Parent Coffee Evening

Wednesday 12 October 2016

			Actions
	Present Mrs Cubbage (Principal) Mrs Spafford (SLT & Community Admin)	**In Attendance** 11 Parents **Apologies** None received	
1	**Welcome** The focus of the meeting would be to discuss • Feedback from students and parents about the changes to the timetable and college day • The MILK app • College Website • New Prospectus • Any other business		
2	**Changes to the College timetable** Drop Down Wednesday - Mrs Cubbage asked parents how they felt the students had responded to the changes to the timetable and college day, the general opinion was that they had settled in very well. Replacing 'Day 10', with 'Drop Down Wednesday' (DDW) had been well received and allows the time to be more focused. Whereas Day 10 was suited to Years 10/11, DDW involves a variety of subjects relevant for all students. Every year group has a timetable, centred on like skills, e.g. SRE, Enterprise and Finance, Respect, Health & Well Being, Democracy and Growth Mind-sets. The delivery of these lessons is age appropriate and students will spend about 8 hours on each subject during the academic year. Time during DDW will also be allocated for sports days, TaSC days and House activities. Intervention - this also seems to be working well, the time is focused and targeted for students, allowing them to develop skills, plug gaps in the curriculum which may not be covered and by preparing students for GCSEs. The pressure on the canteen is 'eased' and break times appear a lot calmer. DDW is the only day where students don't have intervention, students break together before period 3 after which they continue with PDL subjects in the afternoon.		
3	**MILK** The MILK app is new to the students this year. The VLE had become dated and unusable and the college along with the MILK developers will be working closely together to improve the site suitable for its future use. All students received a login and password at the start of term. They can access their timetable and homework, attendance record and achievement/behaviour points. Unlike the VLE, teachers will be able to link and upload homework more easily, students will only be able to access their own homework and it will allow teachers to select specific homework for individual students. They can receive tutor messages and emails and parents will also be able to contact tutors directly (on going MILK development). Their attendance record will also link in with the Truancy Call service which the college is signing up to. If a student is absent from college without prior notification, parents will be text repeatedly until the absence is confirmed by them. Parental access to MILK is also available – as demonstrated by Mrs Spafford – although rolling this out to all parents is still under discussion. It was suggested it would be useful for those present to receive parent logins so they too can try out the app and provide any feedback - this will be arranged in due course. It is anticipated that MILK will replace the need for student log books in the future. There are some initial problems e.g. completed homework not clearing but this is being worked on by the developers. Please bear with us!		
4	**College Website** Mrs Cubbage agreed this was an area in need of improvement - the college website is not user friendly. Taylor Made Solutions have offered their support as part of a working party so if any parents are willing to help with its development it would be appreciated.		

5	**College Prospectus** After responding to feedback from parents, a new college prospectus has been produced and has been well received. New faculty boards and associated artwork, signage around the college and inspirational boards and quotes have really lifted the environment and motivated the students cultivating a real sense of ownership.	
6	**Parents feedback** There have been issues with some of the student toilets been locked and unavailable. Mrs Cubbage confirmed there had been some issues but the toilets should be made available and will follow this up with the site team. Optional subjects – it was asked why for optional subjects e.g. Music, Food Tech, Textiles, Drama, the college only has one teacher for each subject providing for the needs of the whole college? What happens if that teacher is absent? Mrs Cubbage explained that this is a very common situation – these are not core subjects and it is not unusual for schools to have only one teacher specialising in that subject. There is adequate cover at the college for the timetable and teaching load. Provisions would however be made in the event of a long term absence, and teaching staff with suitable specialism to cover these subjects would be arranged. Languages – It was confirmed that every student is required to learn a language, (except in exceptional circumstances). The experience and skills students receive whilst learning languages will meet the requirement of the new curriculum changes. The 'commit to memory' approach to learning will be of benefit in the long term for all subjects. This lead to 'PiXL Curve' – the future of exams. The 'curve' will be the applied methodology of who's going to get what grades, grading will therefore be unclear until after exams have taken place. Scores won't matter anymore – it all depends on the 'curve'. Based on recent assessment, Year 11 students are currently in the top 5% and outperformed all other schools using the new specification. This is a good indication of their potential if they continue to work at this current level. English language mocks for Year 10 – the results from these will also be used to see how students perform alongside the 'curve'. RE GCSE – Year 10 will continue the old GCSE syllabus; Year 9 will take part in the new as they have the 2 years to complete it. The Year 10 grades won't count towards the college performance statistics but will nevertheless be a good and beneficial learning experience for them. Early college closure for open evening – was this entirely necessary? Could provision be made for students, who may find home study difficult, to be allowed to remain at college for the rest of that day, in particular those studying for GSCE's? Mrs Cubbage felt in the grand scheme of things that the impact on students on this occasion was, and would continue to be, negligible. She has a duty of care towards staff and students and events such as the open evening require a lot of planning, and preparation by all staff working long hours and they need to be provided for. On occasion such as these it is necessary for the early college closure. Parents were reminded that there are always opportunities for students to stay after college for additional support and during breakfast club in the mornings. This is available all week. Information Evening Booklets - will be going out to all Year 10/11 students in preparation for forthcoming exams. Hopefully this will answer any questions in areas parents may be unclear on. It includes exam changes, curriculum, PiXL curve. Parents are encouraged to attend the information evening on 19 October. Science GCSE – core and additional Science papers were explained to parents and how this would be reflected in student results. Students who take additional Science papers (triple Science) will get GCSE grades in Physics, Chemistry and Biology whereas those taking the core papers only will be awarded a Science GCSE. Year 10's will soon be assessed in respect of this. Mrs Cubbage went on to explain that PE GCSE (Health & Nutrition Unit) for Year 11 will be completed by February half term, allowing them to focus on core subject using physical PE lessons as a way to de-stress. Parent Maths workshops – proposing to arrange some for English. Bus B – Mrs Cubbage was pleased to announce that County have agreed a new provider for this service. Hopefully this will resolve and prevent any further issues! Sports Fixtures – have been uploaded to the website and both parents and students are enjoying the recognition on social media updates.	CDC CDC
7	**Date of next meetings:** 23 November 2016 (coffee morning) 25 January 2017 (coffee evening)	