

ATTENDEES

STAFF

Rick Clarke – Head
Malika Power – Assistant Head (Teaching)
Andy Spink – Assistant Head (Student Development)
Nick Oram-Tooley – Head of Junior School
Jo Dalziel – Head of Senior School
Hannah Manton – Head of Sixth Form
Emma Judge – Director of External Relations

PARENT VOICE

Vicki Nixon Chair, **Emma Tweed** Vice Chair, **Isobel Hanmer** Secretary, **Claire Karitzis** Rep N&R, **Jo Bushill** Rep Y1, **Natasha Hill** Rep Y2, **Nina Maidlow** Rep Y3, **Helen Jones** Rep Y4, **Helen Davison** Rep Y7, **Sandra Laird** Rep Y9, **Sara Acworth** Y10, **Kay Mawer** Sixth Form.

Plus 16 additional parents

APOLOGIES

Becks Scullion – Deputy Head
Laura Griffiths – Deputy Head (Academic)
Giles Rudd – Assistant Head (Learning)
Richard Fry - Governor
Dan Wheatley Rep Yr 5, **Maki Fox** Rep Yr6, **Fiona Turner** Rep Yr 8, **Mark Havard** Rep Yr11, **Lucy Cripps** Rep Boarding

Introduction

- Vicki welcomes everyone to Parent Voice's first Open meeting and explains the format.
- Rick introduces the staff that are present.

PV administration

- Isobel welcomes new PV members Natasha Yr2, Maki Yr6 & Fiona Yr8 and formally votes them in.
- Isobel also asks PV members to formally vote in the three Officers to continue in their roles as no one else has expressed an interest in taking over.
- Isobel introduces new N&R rep Manga Tharma starting in Sept and explains there are two active vacancies for boarding and y11 (current yr 10) from September. Anyone interested should contact Isobel at thehanmers@gmail.com
- Emma thanks recent outgoing reps Ellie, Mark G, Mark H, Gemma, Lucy & Sara for all their hard work and contributions.

Matters arising

- **Dance & Drama** – Helen D briefly summarises the situation explaining that the pandemic has had a negative effect on the Performing Arts, with cancelled performances etc. This challenge has been picked up by the parents who notice a difference between what is being marketed versus the reality of what's on offer. Vicki mentions that green shoots are appearing though. Helen D updates us as follows:
 - **Focus group mtg** was held with Helen D, Claire, Emma T and Andy, James, Josh, Bob & Amanda
 - **New initiatives** this term and plans for next term eg Bob workshop / ECAs / Claire full time / recruiting Gap student/ JS "play in a week" returns again etc
 - **Further mtgs agreed** to develop Performing Arts vision
- Rick is very keen to get this area up and running again and has already had positive feedback from parents about the new initiatives and output since the pandemic.

ACTION: Rick to catch up on the next steps and report back at next PV meeting in the Autumn term.

- **Embedding Values –**

- Vicki tells us she attended the staff workshop in March to provide the parent perspective on embedding values and that it was a really useful session. Everyone agreed that parents would play a key part in ensuring that values are supported and therefore lived.
- Nick explains that he has been doing a lot of work on values including in assemblies and by updating the curriculum in the Junior School to include lessons on each of the core values. He also mentions that Student Reports in the Junior School are being updated to incorporate them. There's an active drive to celebrate children's achievements based on values too and that they are in the language that is used when teaching and in managing behaviour.
- Rick says Values based student reports are being considered for the SS but it is more complex as students have many more teachers than in the JS. Values are already being actively used when recruiting staff and students. He is firm in not offering a child a place at the school if they are not a good fit with the values and ethos of the school. A holistic approach is used with students being observed in a wide range of situations throughout the assessment and trial days.
- Parents discuss what the values are. It is noted that they are harder to remember as they are phrases and not single words like those used in most other schools. Sara believes that the essence/meaning of the values is however memorable, even if they can't be recited fully by all. Sandra agrees and states that although parents might not yet be fully familiar, she is delighted to see that her child in year 9 definitely knows them.
- Malika introduces a lesson observation tool that has recently been launched internally. "Daybook" is being used to capture values in action around the school and demonstrates the students living those values on a day to day basis. Staff are able to note observations which other staff can then access, helping them to stay up to date on each students achievements and effectively give praise and support where needed, cementing further the relationship between student and teacher. This type of recording also makes the intangible tangible and allows school to note and report on trends and identify successes or areas requiring more support or development.
- Rick is looking at other areas of the Daybook to be discussed later in the agenda
- Parent suggests an Art installation to represents each of the 4 core values (Using the rabbit as an example of Spirit of Togetherness). Rick thanks the parent for their suggestion and states that he has been looking into something along those lines already with Michelle in the Art Department.

- **Comms –** Vicki explains that a working party including Emma T, Isobel and Karen D have been working closely with Emma J regarding parent communication over the last few terms. Emma J explains that parent input has been invaluable and much appreciated. Emma J provides an update:

- **Open Day** Emma J extends her thanks to the many PV members who came to help talk to prospective parents at the school open day recently. Their time and input were greatly appreciated, and the feedback received from prospective parents was very positive and noted that the parent contribution was very helpful.
- **Survey** A parent survey was carried out on communication and the feedback received was extremely helpful -with some positives and some areas that clearly need development. For example, the school takes heart from the lovely comments parents made about the "tone of voice" of school communication. Being described as unpatronizing, approachable and human. The development areas were more about the quantity of emails and ensuring those emails were accurate and clear.
- **My school Portal** School have been looking at a number of software tools to support communication and are leaning towards a system called My School Portal. This system would provide parents with a tool that organises and stores all school communication. A one stop shop amalgamating all the other platforms such as School Base and SOCS etc. The school are keen to ensure that they make the right decisions and get all the functions right before implementing but hope to introduce changes by January next year. Emma J stresses that this is not designed to stop the direct communication between school and parents and that parents will continue to engage with individual teachers direct but the software would allow for general communication to be more effectively managed.
- **Procedures** are being updated and discussed eg. to streamline comms to go out once a week. A parent present has experience of this and much prefers the adhoc way of receiving information at Frensham, as long as messages are well signposted and urgent messages are clear. Noting that it can be harder to navigate and find specific information if all messages are rounded up in a group.
- **Staff training** will be carried out in September to improve best practice, ensure a consistency in approach and support better planning. There is a real drive for the school to get parent communication right and to ensure that the excellent interaction parents experience before joining the school carries on once their child has joined. Rick explains that as parents at the school themselves he and his wife Natalie are on the receiving end of school communication so experience what parents see and understand the frustrations they face.

- **Car Park –**

- Emma T briefly explains that the parent survey last term provided positive feedback following the changes that have been made in the carpark, ie the one way system. The possibility of the middle section being opened up as an exit only is currently

being discussed (a number of the parents at the meeting expressed their support for this suggestion). Budgets are also being looked at for improving and making the signage more permanent. More to follow on this in due course.

ACTION: Rick to make sure budget is being allocated for permanent signage.

General or recurring issues

• Behaviour –

Rick begins by reiterating that the level of behaviour issues they are experiencing now were not seen pre-pandemic. The lockdowns have had a large impact on children's socialisation and listening skills. This is not restricted to Frensham, schools all over the country are facing similar challenges. Rick explains that in order to tackle the behaviour and better support students it is important that parents and students share what is happening and report any incidents or issues so that school can act. Rick also reassures parents that although sometimes it may appear like there are no consequences, this is certainly not the case. A great deal of work is being done behind the scenes with individual students. As well as working directly with the students, school have been looking at updating some procedures and implementing new initiatives:-

- **Show Racism the Red Card** – a very effective and powerful talk in Y8 which school are hoping to extend to other year groups.
- **Recruitment of new students** is now values based and places are only offered to those students that will flourish at Frensham. They will not accept students unless they meet the criteria, even if they are left with spare places.
- **Staff Recruitment** is also values based with questions and interview processes updated to ensure that candidates are the right fit and have a mindset and approach that fully support the school ethos.
- **The ATL process** (Approach To Learning) has been updated. A 4 stage process that is a powerful coaching tool working to change behaviour. Training is being carried out in September to ensure all staff are using the process consistently as it is understood that some staff are better at working through the process than others.

Rick explains that this approach is more time consuming and takes much more effort. Staff cannot simply side step behaviour problems by merely issuing a detention, instead they have to have the conversations, find out where the problems lie and give the students the support they need to turn their behaviour around. This is a process that is much more in keeping with Frensham's ethos.

Andy agrees and says that the process originates from students. The teacher asks the questions "are you OK?" "where do the problems lie" "what support do you need" rather than giving out harsher punishments. It's very much seen as a collaboration, with both staff and student exploring how the student can put it right. The process can take a few weeks initially and parents are not necessarily involved unless the situation escalates.

Hannah says that the ATL process is not something that is done to you, it is a dialogue to move things forward. It's not simply a punishment by another name.

Jo D says the process review has provided more clarity and they have been talking to students about it in assemblies etc. Pupils are aware of the ATL process and the language is being used around school. There has been good feedback and Jo has already starting to see change when the ATL process is used effectively.

Malika states that the students who get the most out of it see it as positive interaction. It's crucial that they recognise that the staff are there to help. Malika specifically notes that Jo D will mediate and always works from the student's perspective.

Parent comments that as a result of the collaborative approach the students are more likely to recognise that they *have* a problem rather than they *are* the problem.

Jo B asks where the recipient of any poor behaviour stands with regard to the ATL process.

Nick confirmed that support is provided, they ensure that the children carrying out the behaviour understand the result of their actions and whether purposeful or not ensure that an apology is given for any hurt caused. They also ensure the students on the receiving end are aware and kept up to date with the actions being taken.

Jo D also confirmed that having taken on board parent feedback they are now working much harder on ensuring the communication loop is closed and parents reporting incidents or concerns are kept informed on progress.

- Andy uses the innovative Yr8 Village project as an example of the school actively trying to encourage developing wider relationships, pushing the students to work as a team and to escape and **break down the day to day boundaries of their usual friendship cliques.**
- Students and parents are encouraged to **report any issues** and share concerns. The more school know the better they are able to look out for students, anticipate potential problems and deal with issues when they arise. School need to know about bad behaviour and the sooner the better.

There is already an anonymous QR code for students to provide feedback. Rick also encourages students not to be a bystander and to recognise that they have the power to stop some of these things from happening.

- Parent suggested if students witnessed staff building students and colleagues up with **positive reinforcement**, they might be inclined to follow suit and asks if it would be possible to give students a format where they too could build each other (staff and students) up.

Emma T also suggested that if students became more accustomed to providing positive feedback and recognising positive behaviours and interactions that they might also be more inclined to call out poor behaviour.

Nick explained that the Junior School has previously had a “monster box” for pupils to put in comments. This is being rebranded as the “Tell Me” box to encourage all types of feedback and the staff will monitor this daily.

- The SMT are considering how to further **encourage students to come forward** and report any problems as they arise.
- Becks and Laura are carrying out a whole school review of **Reward & Sanctions**. Results of the review to be provided at the Autumn term Parent Voice meeting.

ACTION: Jo D to share updated ATL process with parents in September.

ACTION: Becks and Laura to provide update on rewards and sanctions review in the Autumn term Parent Voice meeting.

ACTION: Becks to rebrand the student QR code so that it can be used to capture positive feedback aswell.

• Gender in Sport –

- Rick suggests that based on the success of previous working groups a parent/school focus group is tasked to look further into this subject. To consider the different views, better understand the complexities, explore potential improvements and ensure the school values are appropriately reflected in the sports department vision and policies. This collaborative approach will provide school with valuable insight on the parent perspective and it will give parents an opportunity to better understand what the school are offering and the challenges they need to consider. It will also help give the school policy some clarity and address any misconceptions. It was suggested that students should also form part of the focus group and that we should ensure a full range of student views.
- Jo D and Andy update to say that sport is very fluid at the moment. Its **inclusive**, cohort led and there’s **choice**. The nature of the sport you do (competitive versus non-competitive) as well as who you play with (boys, girls and mixed) etc. Andy uses yr 9,10,11 girls as an example to explain how some cohorts/year groups work better without boys, whether that’s playing sport or in a gym session. The girls in these year groups tend to prefer girl only teams even though mixed teams are offered. It is also recognised that society and the outside world heavily influences the children’s experience and opinions.
- Vicki questions the recent open morning which had girls playing hockey together and boys playing football together. She highlights that it was a missed opportunity to show progressiveness. Andy explained that this was the natural choice of the students present. Vicki suggested that culture drives behaviour and if the school embedded breaking stereotypes in sport early in the JS then this obvious divide might not happen.
- A number of suggestions were put forward for the focus group to consider:-
 - i) Get feedback from students (a wide cross section of viewpoints)
 - ii) Clarify Sports Department Vision and Policy (ensure in line with the school values and ethos)
 - iii) Improve messaging
 - iv) Proactive approach to changing culture and breaking down stereotypes
 - v) Different considerations and constraints for the different year groups
- Overall parents at the meeting felt reassured that the school offered a wide choice with regard to gender in sport and the many opportunities presented, and that it can be hard to fight media bias.

ACTION: Vicki to organise a group of parents to work with Andy, Phil and Nick. Andy will include a cross section of students too.

ACTION: Parents interested in joining the focus group to drop Vicki an email.

ACTION: Vicki to provide update at Autumn term Parent Voice meeting.

Hot Topic Discussion

• Would parents value a “DAYBOOK” function?

A tool used to support communication, embed school values & improve behaviour (eg by automatically sending out an email to parents when their child has done something that exhibits the school values).

This tool is already being used by teachers internally (see embedding values in Matters Arising section above) to great effect but school would like to know if parents would also like to have access to the Daybook function.

Summary of discussion:

PRO's

Opens up dialogue between teachers & parents.

Opens up dialogue between parents and their children.

Students can be better rewarded for upholding the values or achieving a goal etc.

Parents can see the benefits of the school ethos actively being demonstrated in the behaviour of their children.

Build student self esteem.

CON's

Could erode the student's autonomy and ability to be the independent learners that Frensham successfully creates?

Risk that parents will micromanage their children if too much information is given.

Frensham is successful in nurturing students to have a sense of pride in what they do without the need of constant validation.

Will the Daybook function and a new rewards system dismantle that?

Run the risk of parents being provided with too much information.

SUGGESTIONS

Could the negative points be capped so that parents are only informed if a behaviour becomes an issue (ie not informed of every missed piece of homework but informed if a pattern of missed homework develops)?

Could a parent opt in or out of receiving daybook notifications?

Could daybook notifications be kept separate to other forms of communication from school, so it is easier to organise and manage?

Could only positive points be forwarded to parents, leaving (and trusting) the staff and students to correct any small concerns but allowing parents to be informed of their child's achievements and when they display the core values?

AOB

- Positive feedback from PV link – how to capture and how to feedback to the individuals, Governors, staff body and parents

ACTION: Vicki to provide full feedback to Rick/SMT so that the comments can be recognised and passed on to the staff involved

ACTION: Vicki to anonymise and summarise the feedback to create a version that could be shared more widely

ACTION: Rick to consider how best to share the summarised version

- Parent questions school chewing gum policy and how effectively and consistently it is being implemented .

ACTION: Rick to raise it at the SMT meeting.