



Parent Forum Minutes

Thursday 28th January 2021

10am on Zoom

Present: Liz Webber (Parent Ambassador), Bradley Taylor (Headteacher), Wendy Taylor (Assistant Headteacher), Rhonda Gosney (Deputy Headteacher – Cressex Site), DH (BH – Sapphire), PD (SD – Emerald), AH (SH – Ruby), RC (YN – Snowdrop), AD (NB&FB – Butterfly & Ladybird), EH (DH – Buttercup), AA (SP – Butterfly), JH (HH – Sunflower), LH (CH – Eagle), ML (ML – Kestrel), NW (JW – Emerald), PK (AA – Ladybird)

1. Welcome

Wendy opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the Forum before covering housekeeping items (including asking permission for the session to be recorded for minute taking (everyone was in agreement)) and introductions were then made.

2. Update on current situation and the plans we have in place

Bradley gave an update on the current situation. We are in a status quo at the moment. Boris Johnson mentioned yesterday schools starting back on the 8th March. We have not made a decision about widening the number of pupils who are coming back. We are all in very difficult position with competing priorities. There are still high numbers of cases in the local area, although it is lower than it was before, but it is coming down slowly. We are mindful that the numbers of cases in the local area was lower than it is now when we had a big outbreak in school in early December. The challenge is to keep the virus down and to keep staff, their families, and the children and their families safe. We also understand the challenges that parents face having their children at home. We want children to be back in school as that is the best place for them however it is a fine balancing act. According to the Head of Bucks County Council, SEN Special School staff are highly likely to be treated the same as social care and health care workers in being offered the vaccine in Mid-February, which allows 3 weeks for the vaccine to work before the suggested school return date of 8th March. This isn't the same for every locality, but is likely to happen here, which is good news. This makes it safer for staff to have children back in school, however we would still need to maintain the important procedures that we have in place for COVID as being vaccinated doesn't mean that you won't catch it and pass it on. We are mindful that our families are not protected by the vaccine yet.

We are aware that what is offered remotely cannot be compared to what is offered in school. We recognise the impact on parents and also the lost education and socialisation for our children.

3. Update on the support available for children at home eg zoom therapies, zoom classes etc.

Wendy provided an update regarding the support available to families at home. There are virtual lessons for each class. If you are struggling to access these or struggling with the virtual learning then please do contact your class teacher via Dojo or other communication methods you have with your child's teacher. Parents should also be receiving a phone call from their child's class each week.

The therapists are also available – the occupational therapist and speech therapist for your child's class are available to support, for example if you want to introduce a sensory diet or would like support with communication tools to use with your child, then please do let your class teacher know. You can also contact Wendy or the therapists directly if you have their details. We can arrange a zoom call, phone call or training for you.

We can also connect you up with the Learning Disability Nurses, CAMHS and other agencies for support. If you would like any support please let Wendy or Liz know.

Sue Holland, our Learning Mentor, is also available to you.

If you don't know who would be the best person to help you then please do get in contact and we can work out who it would be and get you in touch with them.

4. How can we (the school) best support you?

Liz Webber, Parent Ambassador, explained how she can offer support from form filling, to signposting to other support, as well as arranging training for families and support groups. Do get in contact with Liz if you need support or just need someone to talk to. Liz can be contacted via the school office or via e-mail lwebber@chilternwood.bucks.gov.uk Liz mentioned Recharge, which is a self-care session that we are trialing next week on Tuesday evening. It is a session for parents to take time for themselves and to be able to do something that they enjoy (craft, model making, puzzles etc.) whilst also being on zoom with other like-minded parents and Liz. You can chat with people or just quietly do your craft. If successful, there are more of these sessions planned for next term.

Liz explained that over the next half term the focus will be on wellbeing of the parent and the child. Liz will be running a course entitled When Dreams Change, which is a 4-week course run on a Monday morning, looking at how our expectations and dreams of parenting has changed and how we need to grieve this and then we can look to set new dreams. It is based on counselling principles.

There is also a 5-week course run by Bucks Adult Training on Thursday mornings entitled "Supporting your child's wellbeing". This will cover subjects such as stress, anxiety, self-esteem etc.

There is also a toileting workshop planned with the Learning Disability Community Nurses, which will be on Wednesday March 10th.

Liz will be sending out the dates shortly to parents.

There was an opportunity for parents to share their ideas and to tell us what support they would like. PD shared how it is good to have the zoom training, but mornings are often productive times with her child so could we consider running some sessions in the afternoons. PD appreciated the focus on the wellbeing of the parent and child. Liz thanked PD and said she would take the idea of afternoon courses on board.

JH asked for help from OT with his son. Wendy agreed to get Connie to call him.

5. Have you found any useful resources that you would like to share with the other parents?

PD shared that she finds Audible helpful to self-care for herself. There are some free downloads you can get on Audible. Also singing and dancing to music is great for parents and children. Cosmic Yoga is also good for calming.

Bradley shared Electric Umbrella, which is free zoom session on Wednesdays from 1.30-2.15pm. It's designed for children with Additional Needs. Check it out here:

www.electricumbrella.co.uk

6. Feedback – What's going well? What could work better? How could we improve?

AD thanked Little Wings and the school for their virtual provisions. There is a good balance of videos and zoom calls. It is much appreciated as she has 2 children so can be difficult to do all the zoom calls so can do the videos instead. This will be passed onto Little Wings.

RC thanked the school that her son can come in for 2 days and is able to swim, which he loves. He comes home tired, which is much appreciated. He doesn't like to do schoolwork at home, however RC has found that encouraging him to help with chores helps, as well as walks, singing and garden time. Wendy encouraged parents that this is as good as doing schoolwork sometimes.

7. Annual Review Focus Group information

All parents have to attend their child's Annual Review and we are considering setting up a focus group to create some leaflets/documents which will help parents to understand the process, for example, what do they need for the review and what happens at it. Wendy asked for parents thoughts on this?

PD said that she would appreciate support around considering secondary schools for her son and transition.

LH fed back that she had had her Annual Review recently. She said it was quite quick, everyone worked collaboratively and it was a positive experience.

AH shared that this will be her first annual review and she is not sure what to expect or what to bring to it. She thought a support group would be good for this. Wendy will get Sarah to call AH.

Bradley shared that the SEN team at Bucks County Council have put together leaflets to explain the process to parents and also covers what should be in an ECHP. They should be available in the Summer term.

Bradley shared how it can be really difficult to capture the child's voice in the AR. Sometimes we can include them in the meeting, but children can be nervous about this, however one way that he has heard about from a parent, is for the parent to video themselves asking the children a few questions, for example, what do think about school, what do you like etc. This could then be shown in the meeting.

8. Question re ASD training & SCERTS

Parents are interested in ASD training, but we wanted to know whether this is about ASD in general or whether parents would like to learn about SCERTS and how we communicate with the children at school.

PD would prefer more detail around what ASD is and how to understand it and to understand it from the child's point of view.

9. Any questions?

PD asked if there is any way we can raise funds for the school at the moment given that we couldn't have the Christmas Fayre etc.

Bradley shared that some people are planning on doing sponsored events in the Summer (races/triathlons etc.). The Friends of Chiltern Wood School are looking at fundraising ideas and what we could do online. If you have any ideas, please do share them. Liz shared that there are virtual races that you can do in your own time if you would like to do a sponsored event.

Liz thanked everyone for their contributions and their time before closing the meeting.