



St Mary's Catholic Academy

Newsletter No.10 – Tuesday 3rd May 2022

Parent Forum

There was a fantastic turn out to for our Pentecost Term Parent Forum Meeting. Thank you to all those who attended.

Agenda:

ELSA – Emotional Literacy Support Assistant

Summer Fair

Sports Day

Social Media

Coffee Mornings

Any other business:

Sports Clubs After-School

School incident of racism

Old Uniform

1. ELSA – Mrs Hodgkinson shared:

- Children can be referred to ELSA by parents or school staff
- Children attend ELSA sessions for a variety of reasons including bereavement, experiencing friendship issues, feeling worried/anxious regularly, struggling to concentrate and so on.
- Sessions are usually on a 1 to 1 but in some circumstances can be held in a small group (if this benefits the children)
- Usually 6 sessions are offered, but this can be shortened or increased in response to the child's needs.
- ELSA sessions do not offer a magic wand, but instead a little space and time to explore a concern and develop strategies to help the child to feel safer and stronger in their everyday life
- Parents are kept informed about the sessions and gain a brief overview of the content.
- If Mrs Hodgkinson feels she cannot meet a child's needs and support them, she will sign post parents to other support services.
- There is a drop-in ELSA session every Wednesday lunchtime, either in the library or the Haven (dependent on where the children are playing). This is an opportunity for any child to pop by to see Mrs Hodgkinson to share news, concerns, worries, events they have planned... anything really! It's a good place to come when something little is on a child's mind.
- Happy children mean happy parents, happy learners and better achievers.
- Please contact Mrs Hodgkinson, your child's class teacher or come to the school office if you would like more information or would like to make a referral.

2. Summer Fair

- Parents shared what they like about the fair including: the variety of food, parents getting involved, games children can play, old toys on sale...
- Mrs Bell talked about staff views – keen for the event to be a community celebration rather than a money-making event this year.

- Mrs Bell suggested we have some performances by the children during the event e.g., gymnastics, dance, poetry... There could be a charge on the gate and then tickets to access certain activities e.g., bouncing castle, hair braiding, face painting...
- One parent suggested a talent show, another a modelling event.

3. Sports Day

- Mrs Bell asked for parents' opinions about Sports Day. It was ran last year differently to previous years, following COVID restrictions.
- Most parents voiced that they like the approach where Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1, and Key Stage 2 have separate timings. Some shared that they enjoy the field events being included in the day.

4. Social Media

- Mrs Bell talked about the importance of social media – parents are really missing the school blog, seeing what is happening day-to-day in school.
- Mrs. Bell said that as a staff we had discussed Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Most parents expressed Twitter as a positive way forwards. Some parents do not have Twitter, and some have Facebook. It was agreed that having two networks would be ideal and one can be used to inform the other.
- Mrs Bell explained that the GDPR / personal data questionnaires completed by parents recently will inform how we use the site(s).

Coffee mornings

- St Mary's have held coffee mornings in the past, pre-COVID. Parents agreed it would be good to re-establish this as it is an opportunity for parents to get together and support each other.
- One parent suggested a coffee morning would be ideal early in September so that new parents can get together and support each other.

Sports Clubs

- One parent raised sports clubs as a concern as their child did not get offered a place. Mrs Bell explained that there is a limit on club numbers as they are often not led by teachers and health and safety informs the limit. Where children are not offered a place on the first occasion, they are offered a place when the club is re-run. This is explained in the letter and to the children by their teacher.
- Mrs Bell explained that the school will aim to plan for clubs next academic year, viewing the year as a whole.

Streaming of Parent Forum Meetings

- Streaming the next meeting was requested by one or two parents. Having thought about this some more, I am keen to continue meeting face to face and not live streaming the meeting as I value meeting you all. I believe streaming the meeting will result in a drop in numbers attending in person and I truly value and encourage your contributions. I hope this is acceptable.

Racist incident

- One parent raised a concern that their child had experienced a racist incident in F2 class. The parent said that they could tolerate such a thing themselves, but their child should not experience racism in school at such a young age. School responded by saying that no one should experience racism and accept it and agreed this incident was very serious and was dealt with accordingly. Children learn that they are equal and should show respect in school. Cases of racism are dealt with very seriously. Mrs Bell stated that if any parent is unhappy with how school deal with racism, inequality or have grievance, they should contact school for further discussions.

Action

- Meeting to be arranged to organise the plans for the Summer Fair.
- Twitter and Facebook pages to be set up asap.
- Parents / Carers coffee mornings or afternoons to be offered this term.