

Parents / Friends Meeting 1st March 2017

On 1st March 2017, we held the first Jessie Friends Dialogue meeting. Mrs Sadler started the meeting by explaining its background: to enable closer dialogue between parents and the school around school matters (such as accessibility), communication between parents and school and how to bolster the fundraising resources of the Jessie Friends group.

The meeting was attended by:

Mrs Sadler & Mrs Turner (Chair of the Jessie Friends)

Parents:

Kim Wylam (Yr 5)

Becky Polhill (Yr 1 & 4)

Rachel Hooper (Yr1 & 3)

Grace Marshall (Yr 1)

Emily Penny (Yr 1 and 5)

Rory Barnettson (Yr1)

Jim Callaghan (Yr1)

Sandra Delves (Yr 3)

Lindy Nash (Yr6)

We discussed:

1. The purpose of this meeting/group going forwards. We agreed that such a meeting was a great forum for discussing suggestions, questions, concerns between parents and school management team. These would cover all aspects of school life from fundraising to enhancing the dialogue between the school and parents. Mrs Sadler also expressed a desire that such a forum would be a great way for parents to become aware of the strategic plans for the school.

We discussed the concern that in such a relatively small school, to have a separate group for dialogue, one for fundraising and maybe a third for community matters could be unsustainable. Mrs Sadler made the important point that as parents we are all members of the Friends team. Currently, whilst many parents help on the day of any fundraising events, there are only approximately 5 core people on the Friends committee. It was therefore agreed that the JYS Friends role should be broadened to cover Dialogue, Community and Fundraising. To this end, Emily Penny has created a new logo for the JYS Friends to demonstrate the wider role of the group.

2. The frequency of future meetings and timings. We propose to hold this Friends Dialogue meeting (initially) every half term. We will look to vary the day of the meeting and the time of the meeting to enable a broad spectrum of parents to be able to attend.
3. Class Representation: We agreed that re-establishing named Class Representatives is an ideal way for ideas to flow to and from the Friends Dialogue meeting. We are keen for as many people as possible to take on these roles, maybe on a rolling basis. Ideally, we would

like at least 2 class reps for each class. We were conscious that Years R and 2 were not represented today and are keen for there to be representation from these two year groups at the next meeting.

4. The venue of future meetings. We are hoping to hold the meetings in the refurbished hut to enable the meetings to feel welcoming to all.
5. How we can all raise discussion items: To enable suggestions, questions etc to be communicated to the group we are already working on the following communication channels. Any items suggested/questions posed would then be discussed at the next meeting:
 - a. Through your class reps;
 - b. A suggestions box in the School Reception Area;
 - c. A generic school email address to use purely for these items; and
 - d. A school Facebook Group is being investigated (anyone keen to be involved with its creation and ongoing moderation is very welcome)
6. School access specific items: We discussed many parents desire to have more interaction with the teachers/Mrs Sadler. Whilst we all understand that we can, at any time, contact the teaching time via the office to agree a time to meet with any teacher, we discussed the desire of many parents for more brief and informal discussions/chats. Mrs Sadler detailed the many constraints on teachers time in order to enable them to meet the new curriculum requirements, but changes that have been made/are being discussed are:
 - a. The creation itself of this meeting has been created to create greater informal dialogue with School Management;
 - b. Mrs Sadler confirmed that she is working with the teachers to enable parents (as a group) to be able to access the classrooms once a term initially at 3.15pm to view the beautiful work displayed on the walls of the room;
 - c. Mrs Sadler is also working with the teachers to create an expectation that they are visibly available, probably at 3.15pm, probably at least once a week for quick questions.
 - d. Now that electricity is near the back gate (due to the new path lights) we discussed the possibility of there being a buzzer on the back gate to enable people easier access during the day through the gate. Mrs Sadler explained that the preferred access during the day is via the main Woodlands Lane entrance. It is not possible to operate a general access point at the back of the school because during break and lunchtime and when children were out using the playground or field for PE etc, it would not be possible to allow parents and visitors unaccompanied access and there is not the capacity in the office to go to meet visitors.
Having a gate with a electronic release would set up an expectation that parents (and other visitors) could get access. We do always assist where possible in an emergency (eg a parent collecting a child who is taken ill and has to be collected on foot) and during times when people are coming in to help at events we use the code padlock and additional vigilance is used by staff at these times to maintain site security.

7. Fundraising specific items: We discussed how to involve new people in fundraising for the school. An idea was proposed that we introduce an expectation of there being a (half) termly fundraising activity championed by a specific year group. To this end, on Thursday 6th April, year 1 parents will kick off this initiative by running an Easter themed cake sale at 3.15pm. Whilst we will welcome cake donations from all year groups, the running of the sale will be organised by Year 1. The aim is then that each (half) term, a year group in turn will take on the challenge of running an event to help raise funds and build a stronger sense of community.

We really welcome your views/input/suggestions on all the items captured above. Please get involved by speaking to anyone named in the list above.