

# Parent forum questions and answers

## March 2023

1. *Parent evening - Zoom sessions due to 'technical problems' only lasted 6 minutes. Its very difficult to ask questions in this short time.*

We acknowledge there were technical issues during our last meeting. We used a new system and it didn't run as smoothly as we would have expected. We have fed this back to Parentmail and they are working on our concerns – everything should be resolved before our next parents evening.

We held a Parent survey asking parents whether they preferred face to face or online meetings going forward- only 89 people responded, 69 prefer face to face and 20 online. We will most likely do the last hour online on the second night going forward to accommodate those who prefer an online meeting but make more face to face appointments available for those who would prefer this option.

We know some parents who had specific questions and they have made additional appointments with their child's class teacher.

2. *Comms between parent and teacher is also difficult. It is not possible to talk at drop off or collection. Seesaw can take up to a week for the teachers to see the message.*

Parents should speak to SLT on gate or email office staff if you need to get a message to a teacher. Teachers always happy to meet or call back within 48 hours.

3. *Changing books - children often unable to change their reading books as 'Mrs Baker is not there' Can there be an alternative arrangement for the children?*

The library is open every break and lunchtime and Mrs Baker (for Y3) is there every morning. There is no reason a child should be unable to change their book. If a child is still struggling they just need to mention it to their teacher.

4. *Parking not always being open at Golden Acre. "it seems to be getting less reliable in the last month particularly. If it's ever not open, it's always more chaotic in terms of parking around the school. The car park just takes away some of the pressures from on street parking".*

The caretaker at Golden Acre has clarified the conditions our parents must adhere to in order for them to continue to allow us to use the car park at drop off and pick up.

The car park can only be used from 8.30 – 9.00am and 3.00 – 3.30pm and only if it is unlocked. The hall and car park are let out at other times and many of the clubs who hire the hall require use of the car park. Sadly, in the past our parents have become abusive when hirers have asked them to move their car. We have been advised that if this happens again Golden Acre will stop us from using the car park at any time. Please be considerate and only use the car park for normal pick up and drop off – it should not be used when picking up from clubs or attending Discos, Mothers Day events, Parents Evenings etc.

5. *Christmas plays - can you inform parents going from infant to junior school about the Christmas plays. It is a busy time of year and many parents commented that they had things booked and had to cancel for the school play. (note - the actual plays were great!)*  
We will include this in the junior handbook and the newsletter in September going forward with the diary dates to give plenty of warning.
6. *Can I also add, that we always raised concerns/ complaints at these meetings. I'd like to add a positive note, that feedback is generally positive and Katherine Semar is highly thought of as a school and the way it is managed.*  
Thank you
7. *Would love it if they started doing the parents going in to have lunch with their children again too!*  
At the moment staff absence is still fairly high and we don't have the capacity to do this but if it improves we will try to do this in the summer term.
8. *Also more advanced warning for school trips for payments as often it's short notice.*  
Bus companies will not guarantee their prices at the moment so we have to wait for costs. We do always keep payments for trips open for at least a month after the trip and if parents are struggling to make payment then can just let the office know and pay after the trip.
9. *The possibility of having reading mornings alternated between other days too, apart from just Fridays. So that parents who always work on a Friday, would also be able to come sometimes - Maybe a Tues/Wed morning?*  
We have children having specific interventions such as partnered reading and teaching assistants are employed on other days to work specifically with groups of children first thing in the morning. Unfortunately, we can't waste resources by moving/changing reading morning.
10. *Could it be questioned that if nits / other concerns are reported on Monday why is there no communication announced by the school until the newsletter on Fridays.*  
We were asked by parents to cut back on the number of parentmails via the parent forum so unless its urgent we put everything in the newsletter. Even during Covid we only sent out two updates a week. We would hope parents check their children's hair routinely for headlice.
11. *The science fair has been an amazing opportunity. It would be "even better if" all children had the opportunity to put themselves forwards to participate. Same with archery. It's hard for the children when they don't know why some have been chosen and some haven't. I think my point is it would be great if they could be transparent about the opportunities offered.*

*There was another longer email about this same point but the above comment summarised the main concerns.*

We offer an extensive number of extra activities which teachers often give up their own time to achieve so there is limited time for lengthy application processes. Some of these opportunities are restricted like this one which is hard when there is a particularly talented year group like Year Five. We already increased the number of teams from three to four. All children were aware that there would be a science fair and last year's group would have shared their learning with the school. It was also made clear to the children that for this event

the teachers would select the children who should attend. In previous years, we have always selected the teams using teacher knowledge as they know the children's aptitude to take part in an event like this but we have never had any child or parent voicing their concerns about this process. We will continue to monitor for future years.

In our extra-curricular activities, sometimes the children do "apply" and sometimes children are selected by the people who are leading the event- this could be because the child has demonstrated a particular passion or skill relating to the topic. We also are very mindful of being inclusive and sometimes we choose children as they may not have the confidence to "apply". We try to make sure that all children get their "moment" to shine during their time at Katherine Semar.

12. Will the playground be resurfaced in the near future. It needs looking after as there is a lot of trip hazards and my kids come back injured from falls quite often.  
This has never been raised before and we cannot locate the trip hazards in the playground. We would welcome anyone with a concern to see a member of staff (possibly SLT in the morning on the gate) to show them the areas of concern.