

Parents' Forum Minutes

Thursday 22nd October 2022

Apologies – Dawn Saxby

1. LG welcomed the group and thanked them for attending.
SGI introduced himself as Head of Academy and formally welcomed parents/carers to the group.
2. Additional item: Richard Walker (Chair of Governors) introduced himself and explained the role of the local Governing Board. Governors are one of the largest groups of volunteers in the UK and it is both rewarding and challenging. Governors hold school leaders to account and ask pertinent questions. They do not necessarily have an education background and can apply the skills they have learnt from their life experiences to the role. Governors nearly all have specific link roles, e.g. I am the link governor for Careers/Personal Development as well as leadership & management. In a link role we regularly come into school to meet senior leaders and staff to understand action plans and how effectively things are being implemented. Governors meet five times per year, look at progress data and discuss strategy and question leaders on impact. I will frequently attend events and can be contacted easily through the school office/website.
3. Purpose of the group – LG explained that the group is a forum for leaders to consult parents/carers on school improvement matters. It is not a forum for individual queries or complaints.
4. Teaching & Learning at Harrogate High School. Jeni Mason (Assistant Head teacher) explained her role as lead for Teaching & Learning and our new HHS Teacher Toolkit. She used an illustrative handout (attached) that details all the elements of our toolkit, including the 'phases of a lesson' (Knowledge Recall, Big Idea, Learning Question, Expert Input, Independent Practice, Learning Review) and our planning / PPT format. Jeni also described our core routines (e.g: what happens when students enter / exit the room) that minimise cognitive load and allow students to focus on thinking and learning. She also referred to 'Strive for 5' and 'Ready 4 Learning' protocols, consistently reinforced in all lessons. This approach is grounded in research around retention / learning and a staff working party developed the approach and materials.

Jeni asked parents/carers to discuss the approach/toolkit elements, including thinking about whether their children have mentioned or spoken about any of the elements at home and any questions they have/observations/thoughts. A discussion ensued on tables for 15m.

Feedback was taken – general consensus is this approach makes sense. Many parents had heard their children talk about Strive for 5 and Ready 4 Learning. Some had not yet heard about the phases of the lesson. One parent commented that they liked the independent practice idea. Another parent asked if teachers check-in with struggling students during Independent Practice. JMA replied yes – it gives more breathing space for interactions like this and for teachers to pre-empt issues, knowing the needs of their classes. Richard Walker gave an example of how governors work; governor working group to monitor impact of HHS Teacher Toolkit.

AOB

LG asked parents if anyone would be interested in working with or speaking to students re: careers/pathways. Graham Chippindale volunteered to support / to run some (x2) after school

sessions on accountancy or book-keeping, Vicki Watson offered to speak to students regarding work for the health service re. neurological patients, Georgia Wilson – Yorkshire Water, and Graham Whall – lecturer in safety & mental health advocate.

A parent raised a concern regarding addiction to computers and gaming. This was discussed and several other parents expressed concerns. LG referenced the recent information evening for parents on drugs and alcohol awareness and asked if parents would like anything similar linked to this. Some parents said yes. LG explained that the recent evening was not very well attended, so we need to have uptake for such events, but we are happy to look into this.

Action: LG to liaise/IWI to liaise with individual parents on possible careers encounters with students.

Action: LG to investigate possibility of education / information for parents / carers on online safety, social media & behaviours as well as mental health and wellbeing. Could we consider different methods of supporting parent/carers and giving them information?

Meeting ended at 7.15pm.