

## **FAQ: Parent/Carer Forum January 2024**

All the questions and queries that were submitted in advance of the forum were grouped into the following areas:

- Communication
- Recent re-timetabling and concerns over staff changes
- Astrea's values and rationale behind recent changes at Longsands
- Commitment to staff workload and wellbeing
- Positive Relationships and Behaviour Policy

The PowerPoint slides can be found on the website too

### ***Some feedback from parents/carers who attended the online parent forum:***

"I appreciated hearing the facts and background to the changes and challenges at the school from the school themselves, rather than the exaggerated gossip that is going round among the parents (and general St Neots community). It helped to put my mind at rest about the direction of travel the school is taking. I also liked that you could back up your decisions with studies and reports that show the approach you are taking works."

"It was a tad long and needs to be shortened a bit or look at the flow of information being shared. It wasn't clear if all the questions raised were featured in presentation. I don't feel mine was. Maybe a survey is needed before the event runs on regularly raised topics so the presentation can be focused on the more priority calls."

"It was good understand the thoughts of the school."

"I found the non-interactive nature of it un-nerving. It was a 70 minute monologue, which frankly could have been pre-recorded and watched at an even more convenient time, and paused and rewound etc. and felt nothing like any parent forum I have attended in the previous 6 year [...]I've not before heard Dr Cusick on such a mission to justify herself and probably she desired no interruption? The forum gave her an opportunity to explain the new timetable decision, but only to the few parents watching."

"The apologies from the Headteacher for the issues and problems she has created" was a successful element of the evening.

"In all honesty perhaps I was expecting something different from a forum. It didn't address any concerns I had/have"

### ***FAQs during & after the event:***

<b>Question or Issue raised</b>	<b>Response</b>
Technical problems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• unable to access the link</li><li>• delay between watching the video and listening to the presentation</li></ul>	Although the link was sent out in the weekly briefings, we will send a separate message with the link on the day of the event to support parents/carers accessing it.  We will also create a support sheet for parents/carers accessing Teams live events.
Concern about the number of teacher leaving Longsands, are there any benchmarks or comparative date with local school.	The number of teaching staff leaving in the last year has been higher than was historically the case at Longsands. Unfortunately, it is not possible to access information about staff leaving from other schools. However it is worth noting that staff who are leaving Longsands are moving to local schools, which suggests that there is a vacancy there too.  Also the number of teachers leaving the profession reached a record high in 2022 with 40,000 serving teachers leaving for reasons other than retirement.
Student Morale.	Students are not issued an automatic sanction when they wear the wrong socks or forget their ties. We support them at morning welcome and

<p>Some students are feeling demotivated currently by what they see as overly-punitive consequences for minor infractions of uniform rules.</p> <p>Additionally, what measures are being taken to ensure that every student feels included and supported in their aspirations, as per the school's values?</p>	<p>during tutor time by lending socks and ties to ensure they are wearing their uniform correctly. We also loan shoes, blazers, skirts, trousers etc as we appreciate that they can get damaged or dirty at the most inconvenient times.</p> <p>We believe in the importance of having high standards of wearing uniform for three important reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) It encourages a sense of community identity and pride.</li> <li>2) It encourages our students to develop habits for life.</li> <li>3) It prevents unkindness or bullying while keeping costs down.</li> </ol> <p>We undertake regular student voice with students via the House Council which meets monthly. Also, there are lots of opportunities for students to discuss the rationale and purpose behind the behaviour curriculum which is included to support students in understanding the why. The decision to consult on wearing black trousers rather than grey ones emerged from a strong student voice opinion. We also complete student surveys via MS Forms which have between 60-70% completion rate. Over 80% students report feeling safe at school and 64% said that they are happy at school. Those that weren't happy referenced that lessons were boring, students are unkind, rules are too strict rules, would like longer breaks and a later start to the day, more flexible study options, general state of the school and too much homework. We followed up the student survey with face to face sessions with students and used the information to inform next steps.</p>
<p>You mention the journey you want the school to go on. Could you please share more about this direction.</p>	<p>Simply put, as a school we are committed to students feeling safe at school, being academically successful, and having opportunities to learn and grow as young people so that they have all the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in the next stages of their life. To do this we are committed to creating an environment which is truly inclusive in which all students regardless of any cognitive, social or emotional barriers to learning can thrive in a context free from disruption.</p>
<p>If the school is cold, why are the children not allowed to wear their coat?</p>	<p>Some of the corridors around the school are cold in winter due to the single glazing therefore as communicated in the Autumn half term students are allowed to wear their coats. Classrooms are warmer so students do not need to wear coats, however if the teacher feels that the room is cold, they have the agency to make that decision.</p>
<p>Have you benchmarked your school against other local schools eg Hinchbrook and Camborne that are not part of Astrea.</p>	<p>We do regularly compare our school to other schools in the wider community. We only have access to information that is in the public domain such as via <a href="https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/">https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/</a> as well as OFSTED reports.</p> <p>We know that we had a similar intake profile to both schools and similar attendance and yet year 11 Longsands last year made less progress than year 11 students at these schools. However, there was a smaller gap between students in receipt of pupil premium and their contemporaries at Longsands than in the other two schools. As a school we are focussing this year on ensuring that all students in Year 11 and Year 13 have excellent outcome in their external exams.</p>
<p>How can you be sure that Sparx is of value? Sparx may well just be a good measure of brilliant results in an already brilliant school!</p>	<p>This is a valid point to make which is a consequence of not having unlimited access to the data in other schools. We have a robust system of reviewing the impact of the initiatives we have in school, both ongoing and newly implemented. We consider a variety of data to evaluate the impact ranging from comparing student progress to stakeholders views.</p>

There were some parents/carers who asked very specific questions relating to their children. Where we were provided with contact details we have contacted them individually. If you have not been contacted with a response

to a specific issue raised, this was because we did not have your details, please could you email [enquiries@astrea-longsands.org](mailto:enquiries@astrea-longsands.org) with your concern.