

## **Woodbridge Road Academy Council Meeting**

Wednesday 13th November 2024

Academy Council Attendees: NS, GK, GJ, SM, BD

Apologies: MS

WRA: NS, CM

Paradigm: BH

### **Introductions**

BH introduced himself to the council, the council then introduced themselves.

GJ said "Frankie has found his people here, he is thriving at WRA".

### **Parent/Carer Survey**

NS explained that there is a QR code available for the survey, there is a poster in Reception with it on. There is a prize draw for those who take part to opt into. NS said that there would be PC's available in the hall during parents' evening. GJ suggested that a poster was also put up in the Visitors Room window with the QR code.

BH suggested that if there is a family Whatsapp group could it be shared there too?

NS explained that the last survey was carried out two years ago when WRA was still in the early stages.

BH explained that we don't know who has completed the survey, it is totally anonymous as it is run by an external company.

CJ suggested that we send out regular text reminders.

### **Hidden Disabilities**

NS asked if everyone was aware of this service and played the video. She then showed the council the box containing the sunflower lanyards and cards and explained that they are available free from various outlets. She said that it may be of use to our pupils and that more information would be going in the December newsletter.

GJ said that she took her children abroad last year and wore a lanyard at the airport. She said it was spotted, she didn't have to explain and that they were looked after by the staff and it was brilliant. She said her daughter refused to wear a lanyard so she has a card with her with the information on the back so she doesn't have to speak. She said she encourages her children to wear them.

NS said that a few of our staff wear them too.

BK said that she flew this year and her son refused to wear the lanyard so she wore it and they were pushed to the front.

BH said that we aren't going to push them onto pupils, that if they don't want to wear one they don't have to.

GJ said that some people don't want to disclose publicly.

BH said that Paradigm Trust was not making money from promoting the service. That it was felt it could be useful to staff and pupils.

GJ said that there is a problem with people abusing the system for things such as getting through the airport quicker.

BH said that an alternative was the blue badge scheme and that has lots of paperwork. The sunflower symbol is a way to help educate people about what is involved.

### **Coffee Mornings**

NS asked how we could increase uptake for the coffee mornings? She noted that some people come to all of them and some don't come to any.

GJ said that a lot of prior notice is required, as she is self employed she needs to know in advance to attend.

It was agreed that a reminder would be put in the next newsletter.

NS said that we can put the dates on the website or on the My Child At School app.



NS asked if we should try holding them in the afternoon instead of morning? It had been noted that some parents/carers are waiting at school from 2.30pm, she said that we want to run some parent/child workshops but that she is

aware that we will always have the same children whose parents can't come and we don't want to make anyone feel bad. Maybe we should try it for a session?

GJ said that unless you try you won't know, but there are a lot of parents who work or pupils who come in by taxi. She suggested that the session was offered and to see how it goes.

NS said we are looking into getting a calendar on the website.

BH suggested that we invite the taxi drivers who sit outside from early to come in and have a coffee and some input.

There was a discussion around taxis and how some are brilliant and others not so good.

NS said that the newest council member is unwell and unable to attend but had the timing of this meeting been ok for everyone else?

### **Work Experience**

NS said that we are preparing work experience which will not be a standard two week window and instead we would like to offer a wider range of experiences.

GJ said that her husband has volunteered for someone to go to Whitehouse Primary School, that the school is very inclusive.

SM said the Laurel Fam offer work experience, she said she has been there and the owner explained to the staff about the pupil and they were given a list of what he/she could do.

NS said we have had a few employment people come in to talk to the students and so we have got a few things lined up. She told BR that there is an opportunity for her son which has come up, we are just waiting on more details. NS asked if anyone has any other contacts which might help out.



CJ said that Baylham Rare Breeds take on work experience students. She also suggested Colchester Zoo.

NS said that some pupils had written a persuasive letter to her asking to go to Colchester Zoo. There was also a discussion about One Animal World.

CJ said that they give a qualification in animal care there.

NS said that The Wolsey theatre has lots of opportunities, one of them is a game design program.

GJ said that there are two girls who run Forest School behind Laurel Farm at Henley; she couldn't remember their names but would look them up.

NS asked if anyone knows of any IT company contacts?

GJ asked what the pupils were into?

NS said music, PE, sports, animals, photography. She asked if the council are members of any whatsapp groups could they ask in there please?

CJ said her best friend runs a cake company from home and she might be a contact.

NS asked to let us know if they think of anyone. We would like to build on contacts year after year.

There was a discussion about the offer of music lessons to start in January. NS explained that the lessons will be timetabled and will only go ahead if there is enough interest. The lessons would be free for the first term.

There was a discussion about Forest School, about how far it had now come. NS said that the pupils have been planting trees.

CJ said that her son is concerned about getting mud on his trainers, she has told him to bring in wellies and waterproofs but he refused. His trainers had to be washed and this led to a meltdown the next day when they weren't dry.

NS said we would send out a reminder for pupils to bring in wellies and waterproofs and to make it the norm so that pupils didn't feel the odd ones out wearing them. She said that we push for students to wear wellies etc, staff wear them too.

It was noted that Forest School is very good for the pupils, especially their mental health.

CJ said that her mother-in-law has a double plot of allotment near Castle Hill and she would be more than happy to have some help with weeding and planting.

NS said that we are in the process of setting up a Tesco Blue Token scheme, that we need a shed for Forest School.

It was noted that Copleston School got donated stuff from B&Q, also was it worth trying Nelson Potter?

SM said that her Dad was asking around to see if anyone could help.

CJ suggested asking the parents for garden items, she said that Claydon school held a "kitchen amnesty" and were donated loads of items.

NS said that we need tupperware, that we can't have too much for Food Tech and that a request would go in the newsletter.

SM said that she might be able to get some arts and crafts items from work, she would see what was left over after the window displays were complete.

NS said that anything large that is given can have a sign on it saying "donated by...."

### **Any Other Business**

GJ asked if following the incident at Suffolk College recently, is there a system in place that updates all the local schools and colleges? She said that WRA didn't know about it until she told CM in reception, she didn't want to cause panic but she was aware that some pupils walk in that direction.



BR agreed and said that parents/carers should be notified if there was an incident nearby.

NS said that she would pass the comment onto our local PC who comes in regularly. We routinely carry out a lockdown practice as all schools now have to do.