

## St Olave's PA Form Reps Meeting Minutes

**Date:** Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2015 @ 7:30pm

**Location:** Main School Library

**Attendees:** Mr Evans (Deputy Head), Charlotte Rutter, Kate Cameron, Esmat Pourjam, Rinku Chibber, Narinder Gill, Seema Singh, Julie Vouillemin, James Ward, Sue Watts, Helen Patel, Harbi Kaur, Shubhra Tripathi, Jennifer Franks

**Apologies:** Catherine Fleet, Lin Limbrey, Julie Costard, Sarah Eldridge, Siobhan Gee, Gauri Mehra, Paula McCabe, Dinta Madlani

### **Questions for the school**

**1. Can we pay the school to buy dry ingredients for food technology?**

Parents were keen to know if the school could purchase basic ingredients such as vanilla essence for food technology to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste.

*Mr Evans understands the concerns and will ask the department if anything can be done. At the very least he hopes that recipe details can be provided at the start of term so that students and/or parents can co-ordinate shared provision if necessary.*

**2. What is the date for the spring term parents' evening for Year 8?**

*Mr Evans apologised for the accidental omission of the Year 8 parents' evening from the school website calendar. The date is Thursday, March 17<sup>th</sup> 2016.*

**3. Use of supply teachers and impact on students' learning.**

Parents were concerned that the school relied heavily on cover teachers with issues particularly in Geography.

*Mr Evans explained the school is reluctant to use supply teachers from agencies and so it takes some time to appoint new staff as they must first go through a rigorous selection process. There has been an unexpected staffing issue in the first few weeks of this term but experienced subject-specific teachers have been employed on temporary contracts (including an ex St Olave's teacher). A new permanent Geography teacher has been employed to start in January (after working the notice period at their current school).*

**4. Possibility of Online Technology Safety presentation at St Olave's.**

A parent attended a presentation at another school which she found very useful. The company charge £1,000 for a full day's course for all years and includes an evening session for parents.

*Mr Evans thanked the parent for the suggestion and will pass on the details to his colleague for their consideration. He emphasised that the school already has a very successful programme in place to teach online safety but any suggestions for additions are always gratefully received.*

**5. The effectiveness of the computing teaching.**

There was a concern from a parent in Year 10 about poor scores across the class in computing tests and how this might translate to the controlled assessments. Can the students receive better guidance from the teacher about what can be done to improve?

*Mr Evans was not aware of any tests in the specified format nor of an issue with student attainment in this subject. He requested the parent contact the Head of Computing with more information so it can be investigated and any concerns allayed.*

**6. Can the canteen pricing be improved?**

A parent had heard from their child that no prices showed on the items in the canteen and the till only shows your remaining balance and not the purchase amount.

*Mr Evans clarified that all prices are up on a pricing board in the canteen for the boys to see. The price list and current menus can also be found on the school website under Current Olavians > Information for Parents > Catering. They can be downloaded from the bottom of the page.*

**7. Can the alphabetical order system be swapped around sometimes?**

There is concern from Year 8 that a lot of things in the school are done in alphabetical surname order including seating arrangements and tutorial timings. Could this be changed?

*Mr Evans explained that the seating arrangements are in alphabetical order so the teachers can get to know the names of the students in their class. He accepted that the tutorial system is a little unfair in that boys at the start of the alphabet always have an early slot and then have the rest of the day free. He will request that this is randomised in the future.*

**8. Do boys follow a good regime for warmups and cool downs in school training and rugby matches?**

A parent thought they would do but their son has complained of back pain.

*Mr Evans confirmed that PE staff always ensure that proper warm up and cool down routines are followed. He encouraged any boys who experienced pain or injury to speak to their teacher/coach who would be able to recommend additional stretching exercises and give advice on an individual basis.*

**9. What can be done about the lack of provision for football for Year 10 with no clubs available?**

A parent wondered if the PA could pay for a coach if the school has no-one available.

*Mr Evans did not want to ask the PA to pay for a coach as this would set a precedent and the money from the PA is needed for other things. He emphasised the number of sports clubs that take place at the school including 11 different rugby teams playing almost every weekend and that this relied on teachers volunteering their extra time. There are football teams in a couple of years but these were arranged by tutors from that year group who volunteered to run them.*

**10. Should the students travel to rugby matches wearing uniform or kit?**

*It was confirmed by Mr Evans that students should travel in their full uniform as standard to present a good image of the school. There are occasionally times when students must travel in kit due to insufficient changing facilities at the away ground. The students will be informed if so and they must wear a tracksuit over their muddy kit to travel back in the coach.*

**11. Rugby matches - can we have weekly emails of details please?**

Parents expressed some concern that muddled messages came through from the boys regarding timings and other information about rugby matches.

*Mr Evans said that it is difficult for emails to be sent out each week but all details are put up in the foyer weekly along with the team lists. He will speak with the coaches concerned to see if any further improvements can be made to the way in which last-minute changes are communicated to parents. In the meantime, the fixture list can be found on the website under Current Olavians > Co-curriculum > Sports > Fixtures.*

**12. What is the school's opinion on wearing protective head gear for rugby?**

Parents also suggested that head gear, body armour and gloves be put on the optional kit list for new Year 7s.

*Mr Evans said the school was happy for students to wear head gear if they wanted. He will get the items added to the optional kit list.*

**13. The St. Olave's Grammar School Bronze Award - physical section.**

A child had expressed concern to their parent about the difficulty of the physical section in the bronze award as he isn't a natural sportsman but is willing to work hard.

*Mr Evans explained the premise of the award system which was introduced last year. Bronze for KS3, Silver for KS4 and Gold for KS5. The details for the relevant awards are in the students' planners. It is designed to be challenging to achieve and those that managed it last year show a real sense of pride in wearing their badge.*

*On the specific point of the physical section Mr Evans explained the most achievable element is for a student to represent their House team four times. There are a number of house competitions throughout the year including sports day. In addition, there is an 'other' category which means that if there is a specific and measurable sporting achievement not covered by the existing criteria they can ask the PE department to determine if the level of achievement is high enough to be counted towards the award.*

**14. Mouth guards - can we have a Parentmail in advance to inform of Opro visits especially in the summer?**

*Mr Evans apologised for the school not communicating details of last summer's Opro visit to parents. He will ensure that details for the next visit are emailed out and put on the school online calendar.*

**15. Are boys allowed to choose to drop from the rugby team?**

A few parents wanted to know if their child could opt out of playing in the rugby matches even if selected for the A or B team.

*Mr Evans explained that staff are very committed and give up a lot of their time to coach the rugby teams. To respect this, it is expected that a student who is selected to represent the school will do so. However, if there are valid reasons why a student cannot take part this should be discussed with their coach giving as much notice as possible.*

## **AOB**

It was asked if the use of phones could be banned during break and lunch time as students can be quite addicted to playing games on them to the detriment of doing other things.

*Mr Evans said that students require phones due to their journeys to and from school and as such it would be hard to police their use in non-supervised parts of the school day. Students are already banned from using phones during lesson times. He added that although a few students can be seen sitting playing on their phones in break-times, the majority can be found running around playing with friends or attending clubs. In addition, it is for the parents to decide whether or not the students have a smart phone in the first place.*

Hot food queues are very long and students can find it especially hard when they need to go to a lunch time club.

*Mr Evans said queues are not as long as students sometimes say. There is plenty of food and time available for all to get a hot meal at lunch break. That said, if lots of students arrive at the same time there will inevitably be a queue but by 1pm this has usually died down. If students have lunch clubs starting early they also have the option to get a hot sandwich at break-time.*

A parent was concerned that their child could not get a hot meal at lunch due to food intolerances that are under investigation. She requested a microwave for him to heat meals from home.

*Mr Evans sympathised with the parent's concerns. He explained that it is not possible to provide a microwave for student's use but encouraged her to contact the Head of Catering to discuss the issue and find menu items that could be tolerated.*

There is currently only one Year 12 rep attending meetings. It was suggested there could be 4 house reps for Year 12 instead of a form rep for each of the 10 forms in the year.

*Charlotte agreed to send a Parent Comms to Year 12 parents to ask for volunteers.*

There was a question from Year 8 parents about the policy of tutor groups as their tutor had changed from last year.

*Mr Evans explained the current school policy is for tutor groups to remain the same from Year 7 to 9 and then from Year 10 to 11 and then Year 12 to 13. Where possible this includes having the same tutor but due to staff changes this is not always the case. It was a coincidence this year that most Year 8 classes had changed tutor from Year 7.*

## **Date of next meeting**

Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> January 7.30 - 8.45 pm