



MINUTES OF THE FAIRLAWN SCHOOL PARENTS' FORUM

25th January 2019

Present:

22 parents/carers

Fairlawn Staff:

Jeanette Brumby (Executive Head Teacher), Rosamund Clarke (Business Manager), Leanne Cowley (4C, maths lead), Amanda Moody (Operations manager of Radish, Fairlawn's catering company), Sharon Powley (learning mentor, attendance coordinator), Hania Ryans (Head Teacher),

Matt Parsonage (chair of PTA)

Parents' Forum Volunteers:

Helen Branch (chairing the meeting), Kirsty Lothian (minutes)

1- Meat free Monday

Amanda Moody from Radish outlined plans to trial a Meat Free day, on Valentine's day, themed around Love Your Veg. School will make a big fuss about the day in the run up. The success of the trial will be assessed by measuring the waste on the day, and this will be fed back via the weekly newsletter.

Radish and Fairlawn are also taking part in the Veg Power campaign launching tonight (this is a Department of Health initiative responding to the fact that 80% of kids don't eat enough vegetables: <https://vegpower.org.uk/>). This is open to packed lunch kids too, and focuses on a different vegetable each week. The children who try the vegetable get a sticker, and the class with the most stickers each week wins a prize (eg- cake made with vegetables). This is part of a plan to promote healthy eating more!

Children are already encouraged to eat their vegetables (they have to ask before getting down, and are monitored and encouraged at that point, and when they return their trays), and the salad bar (which is being re-launched on Monday) is always staffed by someone inviting the children to have salad.

A parent questioned whether it would be vegan, and there is the option of making it dairy free (it would certainly not involve meat substitutes).

A parent was concerned about protein. The nutritional content of school food is regulated, and vegetarian meals include plenty of protein. AM noted that the general tomato sauce Radish make includes lentils as well as plenty of other vegetables (JB's family, including her children, are vegan so she can stand up for vegetable protein!)

A parent shared their experience of a group of 3 schools in Lewisham radically changing their dining environment, with round tables, mixed ages sitting at each table and older kids serving from central dishes at each table, with brilliant effect within each school, JB will look into this.

A parent asked if parents can attend a lunch? HR and JB noted this had happened before and can definitely happen again.

RC noted that Fairlawn do regular waste audits and monitor how the menu is going in general. She met with the cook today who reported that risotto goes in the bin, so it's off the menu (Food waste is collected separately)

2- PTA update

Matt Parsonage thanked everyone for the winter fair, which was agreed to have been excellent, making good use of the school spaces, with excellent circulation, and raising a record-breaking £7000.

Events coming up (most of which need on-the-day volunteers) include:

School disco tonight, Parents-only silent disco in a bar in Peckham, tickets still for sale, Musical evening in April, Quiz night in May (teaching staff are going to drive the quiz forward - HR and Kim Clarke will be setting the questions!), Fun Run and Summer Fair (which doesn't yet have a committee).

Keep an eye on the newsletter for info and call for volunteers. What

the funds are being spent on:

The outdoor learning zone project, which is being led by 2-3 parents. The PTA is currently figuring out how to phase it.

The shelter in the upper playground, could be removed. This will need lots of clearing, building and maintaining volunteers!

A parent asked that calls for volunteers be as specific as possible, eg for how long, doing what etc. The PTA are already planning to do this via the newsletter.

A parent was concerned about equalities and the fairs. The PTA always has a balance to strike between pricing (raising funds) and access.

3- Puddings

As a trial this term, one day per week (on a different day each week) the pudding offered will be fruit and yoghurt (fruit is also available every day). This is part of work towards reducing sugar in the dinners.

A parent asked if the yoghurt has sugar in it? Radish make their own, it is flavoured with a small amount concentrated fruit syrup. The yoghurt is dairy.

4- Attendance and awards

The attendance certificates are just part of the picture!

Sharon Powley explained how Fairlawn's attendance records are monitored by Lewisham. She prepares various data sets on a weekly and fortnightly basis, and if any child falls below 90% attendance ("persistent absentee", the school has to engage). Sharon has a workbook for each persistent absentee which she has to send off weekly, and is regularly visited by Lewisham's Attendance Officer, who will ask her to explain each case. She can note if absence is due to significant medical issues which school/Lewisham do not focus on (although parents do still get a letter, along with a phone call to reassure!), however the parents/carers of a child who misses many odd days for colds etc will get a call/ follow up.

There is a system to request permission for an absence (school will not give permission for holidays).

If attendance falls below 90% (or a child is taken out for a holiday of 5 days or more) Lewisham may fine the family, below 80% attendance the family may end up in court. 90% attendance means missing a day per fortnight, or 19 days over the year.

The school as a whole is expected to have 95% attendance or higher, and the school incentivises this.

At the end of each term, children who have 100% attendance get a certificate as part of a celebration assembly on the last day (approximately 100 children get this). A fuss is made of them, however HR, who takes that assembly, talks about how she understands that "some of you have been off and you can't help it. It's a whole assembly also about having a good holiday. I understand when you are not well!"

The school is considering adding a certificate of Good Attendance for those children who have only missed sessions for medical reasons.

A parent was concerned about kids coming in when they are ill, and spreading diseases. School does send children home if they are sick (and ask they stay off for 48 hours afterwards!), or have a temperature, or appear very unwell.

JB stressed that the school looks at things individually, and works hard to support Fairlawn's families who are struggling, intervening and supporting before a trigger is hit, with home visits etc. Kaleidoscope appointments do not count as absences, and when children get into school before 10:30 after a medical appointment they are marked late not absent (except when this was a non-urgent appointment which could have been scheduled out of hours). "We focus on our children in need. Safeguarding and the wellbeing of your children trumps everything! My staff really care about your children, that's always above and beyond everything we do."

5- Star of the week.

Some parents have raised concerns about this. HR explained that it's just one part of how Fairlawn promote learning behaviour, and attitudes. It's about the effort they put in, not the results they get, and they all get to be Star of the Week! (teachers keep lists) In Key stage 1 they also get Dojo points. In the weekly celebration assembly children also come up (often in groups) to share what they have been doing, and there are also art and sport stars of the week, and Good to be Green certificates.

A parent reported that her child had not been SotW until the 39th week, in a class of 30. HR and JB immediately agreed that this is not right and will address it.

A parent noted that it's tough when they get it very late in the year, and they haven't been asked to show anything at an assembly either.

6- MyMaths

Leanne Cowley explained that Fairlawn changed to MyMaths this year as it matches the curriculum closely, and many secondary schools use it. "We've had positive feedback, and some bug reports which I have passed on. If we know we can address them". MyMaths are currently transferring away from Flash, which will hopefully help (if using on a tablet, exiting full screen helps).

However, in KS1 home learning will go back to being on paper as of next half term. This is due to MyMaths not having enough varied things for KS1 to do. KS1 children will still be able to log in and access all the exercises and games if they want.

At the end of the year Fairlawn will assess it in KS2. Year 2 and KS2 have also been using TT Rockstars which the kids love (the parents in attendance agreed enthusiastically!)

Several parents reported problems with MyMaths, a parent recommended Doodlemats for KS1.

A parent asked if the school could supply iPads/tablets for parents to buy more cheaply as a group purchase. The school cannot do this due to VAT and other regulation.

7- Mixing classes and feedback on how it is going

Last year, Fairlawn proposed mixing the classes after Y2 and Y4. Y4 parents were not happy with this, so the plan only went ahead after Y2 (the children currently in Y3). Feedback is good, and the school intends to do this every year, after Y2.

The children will then stay in the same classes for the rest of their time at Fairlawn (unless very exceptional circumstances come about!)

Children were asked to make a list of 5 classmates who they would like to have in their class in future (they were told they would definitely get two from their list, but probably not all), the teachers then made class lists to get a good balance

across the classes (NOT streaming). As a trial run, they discreetly ran some activities in the proposed new combinations to make sure it all worked.

A parent asked if reading groups are by ability. In year 1 they are, but they are reviewed every 2 weeks.

A parent was concerned about especially able children, how are they challenged? JB stressed that "we need to make sure ALL our children and ALWAYS challenged and learning. EVERYONE needs to be making good progress, and parents should come and see us right away if not!"

A parent asked how spelling is differentiated, is it via homework? Homework can be different, but school is careful to ensure that the kids doing well at spelling tests are using the correct spelling of the words in their writing too. It needs to be embedded before they move on.

Wrapping up

More volunteers are needed for Parents' Forum- and feedback is golden so please get in touch at parentforum@fairlawnschool.net Items for future agendas can be sent to the same address.

Jeanette Brumby noted "we are always on the gate, come and see us. If something isn't right, come and see us right away!"