

## Parent Council meeting minutes – 4<sup>th</sup> October 2023

### Updates from last meeting minutes:

Information was shared on our digital communication channels about meals on a budget. The Community Shop is up and running – currently opening once a month and is well attended most of the time. We still haven't finished our RSE leaflet. All the content is there, we just need to actually make the document itself now. Ceri-Ann will try and get this finished before our next meeting. Minutes of our meetings are now shared in our school Facebook group so that parents are informed. As Mrs Francis has now left her Deputy Headteacher post, we have a new lead for our Attendance Team – Mrs Danielle Harris. Weekenders bags were up and running for last school year and are ready to go again for this year. Ceri-Ann will sort out the advertising and collection etc. Afternoons are still a good time slot for us to meet. Meetings since our 8<sup>th</sup> February one, were used to add content to our RSE leaflet.

### Current affairs:

Engagement with school events is, on the whole, well attended. It was discussed how we can get higher attendance at the events that have had smaller numbers. It was decided that we should do a questionnaire/poll to ask families what they would like us to put on. Ceri-Ann will arrange this ASAP. We had unusually low turnout for our MacMillan coffee morning. This could potentially be because the MacMillan event is a Nationwide one, with lots of cake sales happening all over the place at the same time so people feel torn. It's also lots more places asking for money all at once, which puts a lot of pressure on families' already stretched finances. In the past, we haven't been able to host our coffee morning/cake sale on the actual MacMillan day and it has been more successful. We will try this again for next time.

The group felt that the cost of living issues are getting worse, not better. Families are feeling the pinch more than ever, especially working families who don't qualify for the extra support that is generally available for Universal Credit/benefit claimants. Whilst there are some local services available, feedback is that they are not always reliable or accessible any more, or there are certain criteria that you have to meet to be able to access it. Any support that we put in place as a school will be available and as accessible as possible for

all of our families. The possibility of running a School Pantry type scheme was discussed. Potentially a bag of shopping with a recipe - ensuring that we cater for the various diets, such as vegetarian, halal etc. A small fee may need to be charged but the aim is to make it much cheaper than going to the supermarket/shop. Parent Council members are happy to volunteer to run something like this as long as it is during school hours so that they don't need to worry about childcare. We also discussed something that Ceri-Ann has been wanting to set up for quite some time now, where parents / carers come in before the end of the school day to make a meal in our Family Room. When the children finish school, they join us and each family can sit around a table together, like a traditional family meal time. The aim is to encourage enjoyment, skills and family time together. Ceri-Ann is going to work with Ann-Marie, our new Community Focused School Cluster Manager, to get a regular source of food donations to help us as much as possible. Ceri-Ann is going to sign our school up for a scheme called Neighbourly where we can collect food donations of near to use by dated items. Foodbank was also mentioned, along with an organisation called Food Cardiff. Where possible, we want to make things free or as cheap as possible for families to access. Interest has been shown by members in our previously run Food Co-Op scheme, where families can order a bag of fruit/veg/salad for a set price each week. Our previous supplier, the Glendale, is no longer available so Ceri-Ann is going to have a look to see if this is a feasible option with a different supplier and gauge interest. It was mentioned about the supplier that goes to a local community venue each weekend. Ceri-Ann will make contact to enquire.

Concerns were voiced about the amount of pressure on parents to do and be everything for their families and the toll this is taking on 'family time' and being able to spend quality time with their children. This impacts on behaviour and stress at home. Ceri-Ann has started a fortnightly Family After School Club in the Family Room on a Thursday. The first 2 sessions are being focused around an arts and crafts theme, preparing for the upcoming school Halloween event. The following sessions are open for discussion for activities. We have sourced quite a collection of board games now so this could be a theme for one session. Lego and sports/active sessions were also mentioned as options. Questions were asked about running a movie night like we did pre-Covid. Last time, we worked in partnership with a company called Flix. We would need to consider licensing for films as Flix provided this before. Ceri-Ann will look into the possibility of running something like this again.

Members would like school to do a prize draw for another family hamper around Christmas time. Ceri-Ann will get authorisation from the PTA to fund this.

A discussion took place about the possibility of a proper Year leavers' Prom for this year, as a few members have been approached by other parents who would like to organise one. Whilst there are some 'pros' to this idea, the general consensus is that it is too much pressure for families, both parents and children alike. There are a lot of extra costs surrounding the transition from Primary to Secondary school as it is, including the Residential trip as well as the higher purchase cost for high school uniform. Last year, uptake on the Year 6 Residential was fairly low as with it costing around £160 per child, many families chose not to take part. With a prom, costs can spiral when you factor in everything that each child would want as part of it. Outfits aren't cheap, even with the schemes available out there for pre-loved ones. Parents feel pressured to provide new outfits, with hair and nails etc. plus transport and after parties. That is before we factor in the cost of providing the prom, which would mean it would have to be a ticketed event, costing yet more money and not making it accessible to all. It is felt that an official prom style event should be kept to mark the end of a child's compulsory education, when leaving school at 16, rather than for the transition between schools. The residential trip provides many experiences that children would benefit from so it has been decided that our focus should be to enable as many children as possible to attend that. It was mentioned that parents wanted their children to have a 'dressier' leavers event. Children are given the choice to dress up for it every year and often either choose not to change out of their uniform, or want comfy clothes. Year 6 staff work incredibly hard every year to make the children's last year, particularly the last few weeks, as great as possible. 2 of our Parent Council members had children in Year 6 last year and were very happy with provisions for leavers' celebrations, even mentioning that the children still talk about it now. Ceri-Ann will feed this back to staff.

Date of next meeting: 29<sup>th</sup> November 2023, 9-10am in the school Family Room.