

Home Farm Primary School

Parent Forum meeting - Friday 9th November 2018, 2:15pm – Minutes

Present – Mr Potter; Mrs Rivett (Chair of Governors); Mrs Wright; Mrs Nesbitt; Mrs Gamble; Mrs Whiteford; Mr Travi; Mrs Turvil; Mrs Hayton; Mrs Heard; Mrs Royce; Mrs Humm

Welcome

1. Mr Potter welcomed parents to the meeting. He ran through the action points from the previous meeting and how they had been taken forward.

Update on the expansion and build project

2. Mr Potter provided an update on the ongoing expansion of the school. The roof replacement project had now been completed, and the solar panels would be re-installed on the roof later in the term. A small scaffolding tower would be put up on the car park side of the school to accommodate this. Mr Potter confirmed that now the whole school site had been handed over, he was looking at some projects to help develop and add interest to the playground, and he was in discussion with the HFSA on this.
3. The new pedestrian gate to Burns Avenue was now complete and would be opened for use at the beginning and end of the school day from Monday 16th November. Mr Hollingsworth-Blake, the school caretaker, would be on site near the new gate to direct parents to the playground when the gate was opened at 3:00pm.

School meals

4. The school had recently moved to the new winter menu for school dinners, and Mr Potter provided an overview of changes made to the menus, including those which reflected feedback from the Parent Forum. The school:
 - Had introduced the new 'food taster Friday' on which the menu would be varied so that the children had the chance to try a range of new foods;
 - Had included the use of lentils and pulses as non-dairy protein;
 - Continued to provide a vegetarian option every day and had reduced the amount of meat served overall through the 'meat free Monday' option;
 - Removed the jacket potato day from the menu.
5. The development of the menus was an ongoing process, and the school would continue this process. The school also had to balance the importance of developing the children's tastes with the need to keep take-up levels high as funding for Universal Infant Free School Meals was based on the level of take-up. The school continued to work to build food issues into the curriculum, and cooking was already part of the Design and Technology curriculum. Investment in equipment may be needed in future.
6. The Parent Forum discussed the school dinner menus. Parents commented that it might be worth trying a chicken sausage in place of a pork sausage, and parents noted that the next food-taster Friday dish would be fish-based.
7. A parent asked whether it was ever the case that there was not much food left by the time Year 6 children got to the lunch hall, and whether they were rushed in eating their dinners. Mr Potter provided an overview of the way the lunchtime is run. Children attending lunchtime clubs and the Reception

classes came into the lunch hall first, and then children from other classes were called in as and when there were spaces. Sometimes children didn't hear the whistle and were late coming in for lunch.

8. Parents asked whether there was a plan to use the studio in the new classroom block for lunches or to stagger lunchtimes. Mr Potter explained that there were no plans at the moment to stagger the lunchtimes, but he was monitoring this. On warmer days, children having packed lunches would be able to eat outside on the picnic benches. Mrs Rivett explained that in her Governor role, she would be visiting the school to watch a lunchtime in operation in the near future.

After School Club

9. Mr Potter provided an update on the after school club. This was now up and running, and there had been positive feedback from parents. The club was currently making a loss financially, but attendance numbers continued to increase. With the staffing levels currently in place, there were 30 places available each day. Parents present who had used the club provided positive feedback, including on the support that was provided to children with homework and phonics. Parents suggested that the school do some publicity to let people know what the club was up to, and possibly consider offering a free session or a taster session.

Issues raised by parents

10. A parent commented that the shrubbery along the footpath next to the playpark needed cutting back. Mr Potter confirmed that this was the responsibility of Colchester Borough Council. There was a sign up in the playpark with a phone number that parents could ring with feedback or issues.
11. Parents commented on ongoing issues with irresponsible parking, and Mr Potter noted that he continued to remind parents of this through the newsletter.
12. Parents asked whether the Sustrans Eco Race was still running in school, and it was confirmed that the school took part in this every term. Parents asked whether there was scope for the children to run their own version of this in school and Mr Potter would ask the Eco Council to have a look at this.
13. Mr Potter noted that following a suggestion from a pupil, the school was participating in the Terracycle and Colgate recycling scheme for dental products. Parents discussed other similar schemes which were available such as pen recycling, and Mr Potter would look further at this.

Date of next meeting

14. Mr Potter thanked parents for attending the meeting. The next meeting would take place on Friday 30th November at 2:15pm. All parents and carers were welcome to attend.