

Parents Forum Meeting Minutes: Wednesday 18th November 2015, 9.30am

1. School uniform

Details of the uniform code, as published in the 'Working together – Building and Maintaining Positive Working Relationships at Bow School' booklet was provided to parents.

Bow School's uniform supplier is Khalsa Schoolwear. Headteacher Cath Smith has looked into two other school uniform suppliers, one based in south-east London and another internet-based supplier, to find if parents are receiving value for money with Bow School's uniform. Overall, parents are receiving good value for money with the school uniform. The following uniform items were discussed:

- **Blazer**
 - The school blazer is good value for money.

- **Headscarf**
 - Girls must wear the Bow School headscarf with blue beading.
 - Some parents would prefer plain black headscarves, as they are more affordable and easier to replace.
 - **Action – to include plain black headscarf as part of the uniform.**

- **Shalwar Kameez**
 - The school's shalwar kameez is smart and branded as a way of identifying students from Bow School.
 - The school's prices are competitive.

- **Jilbab**
 - There is currently no Bow School jilbab available, although 3 year 7 girls do wear plain grey and black ones.
 - A parent raised that that the jilbab may not be ideal in a school environment for health and safety reasons.
 - John O'Shea suggested parents could contact the Headteacher if they would prefer their child to wear the jilbab.
 - **Action – to include a jilbab as part of the uniform – decision on costs to be discussed.**

- **Skirts**
 - Currently, skirts are not branded, although some local schools do brand their skirts to control and maintain the appropriate skirt length. However, this would increase the cost of the skirt.
 - Parents agreed the skirt shouldn't be branded as it would add to the expense.

- **Tie**
 - Other suppliers said that the school tie is reasonably priced.
 - There are 2 different ties for key stage 3 and key stage 4 students.
 - Parents agreed they would be interested if the school created a uniform exchange system, allowing parents to hand in their child's tie that they no longer need, for another child in a different key stage to wear. Ties would be cleaned and other items of clothing could also eventually follow a similar system.
 - **Action – School to look at a system for uniform exchange to reduce costs of items for parents by allowing them to exchange/sell on items of clothing.**

- **PE kit**
 - The PE top is a one off expense.
 - Khalsa Schoolwear sell Nike branded shorts and socks, but this is not essential for Bow's PE kit.
 - The raincoat is currently compulsory. 2 parents agreed the raincoat should be compulsory but the majority disagreed. Alice Barker discussed the idea of a plain rain jacket, which would ease the cost for parents.
 - **Action – Nike tops to be only compulsory item that needs to be bought from Khalsa.**
 - **Rain jacket can be plain (dark blue?).**

Parents agreed that the communication needs to be clearer from school on what uniform is essential to buy from Khalsa Schoolwear and what can be purchased from other stores. Khalsa Schoolwear is happy to set up a base to sell uniform at Bow School often, rather than parents going to the store in Bethnal Green.

Actions:

- **Adapt uniform information to parents to explicitly say which items of branded clothing are only available from Khalsa and which items can be bought from anywhere.**
- **Work with Khalsa on a date for uniform purchases to be taking place in school.**

All information will be passed onto the Headteacher.

2. Potential activities for parents

Discussion around potential activities that will be available to parents as of January 2016 at Bow School:

- **Online safety**
 - Received a good parent response.
- **Parenting teenagers**
 - Received a good parent response.

- **Healthy families**
 - Includes healthy eating and lifestyle choices.
 - Received a good parent response.
- **Healthy cooking**
 - The food technology facilities would be used within school.
 - At a later date, the Jamie Oliver programme would be available, which includes children cooking with their parents.
 - Received a good parent response.
- **Family aspirations (possible choice)**
- **Money workshops**
- **ICT workshops**
 - Both beginner and intermediate workshops will be available.
 - Received a good parent response.

John O'Shea suggested that one of the Parent Governors is willing to offer basic first aid training to parents, which received a good parent response.

Parent Governor Alice Barker raised if gym facilities will be offered to parents – David Jones is dealing with this separately to the parents forum.

Actions - David Jones and Emily Keith-Young will be arranging the programme calendar and Emily will be booking parents onto the limited spaces available. All information will be published in the next school newsletter.

Most of the parents can attend the activities between 9.00am – 11.00am.

3. Homework policy

Copies of the homework and independent study policy and homework timetable were provided to parents.

At the next Parents Forum in January, parents feedback would be appreciated around how they are finding the homework policy, how school could help support parents further with homework and the experience their child is having with the homework frequency.

Actions:

- **John O'Shea to let staff know that this is coming up on the next Parent Forum**
- **Item to be added to agenda for next meeting**

The homework policy involves the role of parents with their child's homework. Parents can contact their child's teacher or the subject leader regarding any queries they may have.

Parents also need to ensure that they sign their child's planners on a weekly basis.

4. Plea on sugar-based/caffeine-based drinks

Concerns were raised regarding students consuming sugar-based and caffeine-based drinks, such as Boost and Red Bull, as they contain a high sugar content and manufacturers do state on the bottle/can that such drinks are not suitable for children.

These drinks are banned in school, as stated in the schools policy. The DT department are creating a display board to create awareness for students how much sugar various drinks contain.

Sugar-based and caffeine-based drinks can cause health problems, including insomnia, anxiety, type 2 diabetes, headaches, vomiting, high blood pressure and eating disorders.

The parental forum agreed to support school in cutting down the sugar-based and caffeine-based drinks that students consume.

Actions:

- **John O'Shea to write to local shops, asking them to refrain from selling high sugar-based and caffeine-based drinks to students in Bow School uniform.**
- **John O'Shea to write to parents, asking for their support in ensuring their child buys and drinks less sugar-based and caffeine-based drinks.**

5. Any other business – for next meeting

- a. **Discussion on use of mobile phones and communication between students at break times etc.**

Next Parents Forum: Wednesday 20th January 2016 at 9.30am