

GTS Parent Forum

Tuesday 11th March 2014

Present: Tracy Amos (Headteacher), Miriam curdy, Naomi Cox, Penny Stowell

Apologies: Celia Busby, Karen Palmer, Sue Kavanagh, Maggs Zahira

1. Update on cashless catering – canteen are reporting between £100 - £150 per week increase in their takings. Pupils in receipt of free school meals are happier as new system does not draw attention to the fact they are having a ‘free’ meal. Initially queues to buy food were quite long, but these are now reducing.
2. GTS dining hall is not big enough for all pupils to sit down and eat. Tracey Amos explained that the school have applied for grants unsuccessfully over the last two years to remodel the dining hall. Tracy is awaiting the results of the current bid. GTS is the only secondary school in Devon which does not have dedicated dining hall facilities.
3. Parents can log into Parentmail and view a list of items their child has purchased. School can supply a paper list on request.
4. School are considering how to encourage pupils to purchase ‘healthier’ food options. Tracy explained that previously large amounts of healthy food have been wasted as pupils tend to purchase ‘fast food’ type items. Tracy explained that one idea being considered was the reward of house points for healthy food purchased.
5. Pupil ability bandings – Tracy explained that historically pupils have been divided into the top 50% of academic achievers, and the bottom 50%. This system resulted in some stigma, and some pupils feeling unmotivated. The school is now using new ‘g & t’ bandings (name has no relevance) and timetables are planned dependent on classroom and teacher availability with more mixed ability groups. This system should enable pupils to make progress without the negative impact on some groups being labelled as the lower achievers.
6. General discussion on the parent forum – very good attendance at last terms meeting, but lower numbers on this occasion. Agreed that some publicity about the benefits of the forum would be shared via Parentmail. The forum enables parents and head teacher to meet each term and discuss issues that are impacting on pupils at school. This has proved to be a very useful way of information sharing, and the methods of ‘Parent consultation’ were one example of discussion topic from the last meeting which Tracy explained is currently being discussed with staff.
7. It was agreed that Parentmail would be used to remind parents about the forthcoming meetings 10 days before, and 48 hours before, as this method of information sharing does not occur any cost to the school.