

Sixth Form Council Minutes 01/02/24

Attendance:

- Katelyn Hornagold - Chair
- Ella-Mae Ward - Secretary
- Dr Palmer
- Mr Selby
- Mrs Connolly
- Mrs Hiatt
- Plus 10 Student Representatives

Improvements in teaching and learning

1. Mocks

It was raised by year 13 students that they felt during their mocks, a lot of the essay subjects were within the same, short period of time, with some students having multiple in one day. Mrs Hiatt explained that the reason for them being in one week and such a short period of time is that it is not ideal to lose teaching time which is essential for the examinations in the summer. It was also mentioned that the exams timetable is done to reduce clashes so students are not meant to be sitting two examinations at once, however Mrs Hiatt commented that full days may be changed (for example swapping the exams meant to be sat on Monday and Tuesday) and it can be looked into for future year 13 mocks.

Furthermore, it was stated that NEA deadlines for art were in the middle of year 13 mocks and was called a “hard” deadline for the NEA to be in by. Mr Selby agreed this shouldn’t have occurred and would speak to Mr Harvey. There was also a question of if Art could and should be put into the NEA deadline scheduling and Mr Selby would enquire.

2. Mock and predicted grades

Students requested more sensitivity towards giving out mock and predicted grades. It was unclear what specifically was insensitive and in what subject, but students were assured that this is not an unreasonable request, and further action can take place when the issue is known.

3. Year 13 content

A concern over finishing a-level content in RS and Philosophy was raised, as it was mentioned by Year 13 that they had only just begun the year two content for the subject in recent weeks. Mr Selby reassured everyone that RS had some of the strongest results out of any subject at CCHS last year so to trust their teaching and to speak directly to the RS teachers over any specific concerns. Mrs Hiatt also reiterated how year one and two content are not always done in their respective years but can be interspersed so students may have learnt some of the year 2 content already without realising.

There was also a query as to whether when finishing content completely on one side of the course, if that lesson time can be dedicated to finishing other content, especially if one side has less lessons

every fortnight. Mrs Hiett and Mrs Connolly explained the issue was that in subjects like history you have “experts” so sharing content is hard. In subjects such as chemistry however, it can be shared out and thus it must depend on the department itself.

4. Scheme of work for upcoming lessons

Both Year 12 and 13 stated how subjects such as biology and economics have been giving out lists of upcoming lesson topics, tests and revision sessions and this has been praised for being extremely helpful. The practice will be shared to other subject leaders.

5. Supervised study periods

This matter was raised by sixth form students doing three A-levels, so may be less relevant to those doing four but it was noted that some students have had some issues with study space for these supervised sessions. If there is no space in the library this hinders students from making effective use of these periods. Mrs Hiett and Mrs Connolly agreed that this was an issue and mentioned that last year the study centre was also used for these supervised study periods and that whilst no promises can be made, it is something that can be looked into as a possibility for improving the current situation.

6. Microsoft teams

Year 12 brought up how some resources and PowerPoints they want to use are not found on Teams and request that they are uploaded. Mr Hughes has recently presented to staff on the new Teams update and icons within it (such as the classwork function), that can be used for uploading resources for students. A document was also sent around about how teachers may use it. There was no mention specifically of subjects that are not using this new feature and will be looked into further. before any action can take place, however it is noted that the use of Teams is quite teacher specific so issues can often be raised with them directly.

7. Peer assessing

Year 12 students commented about the use of peer assessment in marking essays and tests. They stated that they are unsure of how to effectively use mark schemes and that they lack indicative content and so would like more teacher guidance to improve structure to make peer assessment more valuable to them. Mr Selby mentioned that learning how to use mark schemes is a valuable skill for students, but he will talk to the relevant departments.

It was also raised that Psychology students have some questions about peer marking and how useful it is. When talked through the mark scheme (which it was noted that Mrs Muhammad does and was praised for) students seemed to engage more with their work. There was a question of if rather than talking through every question, there could be a higher focus on key questions that students scored lower on or appeared to struggle with. Mrs Porter was seen to be teaching a useful skill of using mark schemes and was commended for it.

Overall, Mr Selby reminded all members of the council that using mark schemes and understanding them is of real benefit to students in the long term, so students should try work with their subject teachers in order to gain the most that they can out of this learning.

8. Psychology

Year 13 raised that they have recently been receiving homework of a more creative sort that they don't see as constructive to their learning. Mrs Connolly and Mrs Hiatt stated that it may be the Psychology teachers trying to make revision more fun and that students may be getting frustrated with some tasks and not seeing the benefits in the long term. There was also a general concern of pace and time – with students worried over how over half their hour lesson may be used marking homework. Mrs Hiatt asked whether marking homework like this was helpful or if students were getting 100% and finding it unbeneficial. There were mixed reviews over this, and further discussions over homework and discrepancies between teachers on the work set will occur.

Mr Selby also reminded students how he has had previous talks with the Psychology department over the appropriate amount of hours of homework that should be set and will reiterate this.

Facilities

1. Year 12 common room

Year 12 have concern over the continuous disappearances of the sofas in their common room. Mrs Hiatt has investigated this and concluded that since the tables from the sixth form cafe moved to the languages foyer, some sofas from the year 12 common room were transferred so the cafe had furniture. A few sofas were also taken for assemblies but have since been returned. It was commented how there is a lack of money and space for new sofas, but Katelyn will speak to Mrs Mulgrew to see what can be arranged.

Students also inquired as to whether the sofas in the Sixth Form Study Centre could be moved to the common room. Mrs Hiatt stated there may be room for one sofa but that alone would not solve the problem of a lack of space. She advised students to use the study centre/loft in breaks and lunch times where there is no seating available in the common room.

2. Catering

Student across both years mentioned how food options in the Costa go very quickly at break time. The solution was students need to arrive earlier as the Costa cannot overcook to risk producing a loss.

Also, neither of the two microwaves in the sixth form kitchen work – one heats but does not spin nor light up, whereas one lights and spins without heating. Katelyn will raise this with PA senior prefects in order to fund a new microwave.

3. Study spaces

Sixth formers stated that the plugs and electricity in the individual cubicles of the Sixth Form Study Centre do not work. This will be raised with Mrs Mulgrew to be investigated. Investigation has since shown that they do all work.

4. Pegs in hallways

There was a question as to where the pegs that used to line the walls by geography and art have gone, since bags (most often from students in lower school) are piling up. Mr Selby stated as there is a

growing amount of students in our school, having these pegs and bags along the walls means there is not enough space in hallways and thus for health and safety reasons, they had to be removed.

AOB

1. PE

Across both year groups there was a lack of popularity with having to get changed from PE at break, with no designated area to do so. Mrs Hiatt has been advocating and making progress on the matter, but it was mentioned how year 7 need the changing space more than sixth formers on a Friday period one (both weeks). Mr Selby suggested the possibility of using the drama changing room or the old year 7 changing space as possibilities, and will explore this.

There was also clarification on the PE changing arrangements themselves – with year 7 having all three rooms – and there was mention of if we can request one changing room for sixth formers to use. Mrs Hiatt will feed this back and see if further progress can be made.

2. Smoking and vaping – item discussed at the request of Vicky Ford M.P.

On the matter of rising age limits for buying vapes and cigarettes, there were mixed views. Some see that raising the age limit is good and stops vapes being sold to children, however it was commented that children may get people of a legal age to buy products for them, which could be more dangerous as you would be unsure of the total safety of the products you would be receiving.

It was also mentioned that for those working in shops, it would be hard for workers to continuously remember the age limit and may lead to people accessing/being denied these products wrongly, and could contribute to staff in these shops losing their jobs.

There was discussion over when smoking was originally being banned in pubs, there was large uproar, but over time it was effective and did stop people smoking so the cultural change by this law would occur eventually. There was also the suggestion that it would be beneficial for those with poorer socioeconomic backgrounds, as these people are generally those struck with addiction, so implementing this bill may help to improve poverty levels to a certain degree.

Students commented that if this bill was to occur the government would need to nudge people in the right direction of following it, as passing a bill itself doesn't necessarily mean it will change what current children, teenagers and young adults are doing, so to make this an effective bill the government need to take direct, active action.

One final concern raised over this bill is that if banned, something else will overtake the current usage of these products. For example, vapes overtook smoking cigarettes, so if we begin banning vapes, the question is what will replace them and will it be more harmful?