



Girls' School

## Minutes of Virtual Parents' Forum 8.00 a.m. Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2021

**In attendance:**

**Mrs Jane Götschel – Headteacher**

**Mrs Lynne Finucane – Assistant Headteacher, Learning & Achievement**

**Mrs Sheila Allport – PA to Headteacher & Senior Leadership Team (minute taker)**

**13 parents attended the forum**

ITEM		ACTION BY
1.	<p>Mrs Götschel welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked parents for the questions that they had submitted.</p> <p>The following items were discussed:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Half-term update</li> <li>- COVID cases update</li> <li>- Virtual Parents' Evenings</li> <li>- School Re-opening</li> <li>- Ofqual consultation</li>   <li>- Questions raised: How GCSEs will be graded in the Summer Camera use during lessons Replacement of exercise books Online curriculum - moving onto Edulink Teachers are leaving lessons before the lesson is completed?</li> </ul>	
1.	<p><b><u>Half-term update</u></b></p> <p>Mrs Götschel advised that she was very impressed and the students should be congratulated on how they have coped with remote learning, being in isolation as well as missing their friends.</p> <p>The KS3 engagement in lessons is generally good. Year 11 students have had excellent attendance and been outstanding role models; year 10 students and post-16 students have also shown good engagement.</p>	
2.	<p><b><u>COVID cases update</u></b></p> <p>There have been 7 positive cases of COVID amongst students and 6 positive cases amongst staff where two members of staff were admitted to hospital and one member of staff remains very ill in critical care.</p>	

	<p>It has been particularly difficult during lockdown for staff with young children as there have been COVID cases in primary and early years settings.</p> <p><b>Lateral Flow Testing</b></p> <p>There is a team of staff who have received training and are involved in the testing of students and staff who are currently in school on a weekly basis. The lateral flow tests are performed by the students and staff themselves by taking a nasal swab; the administration process in relation to the registration and uploading of test results is quite an unwieldy process.</p> <p>The DfE previously suggested that testing of staff and students should be undertaken every day so that whole year groups of students would not need to be sent home to isolate if someone in their group received a positive COVID test. Public Health Birmingham had recommended that the daily checks should not be carried out as the lateral flow test results are not completely reliable; the DfE have also now paused contact testing. Once all students return to school, testing will become a much larger operation and the process for doing this is currently being reviewed.</p>	
3.	<p><b><u>Virtual Parents' Evenings</u></b></p> <p>A year 9 parents' evening has taken place and we will review parent feedback. The software being used is School Cloud and this was used for parents' evenings last term and worked very well with good feedback received from parents.</p> <p>The 11 parents' evening had to be rearranged as the provider's server crashed on the first occasion. Unfortunately, the provider also had issues on the second occasion with the result that phone calls had to be made.</p> <p>Mrs Götschel thanked the parents who wrote to their MPs regarding additional funding for schools to cover the costs making schools COVID safe.</p>	
4.	<p><b><u>School Re-opening</u></b></p> <p>The DfE has advised that they will give the school two weeks' notice regarding the date of re-opening. The government has advised that this may be on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021 but this has not been confirmed and no information has been provided regarding whether this will be a whole school return, tiered return, exam groups or staggered start return. As soon as further information is received, Mrs Götschel will update parents.</p>	
5.	<p><b>The following questions submitted from parents were discussed:-</b></p> <p><b>How will GCSEs be graded in the Summer?</b></p> <p>Mrs Götschel advised that the Ofqual consultation ended on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2021.</p>	

	<p>Ofqual is proposing that teachers should produce a grade based on the level that the students are working at. The proposal is that the grade should be based on formal tests, mock examination results and substantial candidate work.</p> <p>The exam board may produce tests for the students which would give a level of objectivity as everyone would then be assessed on the same basis.</p> <p>This year Ofqual are focussing on ensuring that year 11 and year 13 students have the knowledge and skill to progress onto the next stage in their education be it post-16 or university.</p> <p>Mrs Gotschel proposed that once Ofqual confirm their decision following the consultation, a series of parents' forums for year 11 and year 13 students could be arranged for e.g. a maximum number of attendees (25) each session. This would provide parents with an opportunity to ask any questions that they may have.</p>	
	<p><b><u>Why do students need to use a camera for the whole duration of lessons?</u></b></p> <p>The guidance is for students to keep the camera on for at least part of the lesson for safeguarding purposes. This is to protect both students and staff as we can then see who is actually present in the room during the lesson.</p> <p>Staff have raised concerns that having the cameras on for the whole lesson can cause broadband overload and have been given guidance that students must put on their camera during registration and also at certain points in the lesson e.g. when answering a question. Sixth form students appear particularly reluctant to do this!</p>	
	<p><b><u>Replacement exercise books</u></b></p> <p>If exercise books are getting full and students need a replacement, Mrs Götschel asked parents to email Sheila Allport (<a href="mailto:s.allport@lordswoodtrust.co.uk">s.allport@lordswoodtrust.co.uk</a>) and an exercise book can then be collected from reception during the school day.</p>	
	<p><b><u>Online curriculum – joining with Edulink</u></b></p> <p>Edulink is not a virtual learning environment. It can be used for homework and it is a useful tool for sharing documents, but it is not an online teaching tool. Edulink do want to develop additional tools but these are currently under development with no timeline available at present.</p>	
	<p><b><u>Teachers leaving lessons before they end</u></b></p> <p>Mrs Götschel advised that she is currently looking into this.</p>	

	<p><b>Mrs Götschel asked the parents if they had any further questions and the following were discussed:-</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Who should we contact if there is a problem with logging-into a live lesson?</b> Mrs Götschel said that if this issue referred to a specific lesson, then it is generally the subject teacher who should have sent a link to the students. Mrs Götschel advised that she is also happy to receive emails regarding any IT issues which she will follow-up with the IT team.</li> <li>- <b>Can PE be given priority when the school re-opens as students' physical fitness has reduced due to not participating in sport as they used to during lockdown.</b> Mrs Finucane advised that the PE department are currently developing a scheme of work which includes physical activity that can be done at home. Wednesday afternoon has been designated as a well-being session to encourage students to go out for a walk or to do some other relaxing activity that they enjoy. We will also look at what else we can include to support students' physical fitness.</li> <li>- <b>The school offers food technology but why does it not offer design technology.</b> Mrs Götschel explained that as an academy we are not required to follow the national curriculum. Technology was offered previously but we did not have the funds to upgrade the machinery when required. Additionally, this subject was not teaching the students the skills they needed and they were not opting to study this subject when they chose their options. This resulted in technology becoming a non-viable option and the decision was taken not to continue teaching this subject. We are looking at submitting a bid to the Condition Improvement Fund for a design technology suite, although this is not high priority for the DfE. We do have a STEM Coordinator who organises STEM events under normal circumstances, so that students do have some exposure to the skills they might develop through DT. Students are also able to develop DT related skills through computing. Students can study product design post-16. Food technology is a very popular option but we will continue to keep DT provision under review.</li> </ul> <p>Mrs Götschel thanked the parents for their feedback and support and also for taking the time to join the Parents' Forum; parent feedback is an important part of our quality assurance processes and enables the school to review what it is doing.</p> <p>Meeting ended at 8.50 a.m.</p>	