

Dartford Science Technology College Parents Forum

Minutes of Meeting held on Tuesday 5th February 2013

Those present:

M King Parent (chair of Parents Forum)
 S Jarvis Parent (vice-chair of Parents Forum)
 D Burgess Vice Principal
 A Cane Associate Vice Principal
 D Edwards Parent governor (chair of governors)
 P Moreton Parent Governor
 B Coker Parent Governor
 A Taylor Parent Governor
 D Edginton Parent
 Y Harrison Staff Representative

1.0	<p>The objective of the group was discussed. Ideas put forward were:</p> <p>Parent forum – engaging and supporting parents whose own experience of education may be negative</p> <p>Parent Focus Group – a body of parents who are consulted when there are any changes made to the running of the school</p> <p>PTA – a group which raises money for the school and makes links between parents and teacher sin social settings</p> <p>It was agreed that the objective of the group was to be a body of parents who work in partnership with the school such that ideas and solutions for improvements could either be triggered by the school or the parents with at times the group actually driving the improvement. It was hoped that the school would consult the group with any changes that were being proposed to the running of the school.</p>	
2.0	<p>It was agreed that the output from the Parents Forum would be taken to the Full meeting of the Governing Body by D Edwards, the Chair of Governors where it would be tabled as a standing agenda item.</p>	
3.0	<p>The chair and vice chair then proposed the following key issues that the group should be concentrating on in relation to the fact that it was these that have arisen time again in the discussions held at previous meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication between parents and school • Reporting of students' progress and the education jargon utilised • Information regarding curriculum studying in each school year • Developing the participation of parents with the forum. <p>It was felt important by the group that any concerns tabled at the meeting should be looked at and a proposed solution put to the school in order to mitigate the solution.</p>	
4.0	<p>Communication</p> <p>It was felt by the group that we had, in our short lifetime, made some differences in respect to the communication between school and parents:-</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact details for key staff (Directors of Learning) had been entered onto the website so that parents could e-mail a subject lead directly. • A Parents Forum section had been developed on the website for parents with contact details of M King and Y Harrison. • HT News and other important communications from school were being e-mailed to parents as well as being placed on the school website. • The development of parent texting that ensured key messages were being sent direct to parents. <p>Discussion took place about who could access the e-mails sent to the Mrs King link on the parent forum website as it was important that this communication was fed into the parent forum meetings when appropriate.</p>	Mrs King to e-mail address and report back to next meeting.
	<p><u>Issue Raised</u> Communication to parents on Monday 21st January – the snow day.</p> <p>Members of the group positively applauded the fact that the school was open on this date.</p> <p>The group noted that tweets were placed on the school website both on Sunday night and Monday morning to confirm school being open. This was acknowledged as a positive step.</p> <p>An issue was raised by parents that when accessing the school website the first link that they saw was the link to the BBC webpage. Unfortunately this BBC web link had not been updated to confirm the school status as open and had left some parents unsure if school was open.</p> <p>The parents acknowledged that the information was on the website as a tweet but felt that this could have been supported by the BBC web link page to avoid any confusion. Also concerns were raised about how many parents accessed twitter.</p> <p>The parents asked whether it could have been possible for a parent text to have been sent on Monday morning to confirm school was open. This would have assisted parents who do not have access to the internet at home and would have provided direct information to parents without them having to search for information. This may encourage more parents to send students to school on a snow day.</p>	D Burgess to look into whether a parent text could have been sent and report back to next meeting
5.0	<p>Curriculum</p> <p>It was agreed that Year 10 was a major change in student's education and as such it would be helpful to have a Parents Engagement Evening during Term 1.</p> <p>The evening could include information on the curriculums to be studied, information from previous students, explanation on the study programmes, a Head teacher address and a "how to" session for parents as to the help and involvement that they could give their daughters.</p> <p>A handbook summarising this information was agreed to be a good idea.</p>	Ideas to be followed up at next meeting.

6.0	Student Reports Not discussed	
7.0	Any Other Business Much discussion ensued with respect to how to “market” the Parents Forum to other parents and to encourage further participation. Ideas were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives to be available to talk to other parents at parents’ evenings. • Representatives to be available during Summer School for new Year 7 entrants. <p>There is a year 9 Options evening on the 27th February and it was considered that attendance at this may be a good idea or whether the use of a questionnaire/flyer explaining what the Parents Forum is about and asking whether people would like to attend or what they would like us to look into. This was especially focus on year 9 parents who would benefit from the year 10 parents engagement evening and would hopefully have views to contribute in person or via the e-mail link.</p> <p>A letter was suggested that could be sent from the parent forum to the parents informing parents of hot topics of discussion and encouraging them to be involved. This contact would be in addition to the contact being made by school and the HT news.</p> <p>If agreed, the letter would be circulated to parents on a date just before the next meeting.</p> <p>It was agreed that the minutes of the Parent Forum meetings would be placed on the website for all to view.</p>	<p>M King/S Jarvis to explore these ideas</p> <p>M King to propose letter to the group members for possible circulation to parents</p>
8.0	Date of next meeting: Tuesday 19th March at 6pm.	