

Merchant Taylors' Boys' School Parents' Association

MINUTES

Tuesday 25th April, 2017

Staff Present

Deiniol Williams	-	Acting Headmaster elect (Chair)	DWI
Sarah Maitland	-	Parent Liaison Co-ordinator	SM
Beverley Bell	-	Chair of Governors	BB

Parents: Anne-Marie Daly, Anne Smith, Andrew Thompson, Helen McLoughlin, Stephen Burns, Malik Al Nasir, Leanne Bovill, Amanda Griffiths, Caroline Gladwin, Jo Hodgkinson, Suzanne Scott, Claire Porteous, David Finnegan, Caroline Sullivan

Pupil: James Daly (Year 9)

1. Apologies

Diane Evans, Dawn Craig, Rachael Randles, Paula Leece, Alison Horspool, Sui Chan, Cathy Austin, David Cook, Jane Sharrock, Trish Blyth

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes from the previous meeting having been circulated and agreed, were signed off by the Chair.

3. Chairman's Report

DW told the meeting about the latest initiative regarding the use of mobile phones around school. He explained that the mobile phone policy is evolving and is in the development stages as the pupils and staff continue to come to terms with Firefly.

Mobile phones have been banned from public areas around school such as the corridors, stairs, library, Williams Hall and the dining room. The boys use their form rooms as 'common rooms' and often gather there and at the moment they are allowed to use their phones in their form rooms. It was explained that the rationale for that decision is that the boys may be working from Firefly. It was suggested from the floor that form rooms should be better marshalled and perhaps Sixth Formers could be used to do this whilst staff are busy doing clinics, lunchtime clubs, music rehearsals, etc. School is currently in a transition week for this initiative and pupils are learning the new regime but sanctions will be put in place moving forwards for those flouting the rules.

DW explained that Years 11 and 13 are busy preparing for their exams. Exam leave starts in 3 weeks for year 11 and 4 weeks for year 13 and there is a positive feeling around the schools about the results. DW went on to discuss the changes to A levels and that this is the first Year 13 who will be taking exams following a 2 year linear course. We have lost modularity, AS exams and the opportunity for resits. The education specialists are expecting a slight depression in results although a parent did comment that she had read that it may well work in boys' favour as they are more mature when they take their A levels. There will obviously be a period of adjustment as schools, universities and employers take time to absorb and understand the new system.

DW also talked about GCSEs and that from summer 2017 some subjects (English Language, English Literature and Maths) will be marked on the numerical scale 9-1 whilst others will be marked from A*-G. The majority of exams in summer 2018 will move to the numerical scale and by 2020 they will all be marked that way.

DW let the meeting know of recent successes:

- teams of senior and junior pupils have made the finals of the Senior and Junior Maths Challenge
- several senior boys have achieved silver and gold awards in the Top of the Bench Chemistry Olympiad.
- our history department has been awarded a gold history quality mark by the historical association – one of the first schools in the country to achieve this prestigious award.
- our 1st XI cricket team have started off the season very well with wins against Bolton, Nottingham High School and Lancashire.

4. Focus Group with Mrs Beverley Bell (Chair of Governors)

- BB introduced herself to the meeting and explained who the Governors are, what they do and their important roles within the schools. BB explained that since she took over the chair she and the Board have asked questions as to why we do things in a certain way. The Board of Governors are constantly reviewing how we do things to ensure we continue to deliver an excellent education for our pupils and they are able to go out confidently into this world of political, social and economic uncertainty. We do deliver an excellent education – but we can always do better and re-evaluation is important. BB is an Old Girl and started at MTGS in 1971. She is a trained lawyer and judge and works currently in the traffic and haulage industry full time.
- RSAcademics (specialists in recruitment and market research in education) are in the process of assisting the Board in recruiting a new Director of Finance & Operations to replace the Bursar and BB will announce the details when the position is filled. RSAcademics have also carried out telephone market research with our present and prospective parents as well as a cohort of parents who made enquiries at MTS but chose to not send their children here. The feedback was given to the Heads and Governors on 24th April and details will be available for all our parents in due course. The feedback is extremely positive with an absolute feeling that MTS is the premier school in the area. The issue of litter and lunches were highlighted in the market research and BB assured the meeting that she is discussing these points with the Heads. In addition, BB explained that she and the Board were discussing other matters such as uniform policy and discipline with the Heads.
- BB talked about the up keep of our old buildings and the need to spend a lot of money on them. BB is working closely with the Old Girls' and Old Boys' Associations, the community and connections to raise funds for this important campaign. A fundraising manager is being recruited with the sole purpose of fundraising for bursaries and our capital campaign.
- There was open debate concerning various areas of school development as well as any strategic research and evaluation taking place. BB is extremely keen to find out what our parents think and to open up discussion. BB acknowledged that the schools face a period of change as Mr Cook and Mrs Robinson both leave their roles in July 2017 and March 2018 respectively.

5. Events for the Summer Term 2017

- Volunteers were sought to help out at the forthcoming CCF Inspection Day (Friday 5th May between 12-4pm) and Sports Day (Saturday 17th June between 12 – 5pm) to serve refreshments. SM to be in touch nearer the time and please do contact Sarah on s.maitland@merchanttaylor.com if you are able to help out. Thank you.

6. Any Other Business

- Year 9 pupil, James Daly, made a presentation to the meeting about a forthcoming trip he is making to Nepal (March 2018) with the Merseyside County Scouts. James asked for a contribution toward his £2000 costs in order for him to visit Nepal and work on a charity project with the Mucchok Education Charity. The meeting agreed

to donate £250 to James's fundraising campaign. In addition a parent also kindly donated £100 to James.

7. Date and time of next meeting – Tuesday 12th September in the IRSC @ 7pm.