



Parent Forum

Wednesday 21st March 2018



Leading today's meeting...

Mr Stock HEADTEACHER

These minutes are a brief account of the discussions that took place at the meeting. If you would like further information feel free to ask a member of staff or turn up to the meetings to get the fuller picture.





Thumbs Up!



Thank you for keeping the school open on the snow days. It meant I could get to work and not lose a days annual leave.



Previous Meetings



PTA Spending – KS2 Playground

‘Money raised last year for KS2 playground – has the money been spent and what has been spent on?’

- Some of the money has been used to purchase additional play equipment in the playground. This equipment is stored in the sheds and is brought out predominantly at lunchtimes.
- Additional lines, grids and play spaces were painted onto the playground over the Summer holidays.
- The school has invested in minimal fixed play equipment due to risk of vandalism outside school operating hours. The same can also be said for KS1.

□ **ACTION – The school will speak with the PTA and via the newsletter ensure that spending carried out is promoted so that parents are aware where the money has been spent. PENDING... HT is meeting with H.Gudgin in the next week or so.**

□ **ACTION – HT will meet with the PTA lead to ensure the remainder of the money is spent on the playground. PENDING... HT is meeting with H.Gudgin in the next week or so.**



Previous Meetings



KS2 Playground – Football for younger year groups?

‘Appears to be heavily weighted towards year 5 and year 6. Is there a reason why Year 3 and Year 4 children has less options with regards to playing football?’

- The playgrounds are particularly busy spaces. Since increasing the size of the school, the playgrounds have become extremely busy and so football games are limited to ensure the safety of all children and to ensure that children who don't want to play football have a safe place to play.
- Through experience, providing Year 5 and Year 6 with the opportunity to play football, significantly reduces issues over the playtime and the lunchtime period.
- In general, Year 3 and Year 4 pupils are also more able to generate games etc during play. Less children in these year groups like to play football.
- Year 3 and Year 4 also have a football club (led by the sports coaches) on Monday and Tuesday lunchtimes to counteract the fact they are unable to play football in the playground. Sign up via the website.
- ❑ **ACTION – The school are considering an adjustment to morning playtimes. Year 3 and Year 4 potentially having playtime at different times to reduce the ‘busyness’ of the playground and to provide them with the chance to have a football game running. Not able to do at present.**
- ❑ **ACTION – DHT will consider the possibility of utilising one of the current playtimes or lunchtimes and allocate this to Year 3 or Year 4 on a rota basis. Year 3 and Year 4 have a specific football club and additional activities planned over lunchtimes.**
- ❑ **ACTION – Once summer arrives, and playtime is on the grass, all year groups are able to play football. No action needed.**



Previous Meetings



Incident outside the school

‘What else can the school do to prevent further incidents like this occurring?’

- Working party still in force. Parents are invited to join the working party via the web-form on the website.
- Encourage parents to write to councillors or MPs to raise awareness.
- Reminder – that this incident was not caused by the issues with the roads outside school. It was a pure accident.
- The delay to the ambulance reaching the scene WAS caused by the issues of poor parking and selfish drivers who ignore the rules of the road.

□ ACTION – DHT to continue to raise awareness and consider alternative options through the traffic working party. New website page created. The working party is making great strides and the L.A., Highways agency and the Local Counsellor are currently working on a number of new initiatives. Update information being sent out to parents over the next few days.



Previous Meetings

Class Mixes

'Is there a plan to mix the **current year 3**?'

- No plans to mix the current Year 3.
- Possible plans to mix the current Year 2 moving into Year 3 (Natural point) but no decisions have been made yet.
- Other schools mix classes every single year.
- Often difficult to balance out the classes as key pupils cannot be in the same class together.

□ ACTION – HT will write to parents if the school plans to carry out a mix of classes.

Letter to be produced in Summer Term 1



Previous Meetings



Reading Incentives (YEAR 3 & YEAR 4)

‘We understand the reasons for the removal of reading diaries, however, we would really like the school to promote a scheme that encourages children to read at home and have some way of logging the information.’

- HT agreed. Discussed the reasons for the removal of the reading logs and the reduction of adults in KS2, which makes management of reading books and reading logs difficult.
- Discussed the change in focus in reading from Year 3 onwards.
- Explained that with regards to reading books, it is expected that;
 - Children have a banded book (set at the level that is appropriate)
 - Children have a ‘choice’ book (either from a selection within the class or from the library – which is not necessarily pitched at the level of the child)
- **ACTION – HT to meet with Literacy lead and librarian to discuss what can be done to create more incentives for children to read in KS2. Ideas discussed. Setting budget first before proceeding.**
- **ACTION – Literacy leads (CS & RD) to rewrite the literacy policy (inc. the reading policy) to indicate how reading works across the school and in early KS2. Process started. Old policy taken down.**



Previous Meetings



Communication for working Mums

'Can the school look at ensure key messages are getting home to parents? We get the newsletter with provides all the key things... but would love more notes / communication / message around the day to day things. Particular in lower KS2 where parent / teacher links are lesser?'

□ ACTION – PHASE LEADERS to investigate ways to ensure parents in Year 3 and Year 4 receive information and communication from the school. Phase leaders and Year group leads now have access to text messaging which should help improve communication especially incidental information. Teachers continue to phone parents regarding incidents, if they are unable to catch up with them at the end of the school day.



Previous Meetings



Singing Squad

'Singing squad used to be open to all and now it is by invitation only. Why? Is there a chance that singing squad could be brought back? It seems a little unfair.'

- The choir have been invited to attend a practice that builds up to a performance. The number of children allowed to attend the performance is limited and so it was decided to restrict the numbers at the beginning, rather than letting children learn the songs and then restrict the amount that could attend the performance.

□ ACTION – HT to speak to Music Teacher about when the singing squad will start again and whether the school has the capacity to run both. Starts after Easter.



Thumbs Up!



The children at SNAPE were amazing! Again this year, we stood out as being one of the best schools there! Go Rushmere!



Lets discuss... (1)



Snow Days

Why does the school try to open when there is snow?

When other schools are closed in the area and there is snow fall it would be very easy for us to close the school. Whether or not the school is open or closed on a snow day; the staff are still paid. 'Snow days' are difficult to deliver and are often much busier than an average day. To be honest, it would be lovely to have a day off midweek, whilst being warm at home. This is not something new for Rushmere, this has always been the school's approach.

So... taking this into consideration, there must be some really good reasons why the school decided to open...

Yes there are. Lots of reasons. It would have been so easy to close the school and have a 'snow day', however, it was decided that we should open, because;

We had enough staff to open the school

We could have sent home the teachers and staff who managed to get in to school. However, we cannot justify a decision to close if we have enough staff to open the school and run it safely.

Our job is to educate the children

Including showing them, that where possible, things carry on during snowy periods.

We have staff that want the school to be open for the children

The school gains nothing by opening on a school day, other than moans and groans from some disgruntled parents. It does it because it wants to be open for the children.

We want to develop resilience

Schools years ago never closed for snow. This country now comes to a standstill whenever we have snow. We need to educate our children to be resilient, teach them to find solutions to problems and understand that the school can be open during snowy periods but that things may be a little different.

Some our parents rely on the school for childcare

A number of our parents go work, look after relatives, have appointments, courses etc. If the school closes, Parents need to find childcare or not go to work. Whilst some jobs can be completed from home, some people need to get to work e.g emergency services!

Some companies are sympathetic if you are unable to come to work because your child's school is closed for snow, some are not!



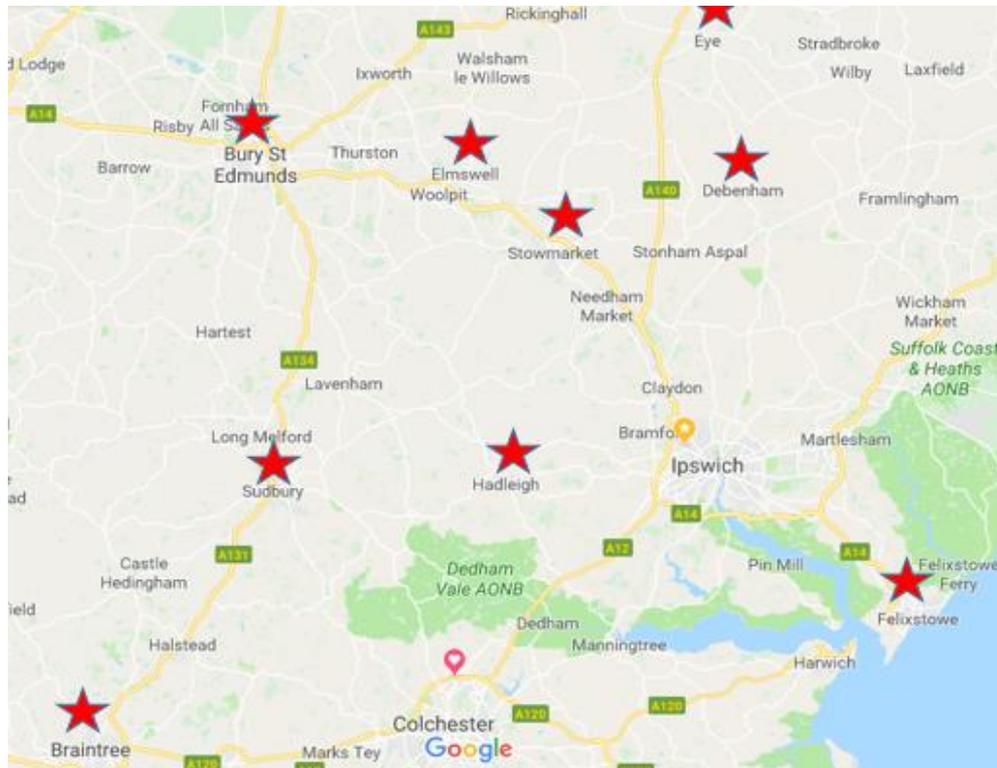
Lets discuss... (1)



Snow Days

Where do staff travel from?

Staff travel to Rushmere from all over Suffolk and Essex. The map shows where some of staff are positioned and why sometimes it is difficult to make a decision about whether we have enough staff to open the school. Apart from a few teachers on this map, all other staff members managed to get to school from these locations on recent snow days.





Lets discuss... (1)



Snow Days

Will absences be unauthorised if my child does not come to school?

Officially, if the school is open and the children are in catchment, the Local Authority have confirmed that this absence should be unauthorised. However, as a school we understand that Parents would not intentionally keep their children off school and so depending on the information we received from parents would consider each case separately. Our office staff were super flexible and suggested to parents that if it was unsafe to travel, they didn't need to.

What if the playgrounds are dangerous?

The school protocol is that clear paths will be cleared by Mr Smith and the site staff. Parents will need to supervise their children to the school doors, ensuring they stay within the marked areas. Yesterday morning, doors opened at 10am and children were invited to go straight back into the classroom.

In the event of entry doors being closed (after registration 9am), parents are advised to knock on the doors (Year 1, Year 5 and Year 6) to gain access or walk round to the office (Year R,2,3,4). This is because in order to open the school and allow flexible entry, we need the teachers and adults in the classroom and not on the playground. Yesterday, Mr Smith was patrolling the playgrounds along with Mrs Spearman encouraging the children to go straight in to school.

It is also likely that the playgrounds will be no more dangerous than the pavements outside the school. We encourage parents to supervise their children to the classroom doors. In the event of the playgrounds being hazardous children will not go at break times on these surfaces.

During the school day, the site staff and Mr Smith check the playgrounds to see if they are safe for the children to play on. On heavy snow days, we utilise the school field as it is a much safer service. When the snow turns to ice the children do not go out for playtimes and will have their playtimes inside.



Lets discuss... (1)



Snow Days

What will children do in school on a 'Snow Day'?

Understandably, the look and feel of the school day will be slightly different to normal during a 'Snow Day'. For logistical reasons, there are adjustments to lunchtime timings, when and where the playtimes take place and potentially some lessons such as P.E. are cancelled due to weather conditions or because they are provided by an external supplier. Playtimes often take place on the field due to sheer size of the space and the softer surface.

In class, the children continue to follow the curriculum and for a large part of the school have standard lessons. In some cases, class teachers may maximise the links to snow by converting current planned lessons more relevant to the external conditions. E.g. Yesterday – a poetry task that was supposed to be connected to a History topic was converted to a Snow based poem. One class did a Science experience / maths lesson exploring the length of time it took for snow to melt in different locations around the school. This replaced the measuring lesson that was originally planned.

The school does not use DVDs or worksheets to keep the children busy during snow days. Each class is taught by a qualified teacher or one of our 5 cover instructors. We are also incredibly lucky to have booster teachers, intervention teachers who are also qualified teachers who are able to step in and cover classes. DVDs are occasionally used over the lunchtime period as an hour outside in the snow would be far too long for children to be outside.



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Thumbs Up!



Those children who were selected for the Science Trip with Mrs Bozier were a credit to the school!

Well done.



Thumbs Up!

So pleased the school managed to win the Ipswich Maths Challenge again this year.

