



Parent Coffee Evening Wednesday 25th January

		Actions
	<p>Present Mrs Cabbage (Principal) Mrs Spafford (SLT & Community Admin)</p>	<p>In Attendance 22 parents Apologies 2 received</p>
1	<p>Welcome Agenda items this evening include MILK feedback, KS3 reports and ideas of how to engage with hard to reach parents.</p>	
2	<p>MILK For those parents who had been given access, the feedback was generally good.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some parents were still experiencing problems with viewing multiple student records. - As the college is not able to administer password resets for all students/parents it is hoped the developers could set up a password reset option via the app/website. - There are still plans to roll out MILK access for parents and it is hoped this will commence shortly. - Opening up a message facility for parents to contact teachers at some point. - Some homework links do not work on tablets, on PC's. - Homework appears to be set by teacher's night before it is due with students receiving assignment messages late at night – particularly language subjects. Mrs Cabbage to reiterate staff expectations when setting homework. - Students have become very reliant on using the app for timetable changes and these are not always accurate i.e. Wednesday afternoon PDL timetable. Although students must have their phones switched off in lessons they can still ask for a member of staff to check their timetable/request a copy for their reference during the college day when they are unable to check the MILK app. - In addition, there is still a backlog of issues which the company are aware of. <p>Moving forward, the college is keen to further develop the MILK app as a student/parent link based on continued feedback.</p>	
3	<p>KS3 Reports Although the majority of parents understood the new KS3 reports, there is still room for improvement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mrs Cabbage explained how summative assessment and the new grading system will indicate how well students understand particular units of work. In Maths, Science and Computer Science students would be expected to be Secure in these units throughout the year and those who are not can receive support during interventions. In other subjects students would be Developing early in the year and their skills would develop over the academic year. These subjects would be expected to be Secure by the end of the year. - It was noted not all parents were/are able to understand this system with some admitting they found the new reports complicated and the accompanying notes, although useful, were difficult to understand. - Although the reports allow teachers to map the required skill sets, this information was of more use to them than parents. - Parents want assurances that the subjects which students find difficult are addressed, along with clarity on which skill sets they can or cannot do. - It was unhelpful the English grades were delayed and not sent out with the initial report. <p>Despite working with a few parents on developing the new reports, it is apparent more work is needed – Mrs Cabbage is keen to engage further with parents in working towards the production of a simpler report and guidance which is easier to understand.</p>	

4	<p>Options process Years 8 and 9 Year 9 course choice evening is Wednesday 8 February. Year 9 Students will continue to study their chosen courses over 2 years (10&11). However, changes to the curriculum will impact Year 8 with the removal of coursework and increased subject content requiring more time to complete. Students will potentially choose their options in Year 8 so they are able to complete all the required skills over 3 years (9,10 & 11). This is pending confirmation from the Department of Education on what courses will be available and these changes will be communicated to Year 8 parents at the Information Evening, Wednesday 8 March.</p>	
5	<p>Courses and exams – future expectations. Curriculum changes will require a different approach to teaching. Year 7 have already started a five year plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students will be expected to learn and remember all quotes (English) and formulas (Maths) and coursework will contain more content e.g. Maths will have a third more content. - GCSE/future exam papers will increase from 1-1.5 hours to 3 hours. Students will need to be prepared for these e.g. introducing sample exam questions for homework and encouraging students to change the type of pen they write with (because ink pens flow freely students would not need to apply the same amount of pressure as they would a biro. This could potentially reduce the strain on hands caused by periods of long writing). - Less computer based, more written homework to build up handwriting stamina and build up exam resilience - How to structure long word answers, particularly in English which can be covered in intervention slots. - When these student reach Year 11 there is concern that the changes to the exam process will be stressful and the college is considering ways of how any anxiety can be dispersed for example, encouraging students to write cursively will help develop stamina required for longer periods of writing. <p>English – Year 10 students will not be entered for GCSE early as the grades they may get would not be a true representation of their ability (after PPE performance). Individual students may be considered for early entry but not the whole year. Students would be better to sit the exam at their best ability and get the best grades – having to re-sit reduces student effort.</p> <p>RE – this is still considered a valuable experience for students to sit the exam in Year 10 and it is important for students to have an understanding of the exam process and practice.</p> <p>Drop Down Wednesday – more revision techniques on a broader choice of subject would be helpful.</p>	
6	<p>Hard to reach Parents Parents were asked to contribute ideas on how to engage with hard to reach parents, for example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Those who find face to face communication difficult. - Those who are not reading college communications, i.e. letters/emails, taking into consideration those who may themselves find this challenging. - Incorrect contact information in SIMS/In touch so are not receiving communications. - The use of abbreviations when communicating to parents i.e. <i>PPE</i>, and that some parents will not understand the terminology often used by the college. In future it was suggested that any such items are communicated in full first with the abbreviation to follow e.g. <i>Pre Public Exams – PPEs</i>. That way parents would have a clearer understanding of the use of such abbreviations in future correspondence. - A glossary of abbreviations/terms used may also be of help to parents. - The issue of safeguarding, when contact details for parents are not accurate or updated, particularly those who will not answer a call from the college which in the event of an emergency would be a cause for concern. The college has on occasion contacted parents via their child’s phone when the need has arisen, because they will answer. <p>Suggested ways of contacting these parents effectively, asking why they do not engage with the college and their child’s education included, personalised letters to parents asking why, possibly hand delivering /knocking on doors or postal (excluding the college franking logo), or recorded delivery.</p> <p>It is realised that despite all efforts some parents will not engage with the college and should any issues arise regarding their child, the lack of communication on their part would be a cause for</p>	

	concern and reported if necessary	
7	Any other business Looking at ways of providing more challenging work for some students, who are not finding the work they are getting stimulating enough.	
	Date of next meetings: 22 March 2017 (coffee morning) 24 May 2017 (coffee evening)	