

# Ellingham Family Forum

Friday, February 24th 2017

Those who attended agreed to the following Forum rules:

- The names of individuals who have submitted items will not be used on the agenda or in the Forum meeting unless the person wishes to make this known.
- The school understands that some people would prefer to remain anonymous, and will accept anonymous submissions, although names would be useful in the event of items requiring clarification or possibly rewording.
- The school reserves the right to omit items that are sent anonymously, if we consider it appropriate to do so.
- The school reserves the rights to omit references considered to be potentially hurtful to members of the school community, and are therefore better dealt with privately with an appropriate member of staff.
- The school will not use opinions that are unclear in origin or attributed to people other than the person submitting the item.

## Outcomes:

### School photos

*An opportunity to look at examples of photographs and share thoughts-*

The parents were unanimous in choosing the casual style of class photo, so this is what we will ask the new photography company to produce. These will be taken in the second half of the school year. Individual photographs will be taken in the Autumn term. The school will speak to them about the possibility of also including an individual photograph to display alongside the class photograph for children in Reception and Year Six (it is too time consuming to do this for all year groups).

### After-school clubs

*Is there any opportunity for some more active clubs i.e. karate, tennis?*

This would be difficult at the moment, as we have responded to parental concerns about wet weather options and only run outdoor clubs that we can accommodate indoors in wet weather. We are currently looking at club provision with a view to using other space off site, but there are safety and staffing issues to consider. We are constantly looking for opportunities to increase our club provision, but have to ensure that the space we have is put to the most effective educational use and meets the needs of as many children as possible. We will ensure that, in future, at least forty-eight hours' notice is given of the club booking system going 'live' so that all parents have time to prepare for this.

### Homework

*Can rewards/certificates be given out to children for good homework? This will encourage and help children understand that the homework is good.*

In future teachers will award stickers for individual pieces of homework as it is handed in on a weekly basis. At the end of each half term all teachers will give overall feedback which can be stuck in the book.

### Chill out - after school and breakfast club

*Whose decision is it who we use? Has this provider been reviewed recently? Can a survey be done? Are all families that use these services happy?*

The current provider hires the space and isn't therefore an employee of the school. The arrangement is therefore between the parent/ carer, as the customer, and the company. We would like to be kept informed of parental opinion about the provision, but request that any problems relating to routines and procedures are made directly to Chill Out.

### Lunchtime/playtime

*What can be done about children who don't eat their lunch because they are more interested in going out to play? How can this be monitored?*

This is constantly monitored by the lunchtime supervisors and, whilst all the supervisors are consistent in encouraging children to eat their lunch, there is a point where it is obvious that this isn't having an effect and could upset the child. Children are allowed to take as long as they need, and sometimes we have the opposite problem, in that they get no play because they take so long to eat. It is, therefore, a difficult situation for the supervisors, who can only do their best, taking into account what they know of individual children. If packed lunches aren't being eaten, then parents will know this from the returned packed lunchbox, and could

support us by talking to the child and reinforcing realistic expectations. Regarding hot meals, the supervisors do let teachers know if a child is developing a pattern of not eating much at all, but most children do eat enough, if not all of it. It can be very helpful when parents allow their children to be involved in choosing of their hot meals, as it helps to minimise incidents of children telling lunchtime supervisors that they don't like a particular meal.

#### Comments on school dinners

*The portion sizes are too small.*

It was explained by ISS representatives that portion sizes are measured in accordance with government recommendations and were nutritionally balanced. Although the children can help themselves to bread and salad, they are not allowed seconds of the main meals and desserts as there is also a need to be guided by warnings against childhood obesity.

*The new system is not very user-friendly - you do not get reminders for payments or to order more meals.*

*The fact that you have to enter in the amount you want to pay is confusing.*

The request for a reminder has been passed on to ISS, who are looking into ways to make the system work for all. Similarly, a request for a 'pay as you go' system for occasional meals has been passed on to the company.

#### Friends Of Ellingham

*What is happening with Friends of Ellingham and the money that is not being used for the children?*

An email will be going out on Friday 3rd March about Friends of Ellingham, with the hope that as many parents, family members and friends will offer whatever help they are able to.

#### Newsletter

*Mr Light's weekly newsletters are brilliant, informative and great communication between school and parents.*

We are pleased that parents are finding the school newsletters so useful. Thank you for this valuable feedback.

#### ISS school meals food tasting

From 3.05pm onwards, in the small hall, there was an opportunity for parents and children to taste samples of food that appears on the ISS hot meals menu. This was very well received and we are grateful to the kitchen staff for making this possible.

The school would like to thank all those who attended the Forum and/or submitted items for discussion. Your views have been very helpful in ensuring that we consider the wider school community in our decisions. Our thanks also go to Kelly and Sinead from ISS who addressed the issues raised about hot school dinners.

The next Family Forum will be on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> June. Please put this date in your diary. If you have any issues that you would like to be discussed, please hand these in, in written form, to the school reception office, even if you are unable to attend the Forum. We hope that as many as possible parents, family members and friends of the school will be able to join us and help us to make the decisions necessary in order to take the school forward.