Sixth Form Council Minutes

Date: Thursday 21st September 2023

Attendance

- Dr Palmer
- Mrs Conolly
- Mr Selby
- Mrs Hiettt

- Emily Yarham (Chair)
- Rebecca Boyejo (Secretary)

- Plus 9 Student Representatives

Teaching and Learning

1. Homework

It was discussed that Year 13s were struggling somewhat with the homework being set during the UCAS early applicant phase. It was asked if work could be decreased as Year 13s believed they had reduced study periods but more homework than in Year 12.

- It was established that the number of study periods that Year 13 have is not massively different this year and that the situation alluded to does not impact many people. It was mentioned that ideally, Year 13s who were early entrants should have finished their personal statements during the summer holidays although accepted that many students had many demands on their time.
- It was also mentioned that a decrease is homework could have later repercussions e.g., not being able to finish the course on time or not being able to reinforce content as homework is meant to do. Instead, it was concluded that students should communicate with teachers, asking for reasonable extensions before the deadline when necessary.

2. Overnight homework

It was brought up that in Psychology students were set a 2-hour sheet to complete overnight and also the Psychology homework load is quite a lot every lesson. This point was noted.

3. Year 13's having private study in form time

Some students requested the option to study privately instead of taking part in form time activities. However it was explained that form time activities had a clear purpose and that the focused use of this time was extremely important. On occasion, for example when a tutor is seeing individuals, reading would be an appropriate activity at the tutor's discretion. Mrs Hiett and Mrs Connolly further noted that if form times were dedicated to private study the next requests would be for form time or assembly to be optional and therefore high expectations would be maintained.

4. Power Points (Retrieval practice)

PowerPoints were reported to be being well used, especially the consolidation tasks that are featured at the start of the lesson. Students mentioned that they found this retrieval practice helpful, especially in Psychology and in Mr Rowell's lessons. It was also indicated that they would like to see this retrieval practice in other lessons particularly in the Humanities subjects.

In Politics the drop downs including future lessons, PowerPoints and Worksheets for each module on Teams was praised. Students found it useful to see upcoming topics and homework and to see where they are in the course. It was especially praised as useful when needing to catch up on missed lessons. We concluded that this feature is worth looking at to implement into other subjects' Teams.

5. PowerPoints (Putting them on before the lesson)

Students inquired if they could have PowerPoints made available before lessons. However, staff suggested that this might lead to a decreased engagement and was also not necessarily a good teaching technique. Therefore it wouldn't be appropriate to make a blanket expectation on this. However (as per many previous discussions) students should have paper or electronic resources in or after lessons depending on the use made of the PowerPoint by the teacher.

6. Revision /support sessions.

Some students had requested a return of revision sessions and subject support sessions. Staff noted that these sessions will be back but at this time of year support for UCAS, for interview prep and for students new into Y12 were a

larger priority. As examinations approach the focus of effort will necessarily change.

Facilities

Catering

1. Portions sizes

   Some students had asked for portion sizex to be discussed, feeling that they were too small for the prices charged. Emily Yarham will discuss this with Mrs Mulgrew.

2. Ice Machine in Costa

   Students mentioned that they would like an ice machine in the Costa to make iced drinks, as a substitute staff suggested that a box of ice can be brought to the Costa every break time. However Dr Palmer recalled that the PA had expressed a willingness to fund such a machine. This will be looked into.

3. Larger Selection of Food at Costa

   Students mentioned the fact that they would like a larger selection of food at the Costa. In Mrs Mulgrew's recent email she did include the new items that would be sold e.g., samosas and pot noodle variations. Students should also suggest what they would like to be sold in the future.

   It was brought up in the meeting that the vegetarian options run out quite quickly in the Costa and the canteen (specifically the vegan sausage rolls), this will be relayed to Mrs Mulgrew.

   Students also suggested that they would like to see dairy milk substitutes in the Costa for students that are sensitive to or intolerant of dairy products. It was, however, not clear how many students this affected. Students felt that if an alternative was on offer it would be attractive to a good number of students. This point will also be relayed to Mrs Mulgrew.

Equipment

1. Adding equipment around the school

A request was made for equipment like staplers and holepunches to be placed around the school in classrooms as teachers may hand put worksheets which are not hole punched to put in folders. However staff noted that such things are provided in the library and the old library and that they would not necessarily last long if left unsupervised in classrooms.

2. Some students had also asked for a greater supply of sanitising wipes. However those present did not think this necessary; all rooms and surfaces (including the Common Rooms) are cleaned daily and the site team can deal with any major spillages.

3. Lockers for the Sixth Form

The Year 12s inquired if there were any lockers for the Sixth form to use as they would welcome the facility. Dr Palmer mentioned a set of 9 lockers in the loft which are available to those who, for example, might have a need not to carry heavy books home. However, apart from by individual request there are no lockers available for the Sixth Form as we do not have space to site them.

AOB

1. Careers Talks

Students expressed an interest for more career talks on more career choices and talk from academics. Some topics mentioned in the meeting were finance, property developing and managing a business. A great effort is being made to increase the number of academic lectures; Dr Palmer is working with staff on this. Dr Hiner is also looking to increase the number of Careers Talks; it was requested that representatives inquire with students in form times what jobs they would like to see addressed in the career talks, particularly in sector beyond law, medicine and business.

2. Uniform

Students were wondering if smart black shorts could be included in the school uniform dress code also including black long skirts reaching calf length. Staff confirmed that none of these items will not be allowed and in hot weather, instead of skirts, students can opt to wear wide-legged **tailored** trousers instead.

At the meeting students were remined that school skirts need to be tailored and should not be a stretchy cloth material (is to be purchased from

Simmonds or similar). Skirts also need to be a suitable length, shortest 2 inches above the knee (an AA battery).

It was noted that Year 12s who needed to review their uniform choices might need some time to purchase better alternatives but also noted that ideally they would have looked at the school dress code before term started to see which items were appropriate.

3. Leaving early for Year 13s

Year 13s mentioned that that they would like to leave early if they have study period in the afternoon. Staff noted that in many cases remaining in school to study was in the best interests of students and that no departures before 1235 would be countenanced. However they undertook to raise this issue with SLT for a considered decision of who should be allowed to leave early and for what reasons. It is understood that students do value the autonomy and responsibility given by some flexibility over leaving early when a student has no further commitments that day.

4. The Cube for Year 13s only

Year 13s inquired whether the cube in the John Moore Library can be used for only Year 13s as sometimes Year 12s are not using the space as a study space. Staff were not keen on such a division, reminding all that the Cube is a space to which all should have access but any misuse of the space should be reported to Mrs Howell.

5. Supervised study

Year 13s wondered if supervised studies will make an appearance on their timetables this year. Staff confirmed that this would happen soon as these lessons are a good opportunity for productive work.

6. Year 12 Common Room counting as a study space.

Year 12s wondered if the Year 12 common room can count as a study space. Staff did not agree with this idea as there are multiple spaces with tables which are much better study areas.

7. PE Timetable

Year 13s remarked that many were a bit confused regarding the timetabling of PE lessons. Owing to some students' timetables they may have PE period 4 and then a lesson period 5. Staff encouraged all to check this by refreshing

their SIMS app and if there are any further confusions they should talk to Mrs Connolly.

8. Inclusive Language

A request was made that students be referred to as 'students' rather than 'girls'. Mr Selby suggested that in cases where this was sensitive it be raised discretely with staff.

9. Year 12 induction Karaoke

It was raised that some of the Year 12s found the Induction Karaoke a little overwhelming and uncomfortable; other team building activities which were suggested as potentially being more suitable included speed dating / people bingo. Mrs Hiett undertook to consider this but did note the light-hearted intention of the karaoke.