

Parent Forum Chat Tuesday, 8 December 2020

Parent Forum was opened in Microsoft Teams as a normal meeting rather than a live event to allow parent commentary to presentations more easily and give the 'camera on' feel of being in the same 'room'.

Agenda 1

Health and Wellbeing

Mrs Pearce shared the slides of information regularly accessed by Pastoral Leaders to support students and Mrs Ryder's slide on mental health and wellbeing groups during Covid (see attached).

Parents shared thoughts on accessing the following other avenues of support:

Parent 1: Mind

Parent 2: Headspace

Parent 1: Special friends of family if young people have sibling who has disabilities

Parent 3: Yoga with Adrienne via YouTube

Parent 4: Hello, I work for Devon Libraries. Just to remind the children and families that we are open as usual now. We would love to see you, we have plenty of great books to borrow. Also you can download ebooks and audiobooks online with a Devon Library card.

Mrs Pearce: Thank you so much for your contributions – we love that you are contributing

Agenda 2

Forensic Reading

Miss Hanton shared the slides (attached) and a positive and open discussion which followed is detailed below:

Parent 5: Some classes are not allowed to take them (the booklets) home. (It was explained that we try to keep the resource in College so they have access and to support Covid risk assessments but some aspects would be shared via epraise or some staff may allow students to photograph pages.)

Parent 6: My son has really enjoyed FR. I was impressed with the booklet when he brought it home. I think the approach is great, helping students to see the bigger picture around issues. In future, it would be nice to see the booklets whilst they are still working through them please.

Parent 1: I don't believe my son in Year 9 has brought it home, as I have never seen any evidence; I think it a great idea.

Mrs Pearce: It may be that the teachers are keen to ensure the students have access to the resource in lessons however they can ask any time to take them home. Miss Hanton will support this.

Parent 2: My children have both really enjoyed it, my daughter especially liked Frankenstein, luckily we had it at home for her to read it.

Parent 7: My daughter has dyslexia and finds reading difficult, will she get help with these and are there different levels, or are they all given the same texts?

Parent 6: The librarians are amazing. A real asset to the College, they deserve recognition for all the support they provide young readers.

Parent 5: My daughter came back home crying as one of the chapter (about the Dead Japanese Man) scares her a bit?

Parent 2: My daughter has just said the video clips help with understanding.

Parent 8: Are ebooks being used?

Parent 9: Hi there, I may have missed this but my son in Year 11 is not taking this subject. As he is dyslexic I feel this would be helpful. Could Year 11 access this?

Parent 1: This has been helpful tonight, as I have not got much out of my son. I do feel that Year 12 would benefit too.

Parent 9: All my children find the LRC ladies very helpful.

Parent 4: We have a collection of books for mental health and wellbeing for young people in Devon Libraries.

Parent 8: There is a software download which can be used on a computer called Read and Write for anyone with dyslexia. It is free. It means if you can get the text online, they can follow the text as it reads to them. Hope this helps.

Parent 9: Thanks that is helpful, I will look into this.

Parent 10: Is it explained to the students what Forensic Reading is about and how it can help and support their studies?

Parent 1: I used Read and Write Amy it is good.

Parent 11: Have you asked (or will you ask) the students for any feedback on their experience of Forensic Reading so far, please? My daughter is not very positive about it and I wonder how the experience may vary group to group.

Parent 7: Thanks, I will look at this software.

Agenda 3

Epraise - please see slides

Parent 2: I think it would help to ensure we get through to the right teacher rather than looking for their email - however understand it would be a lot of work for admin.

Parent 12: Having direct contact through to the teachers for parents sounds very useful, although there would definitely need to be some parameters around number of messages, character limits etc.

Mrs Pearce: Yes finding the teacher would be easy but we do worry about staff having to manage regular parent comments rather than planning teaching and learning....

We would love your thoughts on managing number of characters etc... this is a worry.

Parent 12: Agree there would definitely be a risk of teachers becoming overwhelmed.

Parent 1: It does sound like a great idea, but agree with other comments.

Parent 10: I have used Show my Homework with another school and being able to email the teacher direct about the homework is brilliant and can be very quick.

Parent 2: Easy to follow, easy to use - do worry about the amount of access the parents have to the teachers - they need a break too.

Parent 13: The Forensic Reading seems to be a real opportunity to tie in to positive mental health understanding in general across College. I know of a few children who have found texts or videos distressing this term and they don't have the emotional skills or confidence to manage the feelings evoked. I wonder if there needs to be more routine discussions/teachings about low level mental health issues - usual anxiety, feelings, identity issues, etc. through simple techniques like breathing, using helpful thoughts, distraction, friends etc rather than needing to be referred to a group or outside service. This could then be usual practice for when they sit exams rather than learning new stress management techniques at exam time.

Parent 1: It would be good if lots of similar comments are mad for one class etc.

Parent 5: Would be good if and when a child is self-isolating.

Parent 9: I do feel you will need to protect your teachers so they do not get over-run but I think this is a really good idea.

Parent 4: I have been very impressed with how quickly teachers have replied to my emails.

Parent 12: The blanket reply option sounds great for teachers where you are getting a lot of the same queries.

Parent 1: It would be good to safeguard staff if others can monitor.

Parent 2: Need to be parameters around language used etc. as we all know people rattle off messages in the heat of the moment.

Parent 1: A couple of sentences.

Parent 4: Sorry I meant to say the school responses are passed on to teachers quickly.

Parent 14: Can students use it to message their teachers?

Parent 15: Definitely helpful to clarify homework at times. My daughter tells me that sometimes what they get told to do for homework during the lesson, is different to what gets written on epraise so needs clarification.

Parent 12: Maybe 280 characters, similar to the Twitter limit?

Parent 7: I think it would be really helpful to feel you can contact the right person. It is such a big difference going from primary school to secondary school and the contact modes, this would be clear and traceable so I feel would helpful for Year 7 parents and others. We use My Ed app at primary school to communicate, obviously responsibly at this enables us to make contact and resolve any questions or queries promptly.

Parent 14: Transparency is good, but not for sensitive or confidential issues perhaps?

Parent 10: I think it's a great idea and could give students ownership of their home learning if they are able to contact teachers about homework issues.

Parent 1: Would it easily bring up the teacher's name?

Parent 16: Will it mean there are too many ways to communicate such as messaging from the website, email and epraise?

Parent 12: Would it be worth giving it a limited trial with a small number of parents? Is that possible?

Parent 17: I agree that I would worry as both a parent and a teacher that it would be yet another system to navigate.

Parent 9: I have emailed teachers through the children's accounts and it has been really useful. The teachers get back to you really quickly.

Parent 13: I agree that it needs to be very clear. Easy to miss messages coming in from so many different places.

Parent 9: I think this is a great idea, and should work really well.

Parent 18: It would be great for communication as you mentioned to a whole subject department.

Parent 1: Would it work on the app as well as the online version?

Parents all commented on the usefulness of the Forum and Actions taken forward by the presenting teams to move further forward at Ivybridge Community College.

Parent 12: Really useful forum, thank you 😊

Parent 14: Thank you, well done all.

Parent 17: Thanks all.

Parent 3: Agree...very useful, thank you.

Parent 1: Thank you.

Parent 9: Thank you Amy and fellow teachers - Merry Christmas to you all.

Parent 11: Thank you very much. Very useful.

Parent 2: Lovely to see so many people on tonight's meeting.

Parent 18: That was really interesting. Many thanks. Merry Christmas.