

Marsh School Parents Forum Meeting 24th November 2010

We started off this meeting by briefly going over the Minutes from the previous meeting in June.

Breakfast Club

Parents should have had information now about the Breakfast Club starting on 6th December. There will be a facility for children who have not had breakfast to have a good breakfast if necessary. There will always be two members of staff running the club and the aim is to be as nurturing as possible as this is essential for the children in the morning as they are so young. The family room is going to be refurbished to make a good base for them.

Lunch Club

Mrs Morrisson is having to decide on the contract and food options. Obviously storage is an issue, as the lunches will have to be delivered by an outside provider and kept warm somewhere in school. Parents will be invited to help decide food options and the contract and will be fully involved in the process. Also, there will still be the option for children to bring their own lunches in from home. Free school meals will change to be hot meals.

Nursery

Photos and names of Nursery staff are to be put up in the Nursery cloakroom area so that Nursery parents are aware of the staff who will be looking after their child.

Also it was decided that it would be a good idea for there to be a section on the website (www.marshschool.com) dedicated just to Nursery (i.e. newsletters, session times, uniform, prospectus etc).

Action: Mrs Morrisson to arrange photos and names and also speak to Steve Knight who looks after the website and ask him to arrange a Nursery section with all the information on.

Health & Safety

The new caretaker has started and is doing a brilliant job.

Parents are asked, once again, to take care closing gates behind them when arriving and leaving. Also care needs to be taken with the big double black gates at the back of the school and that there are open fully to allow all parents to get into the playground safely.

Care needs to be taken now that the weather is getting colder as the playground areas will get slippery. Salt will be put down to help make the areas safe but parents are advised to take care of themselves and their children.

Scooter Rack

This is still being looked at but it will be placed in an area over by the rubbish bins as this is near the school gates so children can put their scooters away as soon as they get safely into the playground.

We then moved on to discussing new matters as follows: -

Reception Classes

A lean-to area will be put up between the two Reception classes to provide an area for parents to shelter on bad weather days when coming to collect their children from school.

The Reception area playground will be resurfaced at some point but will use a better safety cover made of shredded rubber which does not get as slippery when wet and is still soft so the children do not hurt themselves as badly if they fall over.

Involvement

There was a feeling that some new parents, especially those in Nursery, were not aware that they could get involved with events in the main school. This is not the case, and all parents from the school can come along to all the general meetings and events if they would like to.

It was also suggested that perhaps Nursery could hold regular story time sessions (perhaps one near the end of each half term or each term) where parents could come into Nursery and sit and watch their child listening to story time.

Another suggestion of getting parents more involved was having a Parent Representative for each class, to act as a point of contact for parents who may find it difficult to get time to speak to their child's teacher. The parent representative could then liaise with the class teacher and report back to the parents.

We are also aware that there are a variety of nationalities at the school and it has been suggested that a separate forum is held for all the Asian parents. This would hopefully be a more relaxed environment for everyone and no-one would feel awkward if English is not his or her first language. A representative from that group would then report back to the Parents Forum Group about any ideas, views, and problems that we could help address. There would be a member of staff who is multilingual who would attend the meetings too.

Form Filling

This is still a problem, although the School will help as much as they are able. We asked whether we could make use of the school computers and perhaps have a couple of sessions where parents could help out as a “buddy” to other parents who might not be as confident with computer or have trouble understanding the forms. We could also operate the “buddy” system outside of school, if parents wanted to help other parents in their own homes. Mrs Morrisson thought this was a good idea.

Events

There was a general feeling that this week especially has been a very busy week for the children and perhaps the events could have been spaced out slightly so the children (and parents!) weren't so overwhelmed with having to remember several things at once. Mrs Morrisson agreed and said that this would be looked at throughout the year. It is difficult as obviously the school calendar is planned at the beginning of the year and December is always tricky as there are lots of Christmas events to fit in (School fair, nativity plays, carol concerts etc).

Parking

This is still an issue. At the front of the school parents are parking by the bus stop and parking on the pavement, which makes it difficult for anyone to get past, especially parents with pushchairs and older people. It was suggested that the Council be approached and asked to put double yellow lines in along Abbey Barn Road to discourage people parking where it causes inconvenience.

At the side of the school, parking needs to be sensible. Please do not park in the goods area of the Retail Park.

Please be aware that inconsiderate parking can cause tempers to flare and a couple of times bad language has been used (not necessarily by parents but by other drivers using the road). This cannot be good for our children to hear bad language so if we all park sensibly and do not cause any traffic jams then hopefully everyone can remain calm.

We queried whether we were allowed to park in the Retail Park car-park, especially after reports recently in the press about other retail parks in Wycombe having clamping vans around who were clamping people's cars that were parking but not using the shops. Mrs Morrisson said that our Retail Park have always let parents park there. She also advised that she could get parking stickers made for parents to stick on their windscreens to say they were parking for Marsh School and this would help.

Action: (1) Mrs Morrisson to get stickers printed and handed out to parents.
 (2) Mrs Morrisson to contact the Council about double yellow lines.

Postboxes for Payments

A system to make it easier for parents to make payments to school for school events (pantomime, Christmas DVD night etc) was discussed. A simple idea of a couple of wooden boxes that can be padlocked was agreed. These boxes could be decorated by the children and would be kept in the main reception area so the office staff could keep an eye on them. This would mean that parents would just need to put their payments in a clearly marked envelope (with their child's name and the event on) and just pop it into the relevant box in reception without having to wait to speak to office staff or teachers.

Also, another option to be looked at was the possibility of making online payments through Parentmail. The problem with this is that not all parents would have access to the internet and able to use Parentmail. There is also the need to make sure that any online payments were completely safe and easy to do, as well as being cost-effective for the school to operate, as obviously Parentmail would make a charge to the school for being able to do online payments.

Action: Mrs Morrisson to arrange the payment boxes

Events

A suggestion was made that, particularly for Nursery and Reception classes, it would be useful to have a "get to know you" event at the beginning of the school year. This could involve an entertainer coming to the school for the afternoon for the children and tea, coffee and cakes being laid on for the adults. It would provide an informal environment in which the children and parents can get to know each other and the teaching staff.

Other Schools

It was felt that there was a general opinion that children from Marsh School have to move up to Beechview School once they reach the end of Year 2. This is not the case; it is entirely up to parents which schools they put down on their application forms. All Mrs Morrisson would ask is that parents go and take a look at the schools they wish their children to move to and make up their own minds. There has been a bit of a bad feeling about some other schools in the area, but hopefully these are all improving. Beechview is continuing to improve as it has close links with our school and can see the way that Marsh School is run and all the changes that have been made for the better.

This brought the meeting to a close.

The next meeting is due to be held on 9th March 2011.