

Minutes of the Alfreton Park Parent Group

Tuesday 6th October 1:30pm

Present: Cheryl Smart, Sharon Walker, Megan Harrowing, Joanne Palmer, Rachel Owers-Jones, Andrea Thomas, Lucy Sarna, Sue Eason.

Apologies: Rachal Spray, Carla Higgins, John Hubball, Shariann Hubball and Sue Norton.

Introduction

- Cheryl welcomed everyone to the group and discussed that the children have settled into school really well. Parents agreed that since the children have been back at school the children have been a lot calmer.
- Cheryl and parents agreed that having the children come back to school on a phased return has worked really well and has helped the children to settle back into school routines.
- The children will be working on a more relaxed curriculum until Christmas to help settle them back into school. This will allow teachers to assess where the children are in their learning.
- After Christmas a new curriculum will evolve that includes more emphasis on emotional wellbeing and gradually includes more formal learning opportunities too.

School events/ Life

- Cheryl explained that things such as Christmas, harvest and parents evening will all be held remotely and that more details would be given closer to the time.
- Parents feel that the relationship between school and parents has got stronger which has aided in combating anxiety.
- It was agreed that parent and pupils feel safe that school is safe. Only a few parents have kept their children at home and this is because they feel that they are medically vulnerable.

COVID testing/ concerns

- Cheryl explained that COVID testing kits from school should only be given out under exceptional circumstances where staff and parents who cannot get a test themselves.
- It was explained that following government guidance parents will only be informed of a positive COVID test if symptoms are within 48 hours of them being in contact with school.
- One parent raised concerns about large bubble sizes and it was explained that this has been done because of the curriculum they access, as without mixing it would limit the activities the children could do.
- Cheryl reassured parents that compared to mainstream school the bubbles are still a lot smaller and there is less socialising outside of school.

- One Parent brought to attention that they had read some research that found that teenagers are more likely to become COVID positive and pass it on than younger children.

Further Lockdowns

- Following government guidelines if there was another lockdown the expectation is that SEND school will carry on as normal.
- We will continue to keep the school safe following the latest government guidelines.
- One parent asked if they could opt to have their children be at home and Cheryl explained that the guidance is currently unclear on this but you have to consider what is right for the family.

Improving communication

- Parents expressed that there is currently not enough information being put in the children's diaries about what the children have done in school.
- Parents would like to see more personalised quality comments about their children rather than generic comments about the subjects the children have been doing as they can see these on the class timetable.
- One parent expressed the desire to have teachers to write in the diaries if anything negative happens in schools so that they support their child at home.
- Parents raised concerns about not receiving important letters because their children are not in school that day.
- One parent asked for more information about bookmarks in dairies and asked if letter could be sent out for existing and new parents.
- Parents would like to be informed about any classes changes in regards to staff and children changes to help better prepare their children.

Parent parking/ staggered pick up times

- Concerns were expressed that staggered pick up times means they are not getting as much feedback face to face with staff because of other parents arriving.
- One parent suggested having a staff member to help direct the flow of traffic.
- Phased drop off in the morning has been working much better.
- Phased pick up at the end of the day is still causing issues as parents are still not arriving at their allocated times.
- Parents are getting out and going to the gate leaving their cars behind meaning that they are not moving down to allow more cars to fit in.
- Parents picking up at twenty past are being blocked in by parents picking up at half past.
- It was agreed to trial a two lane system with one lane for people leaving at 3.20 so that they can leave without getting blocked in.

Home Education

- Parent reported that many had found it very difficult to carry out any home learning tasks during lockdown.
- Parents expressed that activities that are more interactive and visual are better.
- One parent expressed that it would be a lovely idea if the teachers could do remote sessions to help children remain in contact with their peers.

Parents supporting each other

- Parents Whatsapp group has been positive in helping parents feel supported and part of a community.
- Parents Facebook group has not been getting posted on and new parents may not be aware of these existing. One parent suggested that everyone in the meeting takes it in turn to post.

Any other business

- Cheryl wanted to reassure parents that even with windows being open the heating will still be on and advises that parents send children with layers on that could be taken off.

Actions:

- Cheryl will look into different pick up times whilst being conscious of shortening children's school day.
- Cheryl will look into getting a map drawn so that parents and transport know what the new plan will be and where to go.
- Cheryl to allocate a member of staff to be a parking attendant.
- Cheryl to email all classroom staff about having more personalised comments in dairies.
- Sharon will help distribute any letters made by parents for parent in regards to online support groups.
- Cheryl will look into the bookmark scheme and send letters out to existing and new parents.