

Minutes of MRC Parents Forum Meeting 30/4/19

Clare Dickens and Simon Hills presented to the Forum about recent and planned improvements to the colleges Behaviour and Reward system

Behaviour

- Feb 2019 – MRC started to review systems
- Existing system was 2 years old. It has increased classroom engagement and positive learning; those who disrupt are dealt with; most students are compliant; able to make reasonable adjustments; reduced numbers
- Feedback from pupils included comments that they sometimes found the system “too harsh”
- Proposed changes – warnings remain the same; incremental system for “isolation” (2,4,6 hours); bound by 2-week intervals, start from zero every 2 weeks.
- Senior team have been working with middle leaders – reflecting on how they support students and staff to resolve behaviour issues
- Form tutors are important as they have daily contact; work through communication lines with families, pastoral leaders etc
- College has been looking at how staff develop behaviour management skills/planning for this so as to reduce need for isolation etc.
- Heads of House are mentoring selected students identified as in need of support
- Year 9 students are involved with “be the change” external programme with businesses: for more challenging students
- Continue to improve support for excluded students around re-integration
- Working with West Sussex to reduce permanent exclusions
- Changes – parents may have noticed positive contact home as well as around issues
- Anti-bullying training for staff and students next week (Anti-bullying Ambassadors through Princess Diana Trust)
- College can now fund a full week of counsellor time in school
- Small work group on anxiety, exam stress and anger management
- Greater 1:1 support for students of all types with emotional-based issues.

Rewards

- Attendance – cards home, e-praise continue, college has done more training with staff and introduced half termly system of rewards,
- E-praise: reflecting fact that engagement in collecting rewards was low: change to email home every day and assembly each half term to give out rewards (rather than collecting them). Students prefer this. Still looking at how this works in KS4 (year10)
- Heads of House – working with 10 students each doing mentoring – around variety of things and this has been working very well. Email home top ten of E-praise every Friday. This is reinforced in tutor time.

Changes to come

- Sporting and out of school successes – would like to be smarter about sharing and celebrating these – how to capture this?
- ATL Awards in half termly assemblies
- Tutor award – other celebratory pin badges – numeracy leaders etc; librarians; anti-bullying ambassadors- encourages positive conversation
- Increased use of e-praise system

Q and A

Q. Happy to hear about 2-4-6 stages as big improvement. Fairer system – any research into long term psychological effects of isolation? Is there anyone else looking at this – emotional intelligence/literacy for children.

A.

- Yes – school is looking at this. Paul Thompson’s Masters dissertation was about this. Behaviours policy is one avenue of research; looking at lots of things below the surface; Clare and Paul working on this; pastoral leaders are specialising in this as part of their professional development. Huge amount of work going on behind the scenes. Clare produces a weekly report and provision around students appearing in iso – looking at the reasons for this. Most schools have some sort of iso suite – but this is a place for intervention not just punishment; supporting staff with behaviour management. Putting the right team in place for the affected student. Paul Thompson – strong belief that if you get mental health bit right and academic follows.
- Also covered by Simon Hills work through student voice – varies with year group. Pick students through on-call duties; some go to emotional support unit where there is a member of staff, not the ISO unit.
- Parents also invited in so this can be shared, and college can have the correct impact as one size does not fit all.
- More dealing of issues in class rather than isolation as teachers are being better equipped to deal with this.
- Stuart – but you do need to have discipline. Don’t favour the system; when we don’t need the system, we will withdraw it, very low and decreasing numbers are being removed to isolation or similar. Message – behave because it is the right thing to do and respectful. Looking to get a well-being in schools award, working towards this.
- Have to work hard to make sure students behave in an appropriate way – a lot of work goes into this.
- Exclusions are far lower than other schools – permanent exclusions are lowest in West Sussex; short term are lower than comparable schools.
- United Learning Schools student survey – 70 questions – results just above UL average “I am happy at school”; lots were “very much agree” – no issues to pick up on feelings of happiness or safety in school.

Q. Full time counsellor – how will this work?

A.

- Any student can request counselling, any staff member or parent; 1-hour sessions so can see 6 students a day; can re-refer.
- There are other layers too. There is also a signposting service for students, leaflets around this. Youth Emotional Support team – has tailored workers focussing on specific needs, including what happens outside of school. Counsellor is funded by 3 local charities.

Q. Very reassured but Year 8 daughter still has some issues with behaviour in top sets – issue of repeat offenders/temporary teachers.

A College did have high staff absence last week. Issue that 56 teachers are applying the system - there will be an element of inconsistency. Parents are encouraged to email Stuart Edwards about any specific concerns, but what school doesn't know they don't know.

Q. Anti-bullying – please tell us more about what is happening now.

A. Have an anti-bullying policy which school sticks to. Can be hard to establish what bullying is. Zero tolerance with bullying. Anti-bullying ambassadors are to take things to a next step.

Q. Testing – why is there such a level – seem to be tests on things they haven't been taught on or with no warning.

A. College is happy to investigate, parents to contact Stuart Edwards directly.

Q. Can parents have an update on the changes to the system?

A. Yes - this was covered in the last letter home.

Q. Issue on buses – things being thrown downstairs, not a great advert for the school.

A. Yes, staff are aware it is the 470 bus – parents have been contacted; staff supporting students in making the right choice around bus behaviour.