



Date: Thursday 13th March 2025 | 16:45 – 18:00 (via MS Teams)

Attendees: F Corcoran (Principal) J Arda (Assistant Principal)

Francisco Loureiro (Madalena Y7)	Fernando Ojeda (Joshua Y10 & Ariella Y12)
Evelyn Omagbemi (Xavier Y7)	Philipp Thiessen (Marlene Y7)
Yinka Olaitan (Olusola Y7)	Benedicte Gercke (Lilly Y9)
Bryan Hartlin (Sebastian Y7)	Samantha James (Elisabeth Y8)
Giulia Canterini (Gaia Y8)	Marta Paczos (Janka Y7)
Silvana De Jesus Correa (Sophia Y7)	

Apologies: Wendy Abrams (Henry Y9), Vincent Ojeh (Evans Ojeh Y10)

Absent: Peter Haigh (Adam Y8), Krystle Houston (Ariella-Rose Y7), Ava Reid (Chayce Reid Y8)

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

1. Minutes and matters arising

- Parents have received reminders via EduLink with updates to the college calendar.
- The video for 'A Parent's Guide' to student reports was sent out when students received their results in January.
- Student notices are published on Instagram three times a week to further promote student events.

2. Updates from the Principal

- St Michael's academic progress for GCSE and A' level results are confirmed as well above national standards. The A' level average grade in 2024 is the highest on record for the college. Student intervention programmes addressing progress gaps due to Covid and after school programmes have been adapted to nuanced, targeted sessions.
- The college focus is upon refining existing provision rather than introducing new initiatives. St Michael's still awaits an Ofsted inspection. St Matthew Academy, who have recently joined the St Benedict's Academy Trust, had a successful visit and this presents an opportunity for practice to be shared between partner schools.
- Catholic Life is active within the college. Students experiencing Lent, Ash Wednesday and reconciliation services every Thursday are taking place with a short service in the Hall. Students can speak with the priests who said, "students are very well behaved and that students use the opportunity." Lent Charity Fridays and fundraising is taking place. Easter Liturgy takes place in school. A world religions programme promotes other faiths and a Chaplaincy event is taking place after school on Friday to celebrate 'Holi', a Hindu festival of colours event.
- CPSHE lessons focus on health and wellbeing, mental and physical health are mapped with age-appropriate content.
- The expansion of St Benedict's Catholic Academy Trust now adds to the existing schools of St Michael's, Bonus Pastor, St Anthony's, Our Lady and St Philip Neri with new members joining in St Matthew Academy, St Paul's Greenwich, St George's Cathedral School and St Joseph's Gomm Road. Eight schools are now in the St Benedict's Catholic Academy Trust and are sharing resources. School improvement work with St Matthew's is an example of peer reviews which take place. Pilgrims of Hope involves a pilgrimage to each other's schools. Flame is an event staff and students are attending on Saturday 15th March. There will be opportunities for Trust schools with student-led joint activities via prayer or fundraising to take place.



- Children in Year 6 – recently it was secondary school admissions day. 130 students are on the waiting list for St Michael's. In the context of falling rolls, St Michael's is among only 4 out of 20 secondary schools that are oversubscribed.
- Student voice – similar to fundraising activities undertaken by Friends of St Michael's, the Jack Petchey Award provides around £300 a month for students to pitch bids for school-related projects to help students. 90 nominations are currently being considered by the School Council.
- Upcoming areas – an AI pilot is due to take place across Trust Schools and is to be a focus in the year ahead.
- In the summer term, Ms Corcoran wants to share with parents about screen time and suitable amounts for different age groups. For new Year 7s – no smartphones with a confiscation policy in place. Brick phones are allowed.
- The incidents and hours spent on smartphone incidents have reduced significantly because of Southwark schools working together to agree consistent approaches.
- **Action:** Ms Corcoran to share updates about smartphone policy.
- Question from a parent about funding. Joining a Trust allows the opportunity for funding to be accessed and to run centralised services. A staffing consultation is taking place as a review of gaining value-for-money with the use of public funds. A comprehensive review is taking place to assess capacity. Checks to ensure value-for-money from subject areas are taking place while the college is communicating with unions and working with staff supported by the process.
- **Action:** Parents will be contacted in the summer as this process is live.

3. AI – A parent perspective

- This item focused on the responses of parents in relation to AI. Three questions with a range of parent views are summarised as follows:
- **How aware are you of the increasing use of AI tools (like those used for generating text or images) by your child both in and out of school?**
 - Parents' awareness of their children's AI tool usage varies considerably. Some are actively encouraging its use, particularly for creative exploration. Others express concern about their children's usage, with worries about plagiarism and the ability to detect AI-generated work. One parent emphasises parental responsibility in guiding appropriate AI use, particularly regarding image generation and distinguishing reality. Concerns about misinformation, fake news and university regulations are highlighted, with Ms Corcoran indicating the college will share thoughts with parents. One parent questions whether a lack of AI knowledge disadvantages their child, stressing the school's crucial role in education. Several parents highlight the importance of teaching students to critically evaluate AI output and understand proper citation in preparation for university study.
- **What are your main concerns, if any, regarding the impact of AI on your child's learning and development?**
 - Parents have several concerns about the impact of AI on their children's learning and development. Some emphasise the need for children to use AI tools critically, questioning online information and not blindly trusting outputs. There are worries about plagiarism in coursework and the importance of verifying the accuracy of AI-generated content. One parent, like Giulia, has concerns about AI's potential to "dumb down" children and how information is gathered. However, another parent recognises that children will need to be confident AI users for their future academic and professional lives. Overall, concerns centre on AI being used as a shortcut, the danger of over-reliance on AI, and the need for critical evaluation skills.
- How would you prefer the school to communicate with you about the responsible and safe use of AI by our students?
 - Parents want the school to communicate clearly about responsible AI use. They suggest consultations to inform parents about the school's approach to AI education and to raise student awareness. Specific requests include teaching students how to write effective prompts for AI tools and providing examples that help differentiate



between AI-generated and real content. Recognising that parents have varying levels of AI knowledge, they prefer the school to use diverse communication methods, such as consultations, focus groups, and expert groups, to ensure everyone is informed and engaged.

- **Action:** Update on AI pilot and matters arising in the next meeting.
- A question by a parent was asked about the staff consultation during this item. Ms Corcoran advised about the accuracy of this information, its availability to other parents in a situation where it was not possible to respond fully or verify the claims properly. In addition, particularly if the information could identify staff who have not consented to being identified.

4. Friends of St Michael's (FOSM) – update on fundraising projects & Parentkind initiative

- The Friends of St Michael's decided upon four projects to fund. Staff and students thanked the group for their contributions.
 - St Michael's to take part in the F1 in Schools Club with £200 support paying towards costs. Students in the F1 in Schools challenge took on diverse roles: design, leadership, marketing and graphics. They managed tasks emphasising teamwork and time management. They designed cars, secured sponsorships, created branding and supported their team through portfolio contributions and pitstop assistance. Students reflected on their experiences, identifying strengths and areas for improvement, like enhancing social media presence and refining sponsorship strategies, for future competitions.
 - The funding of £100 is being used for an order towards a gardening project for students. Tools, seeds and soil are to be purchased.
 - 68 different books were purchased by Ms El-Janbey with £300 paying for Key Stage 3 (years 7, 8 and 9) to be shared by the English department with students. These books supported World Book Day last Thursday which was organised by Miss Cumber to raise awareness about reading for pleasure.
 - £265 donated for a Battersea Spanish trip for Year 9 students has been relinquished – another counter proposal to fund a project about developing links with our St Michael's alumnus is already in place. Mr Magnoff is asking to use the funding to fund a launch event aiming to recruit 30 mentors to support our students from Years 9-13. On St Michael's LinkedIn page we have 804 alumni and would like to maximise the opportunities of these connections with our students.

Action: Friends of St Michael's to decide whether the £265 can be attributed to the Alumnus project.

- **Upcoming events**

- Thursday 27th March – Spring Concert – doors open 17:00, event begins 17:30-18:20
- Monday 23rd June – Sports Awards (TBC)
- Thursday 10th July – Parent Showcase

Action: Parents to volunteer for the upcoming events.

- **Parentkind** is a charity offering comprehensive support to Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs). For an annual fee of £163, schools gain membership and essential public liability insurance. Parentkind facilitates fundraising efforts, typically helping PTAs raise between £3,000 and £7,000 annually, through initiatives like The Parents Lottery, practical guides, regular newsletters, and informative school webinars covering topics such as Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), Maths, and addressing fussy eaters. They also provide a dedicated member support line for ongoing assistance. There is a possibility of using the same method of cashback websites to provide online purchases.

Action: Friends of St Michael's to decide whether to proceed with Parentkind and to contact the charity to set it up.

Action: Volunteers for the Spring Concert at St Michael's on Thursday 27th March to contact Mr Arda to begin setting up from 4pm.

Minutes to be sent via EduLink