

Frequently asked questions to Mayfield's Parent Council

Revised May 2016

This frequently asked questions document captures school wide issues that are raised on a regular basis by parents/carers to the parent council reps. All have been discussed at parent council meetings, with the school leadership team and, when appropriate, raised with the school governors. If, after reading the text below, you still have questions please talk to your parent council rep. The name of your rep with their email address is displayed on the classroom window. However, please remember the parent council cannot discuss issues related to individual children (which should go to the class teacher).

What is a Parent Council?

A parent council is a body of parents/carers, representing parents/carers, run by parents/carers with the support of the school. Parent councils provide a forum for parents to come together, share ideas, and put forward their views to the school's leadership team and governing body. They can break down barriers, perceived or actual, between the school and parents who are less involved in the school. Although every parent council evolves differently depending on the nature of the school, they all serve two distinct but related purposes:

- To give parents a voice and increase their active involvement in decision-making, fostering a culture of ownership and participation.
- To develop a partnership between the school and parents/carers in order to support and promote the pupils' learning and bring about change.

Parent councils have an advisory and consultative role. The governing body remains the decision maker and provides strategic leadership. There is no reduction in the role and responsibilities of the governing body in schools that have a parent council. The responsibilities of other groups which may be in place, such as a Parent Teacher Association, will not be affected by the establishment of a parent council. Mayfield's parent council runs through a system of class reps which is usually renewed at the start of each academic year. Any parent/carer can become a rep. Meetings are held once a term, rotating between evenings and mornings.

How does it differ to a Parent Teacher Association (PTA)?

All parents/carers and school staff are members of the PTA, which has its own committee. PTA activity varies from school to school. PTAs are best known for their fundraising work, but they have a useful social function too, to encourage closer links between home and school.

The Mayfield parent council supports the PTA by helping to coordinate volunteers for fund-raising event and promoting activities via year google groups. Parent/carers can be parent council reps and on the PTA committee.

Videoing and photography at school performances

This issue has been looked at by the school governor's Premises and Pupil Wellbeing Committee, following a discussion at the parent council. Photography and videoing is allowed at school performances but parents/carers will be asked to sign a sheet on entry to the school hall/other venue(s) agreeing to the following:

- I agree to ensure that all images I take will be for my personal use, will be kept securely and be used appropriately.
- I agree not to post images on the internet of other children without the agreement of their parents/carers.
- I agree not to distract or obscure the view of others whilst taking images.

School toilets

The school cleaners check and clean toilets after school and first thing in the morning but rely on children during the day to inform staff and teachers when there is an issue with the toilets that needs attention. Parents can also inform the school office if they spot a specific problem.

The parent council raised this issue with the Premises and Pupil Wellbeing committee of the governing body, who considered it at their meeting in May 2013. The committee agreed the following:

- Laminated signs to be put into the toilets reminding children to keep them clean.
- A promotion of toilet etiquette amongst parents/carers, (teach your child to leave the toilets in the state they would wish to find them in).
- The school and the parents to encourage children to raise issues such as broken locks or empty soap dispensers as sometimes the school is unaware there is a problem.

When children can go to the toilet in class is at the discretion of the class teacher, so please talk to your child's teacher if you have any concerns.

Lunchtime supervision

To improve lunchtime supervision the school has implemented a number of changes:

- All teaching assistants are lunchtime supervisors. This provides continuity of care and better feedback on individual children's behaviour to teachers. The increase in

number of supervisors also helps to cover lunchtime clubs as well as outside play. A senior member of teaching staff oversees lunchtime supervisors.

- Supervisors wear high visibility jackets so the children can easily identify them.
- Ms Hill, the head teacher and Mr Taylor, the caretaker, meet at 1.15pm each day to discuss any issues.
- Lunchtime supervision has been extended into the cloakrooms.

If you have any concerns over lunchtime supervision please contact Ms Hill, the head teacher, via the school office.

Lost property

All children's personal items – clothes, books, PE kit, coats and footwear should be labelled with their name and ideally their class. Each classroom/cloakroom has a lost property box which is the first place to look for mislaid items. If something has gone missing outside of the classroom (e.g. library, playing fields) or has been missing for some time please check the lost property cupboard. This is between the school office and small school hall.

Parent consultations

Consultations are only 10 minutes with your child's teacher so it is worth having a think beforehand about what you would like to talk about. It is useful if you let the teacher know about these early on in the consultation so that you don't run out of time. Equally there will also be things the teacher will want to talk to you about so it is important you leave some time for them too.

Some useful questions:

- What progress has my child made this term?
- Are they working at an appropriate level for their age?
- What would you describe as my child's greatest strengths?
- Is there anything that they find particularly challenging?
- How well does my child make friends and interact with their classmates?
- Is my child willing to contribute in class and participate in discussions?
- What can I do at home to support my child in school?

If you have concerns and feel that you will need longer than the 10 minute slot let the teacher know in advance so that they can plan to talk another time or give you a slightly longer slot. You don't need to store it all up for your consultation! You can contact your class teacher via the school office to arrange a meeting with them.

School meals

At lunchtime your child can choose to have either a packed lunch, which they bring from home, or a school meal. You do not need to pre-book school meals. School meals are £2.15 a day. Payments can be made on-line via the ParentPay website. You will need a user name and password to log in. Please contact the school office for more information. You can also pay at the school office or give money to the class teacher.

Please note that if your child is in Reception, Y1 or Y2 they are entitled to free school meals under the new Universal Infant Free School Meals scheme. However, if you are on low income and your child would qualify for free school meals please submit a claim so that the school can receive the Pupil Premium funding for your child. In this financial year the amount has been £1,300 per pupil. Claiming does not mean your child has to have a school lunch.

If you feel your child may be eligible for free school meals, whether or not you intend to take advantage of the meals, please read the information provided by Cambridgeshire County Council at <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals> which gives details of eligibility and how to apply or use the attached form.

School meals are provided by Aspens. The school menu can be viewed on-line at http://mayfieldcambridge.org/?page_id=3177 and provides the choice of a hot or cold meal. This service is contracted out so queries/comments or complaints about the quality or quantity of the food should be forwarded directly to Aspens. Their website is <http://www.aspens-services.co.uk/contact-aspens.php> or Tel: 01886 821511.

School Swimming Pool

The school has an outdoor, heated pool which is open from mid-May to the end of September every year. Each class has a scheduled swimming lesson once a week during this time and pupils should remember to bring their swimming kit into school on the appropriate day.

The pool is available to hire for private functions outside of school hours, including at weekends and for the first three weeks of the summer holidays. Details are available from Kate Vadhia in the school office kvadhia@mayfield.cambs.sch.uk Supervision requirements for private hire differ depending on whether the swimmers are all pupils at Mayfield or not. If the swimmers are all Mayfield pupils it is a condition of booking that **2 adults** are present, both of whom have completed the school's resuscitation course in the current year. For external hirers it is a condition of booking that **2 adults** are present, one of whom is a qualified lifeguard and the other of whom has completed the school's resuscitation

course in the current year. The school runs 2 or 3 resuscitation courses in May of each year and these are publicised in the school newsletter.