

Feedback from meeting about clubs on Friday 14th October 2016

Thank you to the parents who gave up their time to attend Friday's meeting about clubs. This opportunity for discussion and questions resulted in a greater mutual understanding of the aims and challenges as the school continually tries to monitor and improve its extra-curricular provision. We were so pleased to hear that our clubs provision is appreciated by both children and parents. It was suggested by the parents at the meeting that a report should be presented, in order to give parents who weren't able to attend, an idea of the issues raised and discussed.

Reduction in the number of free clubs offered

There was some concern about the reduction in the number of free clubs offered this time. It was explained that, whilst some of the clubs are free to parents, there is indeed a cost either in terms of paying the teaching assistants who lead the clubs, or in time given up by teachers which then has to be made up elsewhere in the week. We have had to adjust the numbers of clubs this time.

Firstly, because we have found that the teaching assistants that work in the Reception classes are not able to fulfil their Early Years after-school commitments and also run a club. Secondly, because we are committed to avoiding inconveniencing parents by cancelling clubs due to staff unavailability e.g. training, we have found it necessary to ask a small number of staff to act as 'cover' staff who will step in, if necessary, to make this possible. This works well, but does mean that they can no longer run a club of their own.

Booking system

It has been particularly obvious this time that parents have experienced some frustration about the speed with which some of the clubs get booked up. The online booking system has been adopted as the previous paper system proved to be very time consuming for our administration staff. The 'going live' time of 7pm has been chosen to avoid penalising parents who are at work during the day. Parents at the meeting were asked if there would be a better time but it was generally agreed that it would be impossible to find a time that suited everyone. As the school always given notice, it would seem a reasonable time for parents to apply for clubs. We discussed the possibility of the school adding children that are on the waiting list for a club to the following term's list, letting the parents involved know that their child has a place next term and then adjusting the numbers available online for that club accordingly. The parents at the meeting thought that this would be a helpful way forward and we will certainly look into doing this. It was noted by the parents that not all clubs are oversubscribed.

Availability of space

When deciding on numbers for the clubs we have to take into account the safety of children and staff, and the availability of space. As a result of the feedback of a few parents, we do want to ensure that parents are aware of our commitment to the provision of high quality physical activity and education. In addition to a full PE curriculum, increasingly successful participation in borough competitions, coach-led activities throughout the lunchtimes and the very successful introduction of our lunchtime 'daily mile' challenge for all ages, we also offer a number and variety of physical activity and sports clubs - archery, basketball, frisbee, football, dance, multisports and Fun Fitness Friday. These are very popular and we would love, in an ideal world, to offer more but, after parental feedback about the accommodation of sports clubs in the event of really bad weather, we now only run clubs for which we can offer a viable wet weather alternative. As far as the school and JFS-led clubs are concerned, the leaders have activities that the children can do indoors on these occasions, and we encourage external providers to also have a bad weather back up plan. Obviously any concerns about any of the externally-led clubs need to be addressed directly to the provider. Some of the other clubs are held in classrooms, but we don't consider it fair to ask any teacher to host more than one club a week.

Timetabling of clubs

A very valid point was raised about trying to avoid certain clubs from being held at the same time in order to give children greater choice. It was explained that, whilst we would agree that this would be our aim, we are sometimes limited by the days that individual staff members work and the availability of space. We do, wherever possible, try to spread the type of clubs e.g. sports, art,

computing to give the greatest possible choice on any one day. I am currently looking into options for gaining greater capacity for clubs.

It was a very useful meeting and the school will certainly take into account all the views expressed at the meeting and take on board the very helpful ideas and advice. My thanks again to all who attended,

Mrs Pakes