a year if parents felt the delivery charge was too expensive.

A parent asked if a nearly new clothes sale would be appropriate – Mrs Parker replied that these hadn't proved popular in the past, with the exception of girls dresses.

Mrs Parker asked if parents had any views on a PE uniform as when the children represented the school at sports events they weren't in the same kit and looked less like a team than other schools whose pupils were dressed identically. Parents felt that a red logo T shirt and black shorts should be compulsory PE uniform.

Mrs Parker also asked for parents' views on "PE ready" days. This would mean children would arrive in PE kit on days when they had PE rather than school uniform to raise the profile of fitness. Parents and governors were against this idea - they felt this would mean that (unless there was a school

tracksuit, which would add to the expense) then children would look very untidy.

### **Summary**

All were in agreement that shirts and ties when worn correctly looked very smart but a logo polo shirt and jumper/cardigan is more appropriate for lower school children as they make it easier for them to dress themselves therefore allowing more time for learning activities.

A new uniform could be introduced from September 2017, with a 12-month transition period when either the old or new uniform could be worn.

PE kit should consist of a red logo T shirt and black shorts, and should be enforced.

PTFA would look into co-ordinating a Tesco order (maybe twice a year) to save on delivery costs if there was sufficient demand.

The GB would put the proposal for the new school uniform to parents and take account of their comments in making their final decision.