

Parent Partnership Meeting

Wednesday 10th July 2019 8:30am – 9:30am

Attendees School staff- Miss Kelly, Mrs Ainger, Mrs Whatley, Mrs Evans, Mrs Isaacs, Mrs Aldridge.

Parent Reps – Majella; Nursery, Mirella; Reception, Hannah Y1, Elena (stand in) Y2, Marissa Y3, Karen Y4, Donatella Y5, Elena Y6

1. Open evening

It was an unfortunate human error that the Open Evening date had been omitted from the School Events Calendar, and Miss Kelly sincerely sends her apologies for this mistake. The date had been set in the teachers' diaries for some time, but just wasn't uploaded to the school web site. Miss Kelly and all the staff really appreciated the effort parents made to come along at such short notice. Miss Kelly received lovely feedback from the parents who could make it, and they said how it was a nice opportunity to meet their children's new teachers. All the teachers appreciated the parents who just wanted to personally say "thank you" during this event, it meant a lot to them.

2. Working parents and working parent teachers

The school tries it's very best to place dates in advance on the school calendar so that working parents in particular have a chance to amend their schedules where possible. It is a fine-line for the school to accommodate working parents and working parent teachers who have their own children to look after too.

We discussed the possibility of potentially moving the Open Evening close time to 6:30pm and Miss Kelly explained that many teachers have their own long commutes and families to return to and it is difficult to ask teachers to stay longer when they have already been at the school from 6:30am/7am. However she also wanted to remind us all that parents are more than welcome to make a one-to-one appointment with their teacher directly and they will be more than happy to accommodate your requests to discuss your child's learning/see their books. Miss Kelly mentioned there is a shortage of teachers nationally and how our school wants to look after our teachers, and how important their health and mental well being is. The school needs to consider all of this when making decisions about timings. The school has tried in previous years to have the Learning Afternoon and Open day on the same day, but this was a very tiring and long day for the teachers. The school would rather each parent managed to have a coherent and meaningful conversation with teachers, which is why these are now separate events.

Miss Kelly reminded us that the school is very supportive of working parents and since her appointment, in the last 3 years, some major changes have taken place with working parents in mind, for example opening up Breakfast club and after school club to nursery children in addition to Reception to Year 6. There is also the option of sending your child to nursery all day where previously you could only have a morning or afternoon session.

Please note all masses and prayer services for the whole of the year are planned and distributed in in July before the summer holidays so please look out for those to add to diaries and continue to reference the events calendar for all dates.

3. Parent Pay charge of min £10 a year per family for pencils, books and pens.

Miss Kelly explained how government funding cuts to schools has directly impacted St. Catherine's. There is very little money left at the end of term to pay for new stationary. Things are so bad that she had to ask teachers to look in all their cupboards to try to find any unused exercise books. She is working with the Chair of Governors to balance the remaining school budget but things are extremely tight. Miss Kelly shared one idea that has been discussed which is to potentially add a charge of a minimum of £10 a year

per family to Parent Pay to cover stationary for their children.

It is not uncommon for schools to ask for extra money towards items like stationary, and some other schools have had to make drastic cuts, like reducing the hours of the school day. The Parent Reps didn't realise how bad the situation is and were in agreement for this charge. They thought it was a more than reasonable amount for the parents who can afford it. We discussed the option of adding more for those who wanted to too.

Discussions arose about the different budgets St. Catherines' has and how the school building fund is separate to the stationary fund and unfortunately money cannot be used across each account. Parent Reps suggested making this clearer to parents and in particular at the new year curriculum meetings. It was also noted that the school receives funding per child and the bulge Year 6 year group (90 children) is now leaving, so further funding will be lost through the reduction of pupils at the school. It was also noted how unfortunately many Catholic schools are no longer filling all their actual quota for spaces available with a nearby Catholic school only filling 30 out of 60 places. St Catherine's quota of 60 will be filled.

5. Moving around classrooms

Miss Kelly explained that after school this Monday, 15th July, some teachers will be moving furniture, cupboards, etc, from Year 6 classes down to Year 3 classes in preparation for the new classrooms in September. Parent reps suggested that parents would be more than willing to help with this move. It was agreed that any parents that can help will sign in via the office on Monday and the school will provide childcare provision in the school hall, while the parents help with the move. Signing in to help also means you have read a disclaimer regarding not suing the school for any injuries that might occur. Miss Kelly really appreciated the offer of help and asked all reps to please distribute this request to their classes for volunteers.

6. Pod & caretakers house

The extra 'pod' classroom will be refurbished for the childcare provision of children aged 2. Works will start in the Autumn Term. There are plans in place for the demolition of the caretakers house to take place as soon as possible once all the services have been capped off. Builders can then start work on the new Arts Hub and meeting rooms for CAMHS, social services, etc. More news will be communicated as updates take place.

7. Sports Week

Mrs Whatley shared an update of all the events taking place at our school for Sports Week.

Yesterday the lower school had a Karate Workshop, (the children were very excited about this), Fencing Workshops were taking place today for the older children and a GB Olympic volleyball player has been invited in for assemblies and workshops later this week. Year 6 are also taking part in water polo this week. She has added new sports clubs to the after school and before school list. There are still spaces for Tag Rugby which will be run on site by Saracens coaches. Deadline for signing up to activities is Monday 15th July.

8. Family Learning Afternoon Fri 5th July

Miss Kelly was very pleased with the attendance to this. Parent Reps added how they and other parents enjoyed getting involved directly with the children's activities and how impressive it was to see the teachers in action!

9. PTA Events

Friday 12th July – last PTA event of this academic year – coffee morning in aid of the Firefighters Charity. The firefighters did not bring along their buckets for donations during the school summer fayre so they have been invited back for a coffee morning. Please support this worthy cause, if you can offer to help please contact PTA, or just bring along a cake/biscuits!

PTA need new members with many Year 6 PTA members now leaving the school.

Please come along to their Annual General Meeting on Thursday 26 Sept to find out more!

Future events already booked in:

- Family photo shoot with school photographer John Jaffa – Sat 5th Oct
- Christmas Fayre 7th Dec

Other ideas being discussed.

10. Thank you

Miss Kelly expressed her gratitude working with the current parent reps and for all their input throughout the year.

AOB

- It was asked if there is a plan for the presentation of end of year gifts to teachers and it has been agreed that a parent rep and another parent from each class can go into classrooms on the last day of school, Friday 19th July at 8:40am to do their presentations, as the children come in.

Next Parent Partnership Meeting Weds 9th Oct 2019 8:30am