



## **Academy Council Minutes – 29 November 2023**

### Attendees

Claire Willis (CW) Principal  
Becky Blackman (BB) Assistant Principal  
Sarah Johnston (SJ) mainstream SENCO  
Claire Kalinowska (CK) parent/chair/minutes

Apologies  
Clair Tramontini

### **1) Heating Update**

CW thanked all children and parent/carers for being patient while the heating system was replaced.

Over the summer all three heating boilers failed an inspection. All three were to be replaced, the work was to take three weeks and be completed during the October half term holiday, ready for the Autumn term. Due to the age of parts of the school and unforeseen problems, the work ran over by four weeks.

Prior to the expected 'cold snap', CW had ordered enough portable heaters for multiple to be in use in each classroom. These will now go into storage for future emergency use.

Although works were completed last week (week commencing 20th Nov), they boilers then failed Health and Safety tests. Remedial work on two of the boilers has taken place and they are now fully working. The third boiler affects the Year 3 classrooms and the rooms near the front office. Work needs to be undertaken in the ceilings of these rooms, so obviously cannot be done during school hours. This work is expected to be completed by the end of this week (3rd December)

### **2) SEND support for families with suspected neurodivergence**

CK has been involved in a couple of conversations around children who were displaying behaviours for ADHD or autism. The parents were frustrated with involvement from the school. CK suspected that at least one line of advice given (by a previous SENCO) was incorrect, so asked for clarification for the mainstream school.

CW and SJ explained the current system to follow if a child is believed to show behaviours that may indicate underlying neurodivergence - autism, ADHD (attention

deficit hyperactivity disorder), dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia being the most commonly known.

Sara Johnston is the mainstream school SENCo (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator)

Sarah Wright is the Leap Pad/Special Education Unit SENCo.

### Process

If a parent/carer thinks their child displays behaviours that may indicate neurodivergence, the process is-

Have a conversation with the form teacher detailing their concerns/suspicions.

The form teacher will inform SJ as SENCo.

SJ completes an in class assessment and reports back to the form teacher and parents.

If there are behaviours identified in school as well as at home, then, in the case of autism or ADHD, a form is completed by parents and school requesting assessment by Suffolk County Councils NDD (Neurodevelopmental Disorder) Pathway team.

### Mental Health support

The Academy Trust is aware of the very long wait times for mental health support for children, Murrayfield 'buy in' what is referred to as Tier 3 support from the private sector and have a visiting therapist hold counselling sessions in school. There is an internal waiting list for this support service.

Referrals for mental health support via CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) Learning Disability Community Service are made via your GP.

You can sign your child up for mental health support via the Suffolk Emotional Wellbeing Hub website.

### High School Transition

For those with children in Year 6 this is an overview of the process for any child with additional support needs. This is in addition to the 2 transition days they will spend at their new High School.

Year 7 leads from each High School visit Murrayfield to meet with the Year 6 teachers and SENCo. Each child's needs are discussed.

The children spend a day with the relevant Yr7 lead so that they have already met and spent time with that adult.

Tracking documents for each child (eg: safeguarding, SEN, additional needs, etc) will transfer from Murrayfield to the High School.

### **3) Change of swimming/PE timetable for Year 2**

Year 2 currently have both swimming and PE on the same day. As well as being tiring for the children, they then have to carry in PE kit, swim kit and maybe a packed lunch. Parents have asked if this could be reconsidered?

CW and BB explained that this was due to managing qualified staff timetables and ensuring that all years get to swim.

CW and BB take on board parents comments and will look to changing the schedule for the new year. **ACTION POINT BB/CW**

#### **4) Apparent increase in violent/aggressive behaviour during break times**

CW has recognised that there have been some problems recently. Staff have been identifying problems in order to deal with them in accordance with the schools Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy (this can be found on the schools website).

There are now more adults on playground duty and they wear hi-vis tabards.

Staff have recognised that a group of children in Years 5 and 6 have been unkind and made poor choices.

To mitigate this a visual barrier of cones and benches has been placed to separate Years 3/4 and 5/6. The reasons for this have been discussed in multiple assemblies and with each class individually.

Children are encouraged to speak to an adult about any problems, some do, some don't and wait until they get home before they tell anyone.

The school aims to follow a system of Prevention, Intervention and Working Together.

##### Prevention

Expected values, behaviours and culture are discussed in every assembly.

##### Intervention

If a child reports a concern, the adult will attempt to find out more details- what, who, where, when. They will discuss what happened with each child who was involved. Depending on the circumstances of the incident there may be disciplinary measures, ranging from detention, to isolation to exclusion. Parents/carers will be involved depending on the severity of the incident.

CW explained that decisions around exclusions are a last resort and permanent exclusions would only be issued for endangering others or severe/repeated disruption to learning.

##### Working Together

- Worry boxes in each class, placed so that children can anonymously report a written concern.
- A system of Trusted Adults.
- Restorative Conversations where the pupils and adults can discuss the impact of the negative behaviour of others.
- Lunch club to aid those who may struggle with social interaction, to help them integrate with their classmates.
- Using external agencies to speak to pupils, for example the Youth Offending team.

#### **5) Bullying, what is the process to report and how are things resolved**

Feedback has been received from parent/carers that bullying has continued after being reported to school staff.

CW explained that when a child reports being bullied, the child and teacher discuss and unpick what the bullying means to the child. Sometimes it may be a

misunderstanding of the term bullying, or can be a general worry. If it is identified that bullying is occurring it is dealt with in a similar way to the process described above, using the guidelines in the Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy.

CW stressed that staff want the children and parents/carers to be heard. If a parent/carer feels that the problem has not been resolved after initial reporting, they should continue to inform the teacher of any further problems or incidents.

If still unsatisfied the next step is to contact the Phase Lead for the relevant Year;

Early Years - Georgina Wrinch

Years 1 and 2 - Becky Blackman

Years 3 and 4 - Laura Wellborne

Years 5 and 6 - Claire Willis (until the post is filled)

If concerns are too big or unsuitable to discuss at drop off or pick up, parents/carers can ring (or e-mail) the office to request that the teacher or Phase Lead call them, or alternatively request a meeting.

#### **6) Any Other Business**

No other items were brought up for discussion. However, concerns had been expressed around children being made to eat outside during lunch breaks. CW had already dealt with this prior to the meeting and all parents should have received an email.