Parents Forum 2nd May 2017-05-02

Present:

Pru Risely, Claire Fenwick, Alice Bell, Pete Luetchford, Chris Booker, Joanna Ledger, Mike Thiele, Anna Morris, Abi Steel, Sarah Seddan, Abi Michael, Karen Rosevear, Mel Armstrong, Vic Haymes, Justin Armstrong

Apologies: Wendy Cook, Zoe Wilkinson

Feed back from previous meeting minutes:

Liam from Acorn Multisports has got a mobile phone for his staff who run after school club. The Phone will be kept at school and parents can leave messages for staff as needed. The number will be circulated asap.

1) Website

A discussion was had with regards to how the school saw the new website and the eschools app working and what information was going to be where.

MT clarified that the App is designed to be a notification tool only. Once notified parents would need to log into the website to get the information in full.

Although there is a ‘reply’ option on the messages section of the website/app, please DO NOT reply to these as the school has no way of accessing these messages.

As with many changes, time is needed for these things to settle in and teething problems ironed out. Members of the forum asked if newsletter and important communications could be sent out via email as well as via the app/website, while everyone was getting used to the new system. MT agreed this was a good idea.

Members of the forum suggested the school send a survey out to parents to see how people were getting on with the new system. Including asking what phone parents were using to see if any problems were due to specific software issues.

2) Minibus

Concerns have been raised by parents that the mini bus is not used as much as it could be.

MT explained the reasons behind some of this:

1. The Mini bus is heavy and only those people with D1 category on their driving license can drive it. It costs £1000 to train a new driver and school budget doesn’t stretch to that at present. Currently 3 members of staff that drive the bus.
2. Only seats 13 on the bus. For safety reasons there needs to be 2 adults on board meaning only 11 children can go on at a time. So to move a whole class 3 shuttles are needed. This is often not practical.

The bus is being used by Foundation class for fresh air Fridays at present and the bus is also rented out every week to a third party. Revenue from this helps with the upkeep of the bus and is set at £15 a day and 50p/mile wear and tear. Is used every week that way.

Discussion that followed identified options to help increase usage of the bus:

1. Possibility for fundraising for training Mrs Evans to drive the bus to increase usage.
2. Possibility of selling the current bus and replacing with a lighter one that more people could drive. MT to investigate this and report back.

3) Extra Curricular Clubs

There was a concern that there was a low number of clubs for specific year groups especially year 3.

MT pointed out that all clubs are run by staff on a volunteer basis and that most before school/lunch time/ afterschool slots were filled with clubs and that as a whole Devoran school provided a huge number of options for pupils compared with some schools. There are 11 clubs through out the week that are available to KS2 children.

Members asked if it would be possible to increase club numbers by introducing parent lead clubs? MT pointed out that they would still need a member of staff present and many staff members are already tied up with clubs.

The school monitors who attends clubs and then school acts upon this, if there are children that have not attended clubs especially sports clubs.

Members asked if the school could publish the club timetable on the website so that parents could see what is on offer through the years.

4) Head teacher appointment.

Justin Armstrong (parent Governor and member of forum) informed the forum about the appointment of the new head teacher. There were 15 applicants for the position; this is the highest number in a long time. A short list was formed by the Governors and a County Council representative. To make the short list candidates had to meet all the specifications on the job description. The governors short-listed 4 excellent candidates.

These 4 candidates then attended a day and a half process. Day one involved many tasks including teaching practice and interviews with several panels including a parent and community panel and the school council.

The panel was advised that there will be a handover process for Miss Lock with Mr Thiele at the end of term, during which time she will meet all children.

AOB

* Members with younger children starting foundation asked when the children would start as there was usually a staggered start. MT advised Miss J would inform parents in due course.
* A problem occurred with Zumba club this week. It caused a lot of confusion as was short notice and not all parents got info via app in time. MT assured that children would be looked after until parents picked up if this happened again. MT advised school tries very hard not to cancel clubs
* There is a new email address set up for people to email the parents forum direct. Alice and Pru will have access to it. It is parentsforum@devoranschool.co.uk
* Members asked for Teachers photos to be posted in foyer. MT agreed
* MT asked if members of forum were happy to have their photos on the website so parents know who ‘s who. Members agreed. MT to organise with Mr Morgan.
* MT circulated details of a proposed new club by Mrs Alderman. She would like to offer mindfulness sessions in key stage groups before school (8.15-8.45) the club will be booked and paid for £3 per session in advance. Members were happy with the principal of the club and details will be circulated in usual way.
* Next Meeting Tuesday 4th July 2017 5pm.