

Minutes for Solebay Academy Council Meeting Minutes – 12th December 2017

Beth briefly introduced herself and other Academy Council members to parents.

1. How to Communicate with Academy Council Members

It was mentioned that the council are conscious there is no official means of contacting them. A Facebook page and a Whats App group were suggested but it was agreed that a group email address would be best, and for this to be given a prominent place on the school website, possibly along with photographs of each council member.

Action: Beth to look into e-mail address and website.

2. Fundraising

Beth is keen to introduce extra initiatives to fund raise for the school, particularly for targeted resources within the school such as a stage blocks for school performances. Beth asked for suggestions from all parents of (a) fundraising activities and (b) particular resources which we could aim to purchase or contribute to.

Janet said that the school had enough money to purchase some stage blocks and that this was being looked into.

One parent suggested it would be good to know what money raised by the school fairs had been spent on to date. Janet said that one such recent purchase was the tennis table and that rest of the money had gone on additional purchases for clubs and on additional staff but agreed that the situation needed to be clarified, possibly during a meeting with council members. Asif volunteered to represent the council at that meeting.

Other possible extra resource suggestions included musical instruments and sports equipment. In particular hoops and bean bags. Janet said she would talk to Leonie and Kirstie about musical instruments and look into new equipment to take to the park.

Action: Asif to follow up re meeting on use of money raised to date

Action: Beth to raise issue again at the next meeting and follow up with Janet, particularly re stage blocks

3. Lining up in the park each morning.

Beth mentioned a couple of parents had raised the fact that teachers were allowing children to choose who they lined up with, meaning some children were feeling excluded.

Janet reiterated that the official policy is that children are expected to line up with whoever is there, not to wait for their best friend. This should be happening in all year group lines.

Beth asked Janet to stress to all teachers that the policy needs reinforcing.

A parent also pointed out that it's also incumbent on parents to encourage their child to hold hands with whoever is there.

Action: Janet to follow up with staff to ensure that official policy is being followed.

A second parent mentioned a lack of adults in the line some mornings. In particular 3Red which on more than one occasion recently appeared to have only one teacher.

Janet said she had sent out an email to all staff to remind them that it is everyone's responsibility to ensure two adults are with each line but would follow up on this again.

Action: Janet to follow up with staff to ensure policy is being followed.

Another parent said a second problem was the number of parents dropping their children to the line late which was a safety issue. Late children should simply go straight to the school.

Janet said that parents are to be encouraged to follow the line to school to improve safety. She agreed parents should not be sending their children to join the end of the line for safety reasons. She agreed a letter would be sent out to parents to clarify this policy.

Action: Janet to send letter to parents reminding them of the policy (sent out before Christmas)

One parent said that it could be difficult to identify the right line when there are supply teachers. Given that the school has grown, maybe teachers could carry signs to show where the line is at drop off? Janet said that teachers do have class signs but that perhaps they need something more permanent. Beth asked her to follow up. There was also a concern that some supply teachers were not wearing hi-vis jackets.

Action: Janet to follow up with staff to ensure policy is being followed.

4. Signage

Concerns have been raised about the lack of visible signage for traffic on Solebay Street when children are on their way to and from school.

Janet said the council are going to provide a stop start signal for teachers when they cross Solebay Street half way down on the way to the park. (They have to cross the road because of reversing vans from the adjacent factory).

A parent asked why a proper road crossing and lollipop lady wasn't provided given that it's part of the school's official travel plan.

Claire asked why there were no traffic signs on Solebay Street with flashing lights warning cars there is a school on the road. Janet agreed she would contact the council.

Beth added that, as a council we had discussed getting in touch with the local MP to get an extra line of communication to the council. This to be worked on.

Action: Andy/Beth to look into contact with Rushanara Ali MP

Action: Janet to confirm whether we now have the lollipop sign from the council

Another parent said that Ben Jonson pupils and parents were finding it hard to access the estate when Solebay pupils were crossing the entrance.

Janet said it was a matter of courtesy and that teachers need to be aware of who might be waiting to enter. She agreed this needed to be stressed to teachers again.

Action: Janet to follow up with staff to ensure policy is being followed.

5. Open Space.

Beth said it was important that parents work with the school to maximise options for open space. If anyone is aware of extra space that could be used, ie the forest space facility near the leisure centre, then please mention them to the council.

Various potential options were discussed – QMU facilities, the gardens in Eric Street, a playground near Stepney Green Farm, increased use of Mile End Park.

Janet gave an update on the Arbour youth centre in Shandy Park: Janet said they had been investigated it and the building was not in use, and therefore not available. Elen said she thought it was owned by the St Dunstan's church and that they intended to turn it into luxury flats.

Action: Council/Janet to discuss options and **all** to let the school know of any workable options.

6. Planning.

Janet updated on the situation to date.

In 2014 the school opened with a maximum allowance of 350 children, as proposed by the school's original sponsor. The Paradigm model is to include a nursery. The school now stands at 320 pupils, but all year groups – with a two form entry – were still not full. However if they became full, that would take numbers with a nursery to 470, so they have submitted a planning application to get permission for that number. Beth clarified that this would not physical change the building, just the capacity. There were a number of objections made by parents and carers to the school and the local authority when the application was put in over a year ago. The school withdrew the application and is currently working (via the consultants representing the school) with the council on a pre-application process.

No application has been made yet. If they do make one, there will be a meeting with parents, members of the board and the CEO etc to discuss their concerns in advance of the application being submitted. There is no time line for that application yet. It all depends on the results of the pre application. Any increase in numbers would be gradual, not immediate.

The main objections to the proposal are in relation to space and facilities. The main benefits are financial and to allow the school to follow the Paradigm model, including a nursery.

Action: Janet to update on progress at the next meeting.

7. Academy update from Janet.

All pupils have settled well into their new year groups and the parent carer consultations have taken place.

Some parents were unsure what subjects are taught, so to clarify: the school follows Early Years Foundation for Reception. Years one to six follow the National Curriculum. Science and art are taught in half term blocks and there are weekly PE and park visits.

Homework increases as the children progress, with Year Six pupils getting it twice a week.

Pupils are tested weekly or fortnightly on spelling, arithmetic and times tables. The expectation is that all children know their times tables by the end of year four, in and out of order.

Educational visits are considered an important part of a child's learning and it was school policy to have as many as possible. Recent trips included Broadway Theatre, and the Unicorn. Music is taught weekly to EYFS and all pupils in Year 3-6 have had dance workshops for half a day. She also briefed on upcoming end of term events.

Ranjeni added that the school was partnering with a TFL campaign to raise awareness of road safety. Various events/campaigns will be happening throughout the year.

AOB

One parent asked how black history month was celebrated/taught this year and that there was nothing highlighted in a newsletter. Ranjeni said it was part of the educate/celebrate campaign.

Ranjeni agreed that this campaign could be better promoted and that they would do that next year.