Sixth Form Council Minutes – 1st February 2024 - Curriculum-related sections only

Sixth Form Council Minutes 01/02/24

Attendance:

- Dr Palmer
- Mr Selby
- Mrs Connolly
- Mrs Hiett
- Plus 12 Sixth Form Students

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 Hiett 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 Hiett 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 Hiett 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 form 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 Hiett 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 Hiett 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.