**Parents Forum Meeting**

**8th May 2018**

**Attendees:** Victoria Lock, Clare Fenwick, Pru Risely, Abi Michael, Abi Steel, Zoe Wilkinson, Daren Wilkinson, Wendy Cook, Vic Haymes, Joanna Ledger, Justin Armstrong

**Apologies:** Mel Armstrong, Fi Blenkin, Theresa Mellor, Pete Luetchford, Alice Bell

**Agenda Items:**

1. **Ratifying the Parent Forum Terms of Reference**
2. **Maths homework**
3. **Residentials**
4. **Ratifying the Parent Forum Terms of Reference**

The current Terms of Reference for the Parents Forum have been adjusted slightly to allow for the school, parents and teachers to have a say on agenda items for the meeting. Moving forward, Miss Lock would like there to be a maximum of 3 agenda items per meeting set by the school based on themes from parent and teacher discussions. Miss Lock wants to encourage parents to raise their personal issues with the teachers or Miss Lock first and then if any general themes arise these can then be discussed at the next parent forum meeting. These issues would then be agreed in conjunction with the Chair and would be highlighted to parents two weeks before the meeting in the newsletter. Parents who then want to discuss these issues will then know in advance that the meeting will be discussing them and can attend if they wish to. For any other specific issues, it is the parents responsibility to go into school and discuss individually. Miss Lock would like the parent forum reps to re-emphasise this when they are told about specific concerns.

Miss Lock wants the meetings to be a positive, solutions based forum assisting in finding solutions to issues or concerns. Also the meetings shouldn’t always be about issues, it’s about moving the school forward and celebrating what works well.

It was also discussed that Parent Reps could be re-advertised within the school, perhaps reminding parents of who they can speak with or highlighting the parent forum page on the website.

**2. My Maths Homework**

***Teachers have commented that some parents have had trouble logging into My Maths despite trying solutions such as Puffin Academy. Some parents have expressed a desire to bring back the maths homework books. As a school, Devoran is able to tailor the maths homework better by using My Maths, but is open to discussion and welcome any solutions parents may have.* *Would it help to do one week online, one week written, for example?***

Feedback within the forum was mixed; generally the children enjoy working on the computers / iPads and parents can understand the benefits to the teachers of the marking system, however parents concerns were that the homework is set sporadically, there are numerous technological issues, parents say they were still doing things on paper due to the issues, the language used in the app is not necessarily at the same level as the children and the explanations are not good. One member has emailed Miss Lock with a video of her trying to complete the My Maths homework with her Year 1 son demonstrating the issues with ‘clicking and dragging’ and the frustrations this causes especially when the ‘mark it’ button is pressed immaturely and the score is therefore not recorded accurately. Miss Lock has forwarded this video to technical support at My Maths to gain insight as to why this happens and for them to come up with a solution.

One possible solution that was discussed was whether KS1 resorted to paper-based maths homework and KS2 used the My Maths system due to the fact it would seem the main issues are within KS1 for user friendliness. Also,

 the school wants to support those parents who do not have access to home computers and tablets by printing out homework for those children if required and or allowing them to use the library in school with their child. The paper books also had mixed reactions but Miss Lock will weigh up the pros and cons and devise a plan of action. It was agreed that one week online, one week paper-based would be too confusing.

Alongside Maths homework, Miss Lock wanted to support the parents who want to help their children at home with Maths by bringing out a leaflet covering the main teaching methods used in class as this can also be frustrating for parent and child who have been taught in different ways. There may also be an extra app to help support times tables as from next year in Year 4 all children need to be tested on their times tables up to the 12 x.

**3. Residentials**

***At Devoran, the school prides itself on providing the children with a range of wonderful experiences that directly link to the learning that happens both in and outside of school. It has been brought to the school’s attention that some parents are not happy to pay for the residential. As a school, Devoran never makes a profit from these trips, but it also needs to cover the costs. Should every year group go on a residential? Are the costs acceptable? This year the London trip has cost a lot more than it has in the past. This is as a result of the school hiring its own coach and going through a tour company (which is what parents wanted when consulted). Should Year 6 go to London? Should we look at changing the residential to somewhere closer to home and make it more of a ‘PGL activity’ type of residential?***

Parents have been shocked by the cost of the London trip - this year it’s costing £437 almost double that of previous years. Parents queried the reason for the extra cost and Miss Lock explained it’s due to the fact that the coach requires a supplement if it isn’t full. It requires 45 children on the trip to be free of any supplements. Also with the risk assessments which need to be carried out now for terrorist attacks etc public transport increases the risks on these trips. With a coach the children would be driven securely around the city to the various venues without the need to use the public transport system. The school is including a lot of activities on the trip: Science Museum, Wonderlab, Globe Theatre tour, London Eye, St Pauls Cathedral, Matilda at the theatre, the Harry Potter Studios, Olympic parks, meals out and a visit to Miss Lock’s old school to show the children a multicultural school in the city. The children will be staying at the Premier Inn at Heathrow airport.

With view to the cost of the coach, it was suggested by a parent that perhaps the school could team up with another school to fill the extra seats or even open it up to year 5 on a first come first served basis. It was also discussed as to whether all the activities were necessary especially given that many of these children may well have already experienced these places with their families. Perhaps the length of the trip could be shortened to reduce costs? Parents expressed a desire to be given more notice of the trip and to set up a monthly payment scheme perhaps within year 5 to allow parents the time to save up for the trip. It was generally agreed that a cultural residential was important in year 6 seeing as the previous yearly residentials at Carnyorth, Camp Kernow and Porthpean are activity based.

Miss Lock is considering bringing out a survey to parents in Year 5 each year to gain the general consensus of each cohort regarding the cost / activities / location and to also allow the children to have a say in where they would like to go in their important final year at Devoran.

**AOB**

A parent brought up the topic of sex education following the recent letter home to all parents explaining what each year group will be learning. The concern was around the lack of male teachers / assistants in the school for the boys in particular to be able to speak to if they had any personal worries, questions or concerns. Miss Lock confirmed that the school does have a new male teacher starting in September however she cannot influence the recruitment process to request male applicants.

A few parents commented on how much nicer the school reports were with some really nice personal comments from teachers and Miss Lock. However, it was also requested that school reports could be issued a few days before the end of term rather than the last day to allow parents who may have a few concerns to clarify these with the teachers before the holidays to avoid them ‘stewing’ over any disappointments.

Sports Day was also discussed and many parents were very positive and welcoming of the changes proposed with regards to having it just in the afternoon and linking the teams into the school’s house point teams. However, there were still some concerns over the notice given of the date. Miss Lock promised to highlight on the newsletter any newly added dates so parents could see these immediately instead of missing it by accident.

**Date of next meeting: Tuesday 26th June at 5:30pm**