**Notre Dame Parent Forum**

**Thursday 26th November 2015**

**6pm in Room C10**

Present: Neil Cully (Deputy Headteacher) and 18 parents with children in Yrs 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 & 12.

The meeting opened with a welcome and prayer.

1. Apologies: Brian Conway (Headteacher),

2. Uniform Consultation (Dr Shirley Stevenson, Asst. Head teacher)

Hundreds of parents have so far participated in the uniform consultation. We have introduced the uniform card system which has seemed to have solved the issue about the length of skirts. Feedback to the consultation from parents present at this meeting included the following:

* ironing of pleated skirts would be a concern.
* parents like girls wearing ties.
* question asked about consultation with the students – through the School Council and via form tutors. Should we ask the girls how we solve the problem? Begin the process this way and give them an opportunity to consider and recommend their views.
* A suggestion of introducing culottes as an alternative to the skirt was made
* consult Uniform Shop about different sizes/shapes or colour e.g. grey – like green skirt from the uniform shop but deviations
* can still try different items from other places – cost is not a major issue.
* should we give the girls option to not wear ties? There was not a consensus at the meeting
* girls uniform is more costly
* why do girls have to wear branded t-shirts as this is costly?
* could the blazer in the summer be available in cotton?

One parent, who was unable to attend the meeting emailed the following “I have no objection to the girls skirt changing, however object strongly to the removal of the tie with the skirt option. To remove the tie is a backward step in my opinion”.

In a straw poll at the end of this item, the overwhelming majority of parents were in favour of retaining the current uniform.

4. MCAS (Mr Roger Higgins, Acting Asst. Head teacher)

Mr Higgins began by explaining that the assessment tab has been removed because we are not using it at the moment. We have it switched off for the time being. There was a request to reconfigure homework screen so that homework can be listed and not just shown in a calendar format.

Mr Higgins added that we now have got an extra box on the homepage that shows brief work data. However, when the behaviour tab was split from the work tab some of the credits were deleted – 3 week space from 13/9 to 2/10 – is there a technical issue?

Mr McGregor (Data Manager) has added the following point in response: “From the MCAS accounts I've looked at so far, I've yet to find any obvious evidence of events going missing between 13th Sept and 2nd Oct.  Though it does sound like the sort of timeframe I may have made the switch with the homework event settings so if it's just neutral events that parents believe have vanished, then that would explain it (i.e. they're now displaying under the homework tab instead)”.

Parents said they like being able to switch between children via one log-in.

When there is a negative comment entered, can this trigger a message to the parents? If so, could parents be given the choice to have this feature? And could this alert be available for positive events too! Could this be done in the homework too?

Mr Higgins has subsequently added “many of the suggestions by parents about MCAS require the company Bromcom to make a change. At present Bromcom are planning a major upgrade for Q1 2016, and not accepting any new change requests as a result. When Bromcom allow us to resume making change requests we would be able to request things like the idea to configure MCAS to email parents when a negative event is added against their child.”

Red box on attendance page – if a very small amount on the pie-chart it doesn’t show as a key code.Does lateness affect actual attendance percentages?

Mr McGregor (Data Manager) has added the following point in response: “We have it set so that the present figures don't include lates.  I don't believe any absences are included in the present figures.  You can also change the colour-coding for each category although I note the issue with the key not currently displaying and that looks like a Bromcom bug to me rather than something we can switch on I'm afraid.”

Mr Higgins noted that there is an inconsistency in teacher’s logging homework. Parents say it is helpful to record it on MCAS as a back-up to the students recording their homework in their planner. Mr Higgins said we would tell our teachers to place the emphasis of recording homework on CMIS on significant homework for the rest of the year

One parent reported an issue of a misreported behaviour by where the student that was named was another student and not the child whose parents saw the comment. Mr Higgins asked the parent to contact us after the meeting with details so that we could investigate this further.

There appears to be a lack of confidence from teachers in recording incidents of misbehaviour, according to some parents.

The parent who was unable to attend the meeting emailed the following: “**MCAS** is a useful tool, however not all teachers post the child's homework on it, so I can’t always track if my child is on top of it and also adhering to deadlines unless I go and physically ask for her planner. Sometimes planner and MCAS don't match.”

5. Notrenet

Mr Higgins referred to the variation in style and content between different subject pages on our website and said that the intention is to ‘tidy them up’ so that there is a greater consistency of content in terms of layout. This will also apply to navigating through the sub-pages too.

It is intended that these revised will also include info about mocks and end of year exams and end of topic information lists.

 The aim is to complete this revision by the end of this term.

 One parent said that they did not find that the search facility was very effective.

 Another asked about the purpose of the red menu on the home page.

Mr Higgins added the following comment: “with regards comments from parents that the ndhs.org.uk site’s main menu being cluttered, I have taken a look and can’t see how to force this menu to only list options in a single column. We will look it this suggestions further”

Another parent observed that the school contact details were hard to locate and should be more prominent.

An email from a parent added: “A list of upcoming events for that child’s year would be most helpful. I notice that there are no monthly newsletters at the school, so a list of what's happening for your child's year group would be most helpful. This would avoid events being missed. If it is not possible to include this option, could be included in the Wisepay site, or a section on the Notre Dame website specifically informing what events are coming up in each month for each Year group?”

Date of next meeting: Thursday 26th February 2015 at 6 p.m. in C10

The meeting closed at 7.30 pm.