



Date: Wednesday 19th June 2024 | 16:45 – 17:45 (via MS Teams)

Attendees:

F Corcoran (Principal)	J Arda (Assistant Principal)
Erika Collins (Alana Y7)	Vincentia Odirichukwu (Chidinma Y9)
Simona Bartocci (Leila Y9)	Macrui Dostourian-Moppett (Nico Y10 & Andrea Y9)
Giulia Mastroianni (Gaia Y7)	Samantha James (Elisabeth Y7)
Dorota Barczak (Nicole Y9)	Marcin Jagodzinski (Roger Y10 and Maia Y8)
Benedicte Gercke (Lilly Y8)	

Apologies: Rachael Souter (George Y7)

A reminder that the Parent Focus Group looks at matters arising that are College wide. Any individual issues related to a child should be addressed via their Leader of Learning.

1. Minutes and matters arising

- The Admin Team responded to parents' requests to modify communications with headings on EduLink messages. This comprised of meaningful subject lines and any SMS messages with the first sentence indicating the nature of the communication.
- A survey was shared with parents to organise potential information videos and workshops. This was an item for this meeting's agenda.
- The School Nurse provides about good practice for wellbeing with tips for parents. This is available from: <https://www.stmichaelscollege.org.uk/st-michaels-well-being-newsletter/>

2. Updates from the Principal

- GCSE examinations have completed today as A-level examinations continue.
- The college has made every effort to support examinations and this has been working successfully. The revised Year 11 timetable has been sent to parents to manage revision sessions. The college has been safe and calm.
- After the college end of year exams for Years 7-10 and 12, there are two weeks planned with activities to develop soft skills which are important for confidence-building, future employment and interviews. All Y10 & 12 students take part in work experience as part of the careers guidance offer while Y7-9 have a bespoke programme to meet people from industry or different backgrounds.
- Students gain a wider cultural experience from visits to e.g. The Science Museum or galleries, etc. as they can appear in English exams, for example. Year 8 are to go to Brighton for a Geography field trip.
- Parent Showcase activity due to take place 11th July for children to feature their best work in Music, Drama, Sports, Mental Health Ambassadors, etc. Y7 choir sang for the Y11 students as they celebrated the end of school.
- The St Benedict's Academy Trust is established. Ms Corcoran visited Bonus Pastor with a school improvement focus on challenge for the most able. Sharing practice across schools aids staff development and knowledge sharing.
- Three more schools – St Paul's Academy, St Matthew's Academy, Lewisham and St George's Primary School, Southwark are looking to join in January 2025.
- The new Year 7 evening is due to take place for induction of new students and involve parents on 2nd July.

3. Social media and smartphones

- Headteachers of 17 secondary schools in Southwark have discussed the challenges of smartphone usage with significant time and staffing used on managing inappropriate student incidents e.g. bullying.



- Each school in Southwark will review their behaviour policy. Nokia phones and a Chromebook are being recommended for students to use, particularly with the new Year 7, until students are old enough to use smartphones and related content.
- The college updates students about being safe online through CPSHE lessons to help students navigate the social media and technology usage. Research shows students their ability to read longer texts or their attention is diminished. Issues of anxiety, self-harm, mental health, brain development and peer pressures affect young people.
- A survey will be sent out to parents about phones. Different sanctions will apply between a 'brick' phone and smartphones as per the Southwark Schools group policy. Phones should be switched off in school. If they are seen, they are confiscated. Inappropriate usage of apps e.g. discrimination or bullying are dealt with by behaviour policies. Some schools keep confiscated phones until half term.
- St Michael's encourages the use of Chromebooks for learning. The college policy on phones has been enforced and the key difference is St Michael's is promoting to parents to provide 'brick' phones and understand that this decision is for the common good.
- In Years 7-9, a parent asked if this policy could be mandatory. Ms Corcoran responded that the school wants to work with parents, especially if phones have been purchased already. The 'brick' phones and chromebooks will be promoted to the new Year 7.
- There is a place for smartphones in the use of banking apps, travel apps for purchasing train tickets, etc. and these provide good opportunities for learning and this needs to be balanced against safeguarding children.
- One unit for CPSHE and curriculum evenings provide information for young people.
- Parent suggestions included provided limited data to their children on their phones and use of Wi-Fi at home (which can be monitored). Parents can use settings and manage appropriate usage.
- Another query came from the amount of screen time from laptop usage. Books are primarily being used in lessons, so there is a balance. Technology is useful with quizzes in certain subjects to reinforce learning.
- Thoughts were shared about smart apps or AI being used. There were concerns about monitoring AI and its impact upon learning – distinguishing between fact and fake news. Mr Arda is to attend a conference examining the use of AI and, along with technology across the Trust, will be audited in the next academic year.
- Ms Corcoran thanked parents throughout the exam period and looked forward to seeing parents at the Showcase.
- **Action:** The college will plan/review responses to parent surveys based on the social media and smartphones based on collective action by Southwark schools.
- **Action:** As part of the Trust, the college will audit usage of technology and AI.

4. Parent information follow up

- Sharing results from the parent survey for videos and parent workshops.
- Our first parent video has been created. It will be published on the college website before the end of year reports are sent to parents in July. The video features a parent of a year 9 student talking about how the school report works and what she does to help her child at home. There is also a video being created about the College Rewards and Behaviour policy to explain about the points system.
- **Action:** Mr Arda to arrange for the reports video to be shared alongside the end of year reports.
- Newsletter has been updated in light of parent feedback to feature more images and accounts by students.
- Parent feedback – push messages on EduLink can be a prompt for the curriculum maps and knowledge organisers to support their child. Otherwise, parents appear less aware of the documents which can help their child.
- Discussion around textbooks and recommendation of revision guides to be recommended by departments. Mr Arda explained that curriculum maps and knowledge organisers can directly impact upon a student's learning as this content directly covers learning expected of a child in a certain subject or year group.
- **Action:** Mr Arda to arrange reminder messages related to learning resources to help parents to support their child at home.



- **Action:** Mr Arda to liaise with heads of department to update curriculum maps and content on the college website. In addition to also make recommendations on textbooks or reading material that may support students.

5. Friends of St Michael's (FOSM)

- The group has raised £916.89 and there is now a process in place for staff to bid for funding to support small-scale projects in the school.
- Progress about a FOSM bank account and signatories. Options suggested by parents with fees/free. Planning more events needed.
- **Action:** Group to agree banking arrangements.
- **Action:** Mr Arda to timeline events for 2024-25 from this year.
- One parent felt that the group could be more responsive to support activities. Improvements to be made - sharing responsibilities for organising/transporting refreshments.
- **Action:** Mr Arda to contact the FOSM group to ask for feedback about timings to maximise attendance of the group. Discussions to develop the group in the new school year can begin at the upcoming volunteer events.
- Query about Faith in Action 1st July. Volunteers not yet in place. Mariana in Year 13 wants to fundraise for a gap year teaching impoverished children in China. A view expressed as to whether this was sustainable to offer fundraising for one student when there are house charity events that could support this.
- Upcoming events and volunteers:
 - Sports Awards 9th July. Volunteers: Simona, Dorota, and Erika.
 - Parent Showcase 11th July. Volunteers: Peter, Sam, Macrui, Magdalene, and Dorota.
 - A parent's view to contribute to Open Day and Evening 30th September 2024. Volunteers: Simona (09:30); Sam (Evening).
- **Action:** Parents needed to volunteer for the Faith in Action event on 1st July or September Open Day Evening to speak to prospective parents.
- **Action:** Vincentia Odirichukwu and Giulia Mastroianni to be added to the Friends of St Michael's WhatsApp group and email list.

Minutes to be sent via EduLink