



Response to parental voice autumn 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Gauging opinion of all our stakeholders will and always will be a key part of our drive to be a better school. Your opinions and feedback, both positive and constructive, will always be heard and taken into consideration as we review, evaluate and plan our next steps. This term, we sent out a parental questionnaire via a link. Thank you to all those parents who completed it. We have had 68 responses.

The questions we asked and the percentage of parents who agreed is below:

- My child is happy at this school - 75% agreed
- My child feels safe at this school - 93% agreed
- The school makes sure its pupils are well behaved - 92% agreed
- The school makes me aware of what my child will learn during the year - 70% agreed
- When I have raised concerns with the school they have been dealt with properly - 83% agreed
- My child has SEND, and the school gives them the support they need to succeed - 92% agreed
- The school has high expectations for my child - 88% agreed
- My child does well at this school - 90% agreed
- The school lets me know how my child is doing - 68% agreed
- There is a good range of subjects available to my child at this school - 95% agreed
- My child can take part in clubs and activities at this school - 93% agreed
- The school supports my child's wider personal development - 77% agreed
- I would recommend this school to another parent - 74% agreed

There are a number of areas that we need to make improvements in and we are putting plans in place to address these.

The questionnaire also gave you the opportunity to add anything else that you would like to make us aware of. We have grouped your questions under the following headings and noted our responses to them:

- **Mental health**

How are you supporting students' mental health?

As with other needs, mental health and wellbeing provision can be measured in levels of support. We have established a graduated programme of support to meet student needs at an appropriate level. Level 1 is about universal need i.e. addressing the needs of all students through assemblies, tutor periods and Personal, Health, Social, Relationships and Economics Lessons (PHSRE). The upcoming PHSRE letters will detail provision in lessons which cover a range of themes around wellbeing and mental health. All students during these lessons are signposted to wider support. In addition, specific year groups will receive additional sessions e.g. exam stress for Year 11 and 13. PHSRE content is reinforced with half-termly assemblies linked to wellbeing and mental health and recognising national days such as Mental Health Day. Tutors and pastoral staff also monitor the students in their care and there is communication from all staff if there are deemed to be any needs.

Level 2a is about more individual support. This will be based on assessing the needs of students and may include sessions on emotional regulation (which we call Zones of Regulation), self-esteem sessions, wellbeing and craft club (new club for this term supported by Tesco grant funding), mentoring and some access to the school nurse. We also provide advice and guidance to parents and students. We are pleased to advise on a new service for Sixth Formers: a weekly lunchtime drop in service to enable students to just ask questions or seek advice.

Level 2b is more detailed provision for individual students, again following internal assessment of need. This includes referral to external agencies firstly, Reach4Wellbeing, an NHS service for students with moderate anxiety difficulties. We are also pleased to be able to offer POP provision in school. POP stands for Positive Outcomes Project. POP uses student social workers on placement (with supervision) and running a programme of support for individuals or groups. This includes work on resilience, self-esteem and relationships work. Finally, we are pleased to introduce MHIST. This stands for Mental Health in Schools Team. In recognition of the gap between school provision and NHS referrals MHIST practitioners are being introduced to all schools gradually to provide expertise within the setting. Our MHIST practitioner, Louise Hudson, has recently started with us. She will be able to provide some 1-1 work with students, lunch drop in sessions and work with parents. We will update you with more specific detail in the coming months.

Level 3 is the next stage with specialist provision. We have a school counsellor who sees students following assessment for a range of mental health difficulties. She will also make assessments and signpost to other services and sometimes provides email counselling. We are pleased to advise an extension of this provision through securing a student counsellor who is developing her practice. Jacqui Allen will be with us one morning a week. The Safeguarding team will also refer students with needs to specialist provision such as the Branch project, bereavement counselling (through Footsteps or St Richard's Hospice) and also CAMHS CAST. CAMHS CAST are a support service for CAMHS. If students have been turned down for an assessment CAMHS CAST can be referred to and will assess need and signpost to wider services.

The final stage (4) is a referral to CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) for higher level needs.

- **Homework**

Why is homework important?

Regular homework remains to be a priority at TDMS as it serves as an intellectual discipline, consolidates learning and develops good study habits and routines. In addition, it fosters student initiative, independence, and responsibility, and brings home and school closer together. Forming strong study routines early will significantly reduce anxiety caused by assessments and terminal exams in the long term.

Why don't the students do projects for homework?

Research says that small and regular amounts of homework are more effective at allowing students to recall identified core knowledge and for this to become more embedded in the long term memory. The setting of projects can easily mean that students go off topic and spend a large amount of time researching knowledge that may not be relevant and/or may lead to misconceptions. Quizzing tasks set by the subject specialist means the correct information is being revised and regular recall increases retention.

- **Uniform**

How is uniform checked and especially the lengths of skirts?

School uniform is important as it shows that the student has a sense of pride and community. It can improve learning by reducing distraction, sharpening focus on school work and making the classroom a more serious environment, allowing students to perform better academically. We check school uniform as the students come into school in the morning, including the length of skirts. We use the first 10 minutes of the first lesson not only to check the school uniform but also to support students to correct it. We will provide items of clothing such as tights and socks for the students to wear as well as lending other items such as shoes and ties. Members of staff welcome the students into their room for all of the lessons and they will check the student uniform, including the skirt length.

▪ Behaviour

Why is the school so strict?

Good behaviour is the foundation of learning; we believe it is our responsibility to make sure there is a calm and purposeful learning environment around the school that allows all our students to have the opportunity to learn. If there is low level disruption in lessons it is a distraction to other students in the room and research shows that even a small increase in noise can have a significant impact on ability to concentrate.

Is it true you get a detention if you drop something?

There have been no detentions issued for dropping an item and this is not part of our behaviour policy.

Why are you giving detentions?

We believe in a consistent behaviour management system. Detentions can both act as a deterrent but also give the students a chance to reflect when they have got it wrong. We make sure that all the students are clear on the expectations and the first part of the process is a C1 warning. We will remind the students why they have a warning and this gives them an opportunity to make a change in their behaviour. We believe that a consistent behaviour policy works best with certainty rather than severity. We have moved the vast majority of the detentions to lunchtime meaning that the students are able to serve them during the day, rather than having to stay behind at the end of the day.

Why can't students ask questions?

Students can ask questions; this is an essential part of the learning process. We want students to ask if they do not understand a task that has been set or need help. We do ask that students ask the right questions at the right time. A question that is unrelated to the topic or learning is clearly not the right type of question. Likewise, questions that interrupt the member of staff when they are explaining new material or disrupt the learning of others are not at the right time. This week in tutor time we have talked to students about asking questions and what they need to do if they need help in a lesson.

Are break and lunch time supervised?

Yes, there is supervision at break and lunchtime by senior leaders and subject teachers. A duty rota indicates where every member of staff should be to ensure that the school site is covered. No students are left unsupervised. It is important the students have an opportunity to have a break, relax and let off steam, but we also expect the behaviour and conduct to be sensible and safe. As well as members of staff monitoring the behaviour of the students, it is also an excellent time to talk to them about their day.

▪ Communication

How are you improving communication?

Working with families is essential to supporting students to achieve their potential. Good communication is central to this. This term, we have put in place the following:

- Weekly Head's update providing a snap shot of the week as well as any necessary updates;
- Regular letters;
- Dedicated parental email (parents@tdms.worcs.sch.uk);
- Termly parental voice and response; and
- Half termly parent/carer forum.

Next term, we will be launching our new Edulink parent app that will combine our current information systems into one making it easier and quicker to access the necessary information about your child as well as streamlining the sharing of information.

How are you improving induction communication for new parents?

This year, transition will last the year with regular opportunities for students to visit the school and take part in activities as well as opportunities for families to meet with key members of staff and the school. We are working hard to improve our relationships with the feeder schools to ensure that new parents and students have access to all the necessary information to make transition in September a smooth and easy process.

- **Rewards**

How are you making sure that the shy and quiet students are being recognised and rewarded?

All students who are working hard should be rewarded within lessons using achievement points (AP) logged on the board. Each week, Heads of Learning send 5 postcards a week to recognise outstanding success and effort within the year group. Our students are recognised for positive behaviours, from sitting quietly and working hard on a piece of work to giving well reasoned explanation when asked a question in a lesson. Our rewards system has been designed to recognise and reward the behaviour we want to see and rewards all students fairly.

- **Extra-curricular**

Can the school improve its extra-curricular offer?

TDMS currently offers 30 different activities that occur before, during and after school. Every half term we will evaluate our offer and see how we can improve it for the following half term. There are opportunities every day for students to complete homework, during and after school. We are investigating a self-defence and a variety of other sporting clubs, after feedback from a group of students.

- **Lockers**

Can the students have lockers?

Yes, lockers are available to all students that want them. If your child would like a locker, please ask them to speak to their Head of Learning.

- **Curriculum/T&L**

Why are the walls white?

“You learn what you attend to”. This is a phrase you will hear often at TDMS meaning that you learn what you are able to focus on. For example, if you are concentrating in a car when you are performing a difficult manoeuvre or following the SAT nav when lost, you may turn the radio down. This is because we find it very difficult to concentrate on more than one thing. We have plain walls in the classrooms so that students’ focus is entirely on the learning in the classroom. It is often the case that wall displays in classrooms are in awkward places and are hard to read and therefore can cause an unnecessary distraction. Teachers should be spending time on providing students with excellent resources and lessons, not on decorating the walls.

Why has the school chosen to follow the curriculum it has?

As a school, we are unapologetically ambitious for all our students and we want our curriculum to reflect this. We believe that every student should have access to a wide range of information and knowledge. We build our curriculum around key concepts and knowledge that is going to ensure a successful future for all of our learners, where they will be able to engage in all aspects of society. We are currently going through a significant curriculum review to ensure that students have access to the powerful knowledge as well as a breadth and depth of topics. Now that we are part of a multi academy trust, teachers are able to share best practice and expertise from other outstanding and good schools. Access to other school curriculums is enabling us to make the necessary improvements to our curriculum offer to ensure that every student is challenged to achieve their potential.

Why can't students speak and discuss in class?

They absolutely can, just at the right time that is orderly and ensures the best possible environment for learning. We use a no hands up policy during questioning to ensure that all our students have understood the main teaching points of the lesson. We are working with students to ensure that they understand that timing is everything as well as helping them to understand how to listen to peers and the teacher and respond appropriately.

▪ **Reporting**

How are you going to improve communication about what my child is learning?

We are going to introduce a parents/carers friendly curriculum overview for Years 6-10. This will be available every half term so that parents/carers will be able to see what their child is studying in the various subjects. We aim to get this ready for this half term.

How are you going to improve communication about how my child is progressing?

From January 2022 we will be using a platform called Edulink One. It is a whole school solution designed for teachers, parents/carers and students to effectively collaborate in a user-friendly mobile and web app. All users have access to messaging (via text, email or push notification), attendance, timetables, achievement, behaviour, homework, exams, student reports, medical and contact information.

Parents will also be able to manage and book parents' evenings, view cashless catering balances, share resources and collect information using forms. This is an example of what parents/carers will see when they log onto the Edulink One app and look at their child's information. We will be writing to you shortly to inform you about how to access Edulink One.



Thank you again for all of your support.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ruth Allen'.

Ruth Allen
Headteacher