

Parent Council meeting minutes - 29th November 2023

Updates from last meeting minutes:

Weekenders bags are up and running and have been advertised. Take up has been quite good so far, which is pleasing. A poll was posted in the Facebook group to find out what courses parents and carers would like to be run here at school. The poll closes soon so Ceri-Ann can work with partner organisations to get tutors here. Our Community Focused Schools Cluster Manager has been working with Ceri-Ann to explore different food options and providers. The challenge is finding a regular supplier that fits in around school term times. We have signed up for the Neighbourly scheme, but in order to qualify to collect surplus food from local supermarkets, we need to have an up to date Food Hygiene qualification. Ceri-Ann's has expired so is going to renew this ASAP so we can get this up and running. Movie nights and licensing have been looked in to. The license is several hundred pounds per year through a school PTA, which we wouldn't be able to afford unless we charged each person. This defeats the object of what we wanted to achieve through running these events. Ceri-Ann is going to find out what other schools in the cluster do. Christmas hampers are very generously being provided by external organisations this year. There have been more offered than we were expecting too! This means we can spread lots of Christmas cheer this year! Ceri-Ann will share the minutes of these meetings via our Teachershare network to keep staff updated.

Current affairs:

The recent family questionnaire. We had lots of really positive comments about the school and staff. This was so lovely to see. They have been shared in the staff room for everyone to see. There were a very small number of negative comments that seemed to be about specific incidents or pupils. As the questionnaires were anonymous, it was difficult for us to address these particular concerns directly. We had arranged a drop in session, open to all, for families to come and discuss any concerns or issues, so that we can work with them to get them resolved. No one attended the drop in session so we are unable to resolve those issues. It was mentioned that we have advertised the complaints and bullying policies on the school response sheet, so that parents, should they wish to, can attempt a resolution off their own backs.

The figure of 31.4% of people not feeling safe in our area/neighbourhood was noted to be quite high, but not surprising given recent events. Whilst, on the school response, a reminder was put on about reporting incidents to the Police, it is felt that no action is taken as a result so people don't bother. To help our families have a bit more power and control over our area, we are working with Citizens Cymru to work on tackling the issues

we see everyday. Ceri-Ann has met with Citizens in the last week to put a plan together for how this is going to look. We need to know what people feel the main issues are and to provide training for community members on how they can 'get a seat at the table' with the people in power. A date has been booked in for January for Community Organising training. The training will be a 1 day session, timed from 9.30-2.30 to allow for school drop off and pick up and for other community members, who don't attend our school, to come too. Lunch and snacks will be provided. This will build upon the work that School Government did in the Summer Term and will also tie in with the work that the Ely and Caerau Community plan are doing too. Ceri-Ann will make the arrangements and advertise this.

A discussion was held about the definition of the term 'bullying', after looking at the figures from the questionnaire. There is a difference between bullying, which is targeted and over a long period, and occasional incidents of conflict between pupils. Our Anti-bullying policy, which is available on the school website, details how incidents are dealt with and how to report them. It was mentioned that quite often, an argument or conflict between children here at school escalates outside of school due to the involvement of social media. Previously, children would have had an incident dealt with in school, had the evening to relax and come back in the next day with no issues. Now, the issues are brought up on social media and the issues escalate, which is then brought back in to school the following day. This is really difficult for school to control and deal with as it takes place at home. It was also noted that there are age restrictions set for social media platforms, all of which children who attend primary school are too young for. Unfortunately, responsibility for monitoring this is placed on parents and carers and school's hands are tied. If parents choose to allow their children access to these platforms, when there are issues, our advice is always to block and delete the person/people they are having issues with, so that they can have a break from the conflict. We discussed how we can raise awareness of the importance of internet safety in issues such as bullying - as it's not just meeting strangers that is a danger to our children. It is having an impact on their mental health. We incorporate digital safety in to many of the lessons that the children take part in regularly and in the past we have run sessions for parents too. This has always been poorly attended. A suggestion was made that we could have a session where the parents attend with their child instead, or that the children make a video about it that can be shared with families as they are more likely to watch a video than read a leaflet. Ceri-Ann will look in to the feasibility of this.

Members were shocked at how many people didn't know how we approach wellbeing, or about Thrive and the complaints policy. It was agreed that the information needs to be updated on our website. Could we publicise more on our social media channels? How else can we let parents know? We are providing lots of information but not all families are accessing it. People don't tend to turn up to information sessions about them here at school if the children aren't involved. Although, we recently held information sessions

on the New Curriculum and Times Table Rockstars for parents, that were both well attended! It was suggested that we have an information stall at the upcoming Christmas Fayre. Maybe display some leaflets or the policies. We have the policies and procedures there and we follow them as a school, but we need to keep sharing that with families to raise awareness. Ceri-Ann will arrange some information/a display to be put up at the fayre.

Not all children are big sharers of what has happened during their school day, which will contribute to parents and carers not knowing about the choices and independence children get and are encouraged to take part in. Whilst the school response sheet mentions addressing this by updating the static information on the website regarding missions and bubbles, School Government and pupil voice, it was mentioned that it would be nice to invite parents in to see the work the children have done, look through their books etc. A bit like the Governing Body activities that were mentioned in yesterday's annual report. It could be a bit of a celebration and evaluation type event, in the hall with refreshments. The children could join from their classes, bringing their work along with them. This would be a nice activity to do before parents evening as parents would have more of an idea about the children's work and make it easier to talk with the class teacher. The next parents evening is quite early in the Spring Term, which either means rushing to fit this in as well, or having lots of things for parents to attend in a short space of time - which can be difficult for some parents. It was asked if the parents evening could be postponed. Ceri-Ann will speak to Mr Fisher to find out if this is possible.

Members were shocked that 15.7% of respondents felt they weren't aware of events/opportunities in the area. Local events are publicised a lot via our social media channels. Ceri-Ann mentioned that 3 children reported to her that they didn't know about the Halloween disco! As well as sharing all over our social media channels, letters were sent home for children to book tickets. Members couldn't come up with another solution/way to inform parents if they are not accessing SeeSaw, Facebook, X - formerly known as Twitter or reading letters that are sent home. We can advertise and share, but we can't make people read them.

It was commented that overall, the family questionnaire was really positive and much better than previous years. It was mentioned that there have been lots of changes over the last few years, which have had a big impact.

The cost of living, particularly the price of food in the run up to Christmas has been mentioned as a concern. Last year, we joined a scheme from the Money Advice Service where families could access supermarket vouchers. There was limited availability and the allocation was used up very quickly, meaning that not all families that needed it could benefit from it. Ceri-Ann has already had several parents ask if there is going to be some help/support for families this year. Recently, we have used PTA funds to purchase supplies and make food hampers for some families that have been identified

for various reasons. Mr Fisher has received information from the Advice Hub that there is a possibility for schools to sign up to a similar scheme, where schools can request vouchers that would be used to purchase food and gift to families in need. Ceri-Ann has been tasked with looking in to this further and/or signing us up so that we can continue to support families needing a little bit of extra support at this time of year.

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 6th February 2024, 9-10am in the school Family Room.