



The De Montfort School

UNLOCKING YOUR CHILD'S POTENTIAL

Parent Voice Meeting **Tuesday 15th March 2016 at 6pm**

Present:

Mrs F Lovecy, Deputy Head Teaching & Learning
Mr M Sandell, Head of 6th Form

Mrs Lovecy welcomed everyone to the meeting, and reported an agenda change to accommodate some new issues that had arisen for discussion.

1. Sixth Form Uniform Proposal

Current 6th form uniform policy states “smart office wear”. This has led to a fair amount of confusion within the 6th form student body, particularly girls, as boys tend to wear suits, and look very smart. The parameters for girls’ office wear are much wider, and there are a lot of grey areas, which sometimes results in TDMS 6th formers not looking as smart as their counterparts in the lower years. Because the uniform and taking pride in a smart appearance as a school has become an embedded core value of the school, it was felt by students and staff that perhaps a uniform for the 6th form would allow them to assume their role as examples who are looked to by the lower years, and they would become the smartest in the school.

A lot of thought has gone in to the uniform choices, and Mr Sandell explained that the favoured choice at present was a grey uniform, which will mark out the 6th form as a separate body from the rest of the school, giving them a feeling of independence and stature. It has been proposed that there is no badge on the uniform blazers, so that students can wear the uniform as a suit for work experience, university and job interviews. They will have a tie to reflect their inclusion in the school, but the logo will be silver instead of red to give them a feeling of seniority.

The uniform has been met with good feedback from the current Year 12 students, and the current year 11 who will be the first to wear it are also in favour. It was pointed out that it will probably cost a lot less than having to buy proper men’s suits for boys and several office wear outfits for girls. Shirts and footwear remain the same as current policy, which also helps reduce the cost.

Mr Sandell showed samples to PVT, along with a brochure from a proposed supplier. The PVT were unanimous in their positive feedback for the uniform, particularly those who had already had children go through the 6th form, who had first-hand experience of the “What shall I wear today?” dilemma from their children.

PVT asked “What will ensure the 6th form skirt length remains regulation?”

Mr Sandell replied that because the uniform was from a specific supplier, it would be consistent. He reported that the students themselves had chosen a longer style of skirt, as they preferred this. PVT asked "What about hairstyles across the school?"

Mr Sandell told PVT that there was a strict policy on hairstyles, and that extreme hair styles and colours would not be tolerated, and a student would be sent home or have to work in isolation until the hair could return to an appropriate style. In the middle school girls must tie hair back. This is not a policy in the high school.

Next steps are to introduce the uniform to the students on the 6th form taster day, and finalise details and supply details. PVT feedback was that it was far easier to use an internet supplier than the local school shop.

2. Babcock Prime report circulated to PVT for feedback

Mrs Lovecy asked PVT to read through a report of findings from a visit from the Local Authority School Improvement officers. Four officers came to the school for a long day where they visited both sites, observed lessons, read through books and checked marking, and interviewed students. It was a very thorough visit and the feedback report was extremely positive. It did highlight some areas for improvement, which Mrs Lovecy said were largely in hand and change was under way.

PVT found the report to be very positive. Two areas of improvement were clarified at the request of PVT;

- The observation of a small group of students whose behaviour was not consistent. Mrs Lovecy explained that there are a small percentage of students who have problems with behaviour. At the middle school it is very few, and these students are sometimes children with additional needs who are being supported by the school within lessons. There is also a small group of Year 9 students who are sometimes counting the days until they can drop certain subjects as they will take their option subjects. This has led to them 'giving up' to an extent in certain lessons, and causing disruption. TDMS Senior Leaders have been supporting staff teaching Year 9 with extra support in lessons to try and prevent disruption, plus setting work and using strategies to support the students and ensure good conduct. It was noted that this has been a pattern towards the Option period historically in Year 9, and it was felt by PVT that going forward this would not be the case as the beginning of Year 9 will now mean the commencement of GCSE studies for students and staff, which should mean they are totally engaged and this 'foot off the pedal' phenomenon will be a thing of the past.

- The report highlighted that some middle ability students were not being pushed in lessons. Some PVT members felt this was relevant to their own children, and Mrs Lovecy explained that it is a difficult balance to challenge a child without giving them work so hard that it scared them off. She said that TDMS have high expectations of Students learning, and that through knowing the students and their parents, staff were able to better challenge the students. PVT were encouraged to always contact staff if they felt their child was not being pushed.

3. IPU (Progress Reports) Update

Mrs Lovecy circulated anonymised examples of Year 6 and Year 9 IPUs. Last term, these had both featured comments from staff on the back. PVT thought that some of the comments were still too generic, and need to be very detailed to the child. Mrs Lovecy explained there is a strict character count to fit the comments on, so PVT stated they would prefer straight in with detail rather than

“(Child’s name) is a pleasure to teach” style of comments. A Year 11 PVT member had also recently received a report with just comments, and she stated that they were very detailed and specific to her child. It was asked by PVT that all staff comments follow this pattern.

PVT asked about Attitude to Learning grades- some had experienced their child having a drop in ATL grades. Mrs Lovecy explained that the parameters for ATL had got harder, and that students were aware of the new parameters, and were trying to attain ATL 1 in all subjects.

PVT asked “what is the national attainment average for Year 6,7,8, 9? Can this not feature on the IPU?”

Mrs Lovecy explained that there is no National assessment expectation for these year groups, progress is measured from baseline assessments when they enter school and their Year 6 SATS in core subjects. PVT commented that IPUs need to be constantly explained and subject teachers and form teachers need to be available to give a very simple explanation after the IPUs are issued, so parents do not worry about their child’s progress.

4. Safeguarding

Mrs Lovecy asked PVT if they were familiar with the process for complaints and reporting problems. Although most PVT had not read the actual policy on the TDMS website, they all felt that they knew who to address concerns too, and the proper process of escalation. PVT had all had positive experiences of emailing or calling about a problem, and it being resolved at the first level, with no need for escalation.

Mrs Lovecy thanked everyone for coming and set the date of the next meeting as May 24th 2016.