

18<sup>th</sup> April 2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

### **Important Information - Changes to Parents' Evenings**

As you know, we surveyed parental views regarding the way we run parents' evenings in school to try to ensure as many parents as possible are able to attend. We were delighted to have 396 responses, by far the highest we have had for any surveys, so thank you for sharing your views.

#### **Key Messages from parents**

- We had very well distributed and fairly equal responses across all year groups
- You were split over whether parents' evenings (with subject teachers) should be:
  - o in-person (63%) or
  - o online (31%)
  - o with very few having no preference (6%)
- With regards to the short pastoral meetings (with form teachers) it was more balanced with:
  - o Online (41%)
  - o In-person (47%)
  - o No preference (12%)

#### **Key comments and themes**

- There was considerable concern about the number of early finishes involved in running the parents evening.
- Some concerns about 5 minutes not being enough (see later).
- Poor queuing system for the in-school events.
- Many parents frustrated that other parents overrun considerably – felt parents' evenings were for the general updates and more detailed discussion should take place at another time.
- Issues with online meetings: poor connection, some staff with no cameras on, some late joining.
- Strong views both for and against both versions of online and in-person sessions.

#### **Proposals (for main parents' evenings with subject teachers):**

- To switch all parents' evenings to after school (no more early finishes).
- To provide a blended parents' evening approach which allows 1 hour of online appointments and then 2 hours of in-person appointments. The following timings will apply:
  - o Online appointments: 3.15pm to 4.15pm
  - o In person appointments: 4.45pm to 7.00pm
- To retain the 5 minutes slots (see below for rationale).
- To change our in-person queuing to ensure clarity of who is next.
- To have clocks in all rooms and be quite firm in trying to keep to time.

#### **Proposals for Pastoral Parents' Evenings (there are no more of these till next year)**

- Year 7 in person
- Years 8-11 online

- Possibly staggered to avoid early finishes but decision will be made when reviewing the Quality Assurance calendar.

**Rationale**

- We have tried to accommodate as many families and the majority of views. This way provides 1/3 of the appointments online and 2/3 in person (mirroring the responses of the survey).
- We have retained the 5-minute meeting slots for several reasons:
  - o as these have always been the case (for online and in-person appointments)
  - o As many parents pointed out, if a child requires more extensive discussion, then an additional meeting would be appropriate.
  - o For most students this means still over 60 mins discussion about their progress
  - o It is in line with most other schools (some have as few as 3-minute sessions and a small number have 6 minutes but usually for 6<sup>th</sup> form).
  - o To increase the time would have a massive impact upon the length and feasibility of the evenings.
  - o Even remaining at 5 mins this will mean that some subjects such as technology and art will struggle to see all parents in the allocated times (this has always been the case).

These new arrangements will be implemented immediately ahead of the upcoming Year 7 and Year 10 Parents' Evenings.

I realise that we will never be able to please everybody, but hopefully parents will appreciate that their views have been listened to and that we are trying to accommodate the majority of parents.

Yours sincerely,

**Andrew Rannard**  
Headteacher