

Feedback from Parent Ambassador Meeting 17 May 2023

The Members of the Parent Ambassadors present were:

- Hannah Cecil – a parent of three pupils in Years 2, 8 and 11
- Charlotte Fox – a parent of two pupils in Reception and Year 2
- Leonie Lewis-Hall – a parent of a pupil in Year 3
- Karen Lowrey – a parent of a pupil in Year 1
- Mike Prior – a parent of a pupil in Year 1

The members of the School present were:

- Mrs L New, Executive Principal
- Mrs H Humphry, Chair of Governors

Prior to the meeting the School and Ambassadors had created a mutually agreed agenda.

An extremely productive meeting took place, with lots of things discussed and ideas considered. The points to note along with the action points from the agenda are detailed below:

1. Multi Academy Trust Update

Queries from the parental body were brought to the meeting following Mrs New's previous communication to all parents with an update on CFS joining Sussex Learning Trust:

- **How will joining a MAT affect CFS' 'free school' status?** This will be unaffected.
- **Is the change supported by the teaching staff as well as the governors?** Yes. This is proactively supported by staff and the Governors. There is general excitement about the opportunities for collaboration and mutual school improvement.
- **Will we keep the parent ambassadors?** Yes, absolutely.
- **Are we going to lose any funding from LA, such as SEN, school improvement and speech and language therapy?** There will be no change as CFS is already an academy and not a Local Authority maintained school.
- **Will CFS now be allowed to employ unqualified teachers?** All academies can do this, and so this has already been an option open to CFS which has been an academy since it opened in 2013. At all times, in the past, present and future we will ensure we employ the best possible staff for the role.
- **The NEU states that academy teachers earned less than maintained school counterparts, can CFS guarantee we will keep our teaching staff?** There will be no change as CFS is already an academy, and has been since 2013, so we have always had more flexibility on pay. However, CFS chooses to follow the national pay scales and Sussex Learning Trust do the same, so there will be no change.
- **Will we really benefit from joining a MAT with a cluster of schools so far away?** The School believe so. In fact, the distance will be beneficial as we will be part of this larger group of schools to collaborate with, but will naturally maintain our own autonomy and services. The School's plan is to develop and lead a local cluster and help to grow the trust.

- *What happens if one of the schools in the MAT is struggling and gets a poor Ofsted?* A poor Ofsted at one of the other schools won't be a detriment to CFS. Each school receives a separate Ofsted grading.
- *Will each school have its own budget and governing board?* Yes

2. Future Parent Survey

It was agreed that it would be great to have an increased engagement from parents in the next Parent survey. Both the School and Parent Ambassadors agreed that a competitive approach through the House system would be an effective, and fun idea! This will be actioned after the summer holiday.

3. Pupil Survey Results

The results of the recent pupil surveys were discussed including the trends and any actions the School has taken away from them. The results were positive and encouraging.

4. Land Purchase Update

The School has received preliminary approval from the Department of Education and hopes to have an update by the end of the academic year.

5. Communication Feedback

The Ambassadors discussed the parental response to the recent industrial action and how parents had been supportive and understanding of the situation. It was felt that the communications from Mrs New had been well received, both in terms of timing and honesty. Parents appreciated the amount of work that went into keeping certain year groups in school where possible.

6. AOB

It was brought to the School's attention that Primary parents, whilst understanding why the CFS branded legging should be the only allowed legging in Secondary, felt that in Primary this should be optional as children go through several pairs of leggings in year. Mrs New agreed to make this change, and the policy has been altered accordingly and resent to parents.

The Parent Ambassador Meetings for the 2023-2024 academic year are yet to be determined but will be published with the new Rhythm of the Year before the summer holidays.