

Consultation Meeting re Proposed Changes to the School Day.

Monday, 29 April 2019 – 3.30pm School Hall

Open meeting for parents to discuss possible changes to the school day.

All parents/carers received an email invitation to this meeting: this was dated 3 April 19.

Representing the school:

Mrs E Lovett :	Ch of LGB	EL
Mrs K Howarth :	Exec HT	KH
Mrs R Hawke :	Deputy HT	BH
Mrs S Wood :	Admin	

Parents attending:

Mrs E Bennett	EB
Mr M O'Connor	MO
Mrs J Kraftl	JK
Mrs L Noble	LN

Liz Lovett (EL) introduced herself and the school staff.

Sue Wood will take minutes of the meeting.

The form of the meeting very much a consultation mtg: no decisions being made today.

Its purpose is to make informed, considered decisions: not seeking to find a solution either way – merely to share views received so far and to hear what parents (at this meeting) have to say.

And a good opportunity to try and answer any questions that might arise.

Findings will go to next Local Governing Board meeting on 8 May 19.

EL said that Mrs Helen Hughes, class teacher, was on playground duty to supervise any children outside during the time of the meeting.

Kirstin Howarth (KH) said that communication so far comprised three emails: two in support – though one requesting same end time at both infant & junior ends of school, and one email in support of the shorter lunch hour but opposing the change to the end of the school day as there were concerns re child care costs.

Mr O'Connor (MO) considered the timing of this meeting did not suit working parents.

KH said there had been just three requests for an evening meeting at a later time, so we kept the meeting at 3.30pm as, historically, attendance is better at 3.30pm.

MO pointed out that the meeting was running at the same time as Yr3&4 Parent Consultation Evening.

KH agreed this was not well co-ordinated, but it was possible to attend both.

Mrs Bennett (EB) said she'd spoken with another parent who apparently said that she would be unable to attend this 3.30pm meeting due to the nature of her work.

EB also pointed out that she had had to take time off work to attend this meeting.

EB suggested that there were loads (*sic*) of parents not happy about the proposed changes.

KH hoped these other parents might email school with their views, as per the initial letter, because to date, (as already mentioned) only 3 emails had been received in response to the initial notification.

KH acknowledged that it was impossible to please everyone.

EB said that although supporting the shorter lunch break – she was against change to the end of the school day. Would have to pay for child care or lose time at work. This would have an effect on the family.

EB asked if the school could run a Homework Club.

KH said that the stage had not yet been reached when considerations such as this would be made.

Mrs Noble (LN) said that she worked for the NHS and would need to make significant changes and finish very early to be @ school for 3.15pm.

LN also mentioned childcare costs of £15 for two children for 15 minutes.

Mrs Kraftl (JK) said that her family would not object to the earlier finish as her children were involved in many after school activities and would welcome the extra fifteen minutes.

EB asked if something might be arranged for pupils in the junior end.

KH spoke of the three after school clubs in existence - but these have to be paid for.

Isham School does not run wrap-around care.

EB mentioned Southfield School for Girls. In addition to shortening every school day they also finish extra early, 2.15pm, on Wednesdays but, at the same time provide for pupils to stay at school for additional classes.

KH said that there would have to be cover costs involved to ensure compliance with safeguarding requirements if we introduced an after school 'waiting area'. This would also involve a cost to parents.

It was not the intention to make parents' lives difficult, but our lunch hour is clearly too long and the problem needs addressing.

All changes have to be relevant to this school and this context.

79% of all lunchtime incidents happen in last 15 minutes of the lunch break.

EB suggested keeping the last 15 minutes of the school day – but change its use.

It was suggested there might be a Reading Club, for example.

Potentially this was possible but, again, there would be cover costs involved.

It was suggested children could work in the library, or do their homework, in the 15 minute period between 3.15 and 3.30pm; and potentially supervision for this could possibly be done by parents on a rolling basis.

Again, EL reiterated that the school would take account of parental views, but would not find a solution today.

KH said that the 3.15pm end of day would be favourable to the schools within PDET and the local schools we work with. We share staff training, moderation, sports meetings etc and consequently everyone would benefit if we finished at the same time: it would enable us to start post-school events together.

KH said that she fully accepted, as a parent, that it was not an easy call and was well aware that change is always hard.

MO said that he had no objection to shorten the lunchtime - but not the school day.

LN added that to look after children you sometimes have to look after parents too.

The four parents present all agreed that a shorter lunch break was a good idea.

Mrs Hawke reminded everyone that changes, if they should happen, won't come into effect until September 19.

In drawing the meeting to a close, EL thanked everyone for their time and patience, and for offering their different points of view. Everything will be given full consideration at the LGB mtg on 8 May 19.

The meeting finished at 4.00pm.