



PARENT FORUM MEETING MINUTES Friday 10th November 2023

<u>Present:</u>	Rob Aiken Madi Wilkie Gemma Archer Gosia Henik Christina Hammond	Kate Brown Emily Small Sarah Steer Emilie Fisset Hayley Cordall
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1.	<p><u>Apologies</u> Apologies were received Julie Puxley and Elspeth Newman</p>
2.	<p><u>Closing of ACE during Summer Holidays</u> Rob explained that some days in the holidays ACE was running at a loss. It has been decided that ACE will close for the May Half Term – this is traditionally a very quiet time as lots of families go away on holiday. A parent mentioned the possibility of opening up ACE in the holidays to children from other schools as there was always parents asking for childcare ideas in the holidays. Rob explained that this had happened in the past but the difficulty with accepting children from other schools is that we don't know them and their background. Our priority always will be ensuring our children are happy and enjoy attending ACE. One parent commented that they just assumed ACE was always full in the holidays so didn't even realise it was an option. We said we will make it clear to parents that spaces are normally always available in the holidays. It was agreed that it was useful to advertise the activity schedule and we will do this going forward.</p>
3.	<p><u>Opening Ace to past KS pupils in Y7</u> The thoughts behind this idea were explained – parents of past students who are now in Y7 at SWCHS could book their children in at ACE for after school. The children could walk here from SWCHS, due to their age they would not require a high adult/child ratio so would not be taking places from other children. Presently our Year 6 children often help with the younger children in ACE and its wonderful to see them playing together. Parents commented that it seemed a good idea and worth exploring.</p>
4.	<p><u>Squads and Clubs</u> We asked for feedback on the cost of clubs and squads as we now charge for each club/squad separately. The parents commented that the pricing was fair – you should expect to pay more if you participate in more clubs and squads. It was mentioned that clubs/squads are cancelled when the weather is bad – and how was this reflected in the price. We know there will always be some cancellations in the Autumn term due to bad weather, so the cost of the clubs/squads reflect this, i.e. the cost for the term was not based on the 13 weeks that we are in school this term – our aim is to run 9 or 10 sessions this term . We always do our best to avoid cancelling the same club too many times in a term to ensure that pricing is fair. We also fed back to parents that squads should not be booked as “childcare” for children – they should be booked into ACE if childcare is needed. We are having problems with children who</p>

	<p>participate in squads but then choose not to represent the school when asked. We will communicate this to parents again.</p> <p>There was a comment asking if we could send a ParentMail if a squad was cancelled – most parents felt this wasn't necessary due to the early time parents would need the email. School will reiterate the message that if it is raining then an outdoor squad is cancelled. Children would have to sit in wet clothing all day which isn't nice for them. Children will not be told off if they miss a squad because the weather was wet at the time they would be setting off for school. Children cannot come into school if a squad is cancelled as there is no space to accommodate them inside.</p>
5.	<p><u>Parent Workshops</u></p> <p>We had some wonderful feedback from parents on our workshops. Parents really enjoy attending and working with their children, and find it really useful to observe lessons. It was asked whether we could provide a creche for these – unfortunately we do not have enough staff to do this or the budget to pay staff additional overtime.</p>
6	<p><u>Fundraising</u></p> <p>We explained that in an ideal world we would love to have a committee formed – however if this is not possible then we would welcome a group of parents to organise a single event or activity. We will hold an open coffee morning and an evening event in January to try to explain to parents a little more about the help that can be offered. The forum commented that they always thought a big commitment was needed – however several indicated they would be happy to do one event.</p>
	<p><u>Other Parent Comments Raised</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One parent mentioned that we should be helping the children design their Christmas cards - we do not have time for this in the school day. However, as so many parents loved ordering these cards, we thought our current option (where parents complete them at home if they wish) was a good compromise. The parents in the forum agreed that as it was optional it made sense for parents to do this with their children if they wanted to. • A parent mentioned that the packed lunch provided on a Year 2 trip wasn't enough and her child was hungry. The children are given half a filled baguette, vegetable sticks, a piece of fruit, a cupcake and a carton of juice. Our catering team have to follow the Essex Food Standards and this is the recommended amount for up to the age of 8. It was acknowledged by another parent that there is so much wastage on school trips as children have varying appetites. School advised that if a parent wanted to send their own packed lunch in, they can or they can supplement the one provided by school. • A parent asked if reading morning could be rotated so it wasn't always on a Friday. Due to staffing levels, intervention groups and assemblies Friday works much better for staff – however we will begin to hold a reading morning on weeks where we aren't in school on a Friday – so for this school year we will hold one on Thursday 23rd November (as we have inset on Friday 24th) and Wednesday 20th December & Tuesday 23rd July. • Parents indicated they are not happy with the quality of school photographs – a parent commented that SWCHS photos were better quality and much cheaper. School will investigate other options.