

## **Curriculum Related Extracts from the Minutes of Sixth Form Council Meetings** **held on 13<sup>th</sup> March and 30<sup>th</sup> April 2019**

### **13th March 2019**

#### **Present:**

Dr Palmer, Mrs Hiett, Bethan Evans (Chair), Lara Gigov (Secretary), Fiona Neave, Tomi Ibrahim, Lily Follett, Rebecca Watt, Alice Hoysted

#### **Feedback from last meeting**

- Issues regarding excessive homework, particularly in German, were fed back on, as well as the issue of overnight homework.

Point of Action: It was concluded that the situation of homework in German has improved. Regarding the issue of overnight homework, it was decided that this needs to be discussed by students with specific teachers when it is an issue.

### **Sixth Form teaching and learning**

#### **Item 1 - Emailing lesson PowerPoints to students**

- Subjects that email or give out paper copies of their presentations were praised.  
Point of Action: It was encouraged that teachers make it clear to students whether or not it is necessary to take notes and students should ask for PowerPoints when appropriate.

#### **Item 2 - Updates to VLE subject section**

- The geography department was praised for its extensive use of the VLE however there were observations that often the presentations are updated after the students have printed them out.
- It was questioned if the VLE has been superseded by the use of Padlet or by emails but students feel that there needs to be a place where they can access what they need.  
Point of Action: Dr Palmer will discuss the general use of the VLE with SLT.

#### **Item 3 - Cover lessons**

- There were comments regarding the fact that not all teachers let their classes know if they have a cover well in advance. However it was pointed out that this depends largely on whether the absence is planned.  
Point of Action: Teachers to be reminded that they should if possible email in advance.
- It was noted that occasionally the cover board shows that classes have cover when in fact their teacher is present. It was mentioned that the system cannot record if a teacher is out for the whole day or just part of it. It was raised that teachers assume that students will turn up unless emailed.  
Points of Action: Suggestions include: students could be emailed the cover board daily (as teachers are), form tutors could read out covers in the morning, the cover board will be collected for the Sixth Form common room.
- It was pointed out that 'No Cover Required' means that the teacher is absent but Sixth Form classes don't need a teacher to cover them.
- The issue was raised that there is no cover board in the Languages Centre, which is where most room changes take place.  
Point of Action: Bethan and Lara to find out the possibility of a cover and room change board in the Languages Centre.
- There were comments regarding the amount of cover work being set, as often there is too much to do in an hour lesson and homework.

#### **Item 4 - Approach by teachers to learning**

- It was raised that tests are often rushed in to when topics are finished, for example in Psychology. It was also mentioned that some classes have several revision lessons, whereas others are learning the content the day before. It was noted however that this depends on circumstances such as there are less lessons than anticipated due to RTP.
- There were also complaints about the quantity of content covered in one lesson and that this often results in students having to complete work at home. Just to keep up with the basic content, it was also noted that at times the students are just making notes from a textbook in lessons. It was pointed out by Dr Palmer that classes should where possible be predominantly focused on work that cannot be done quietly alone.  
Point of Action: Students to monitor their lessons, and privately speak to the teacher politely if there are any issues.

## **Sixth Form facilities**

### **Item 5 - The Loft**

- It was raised that the loft is often very noisy during study periods and that this often hinders productivity.  
Point of Action: Teachers will continue to monitor the loft as often as possible, though it would be hard to have a member of staff supervising at all times. Room 29 and the library are also available as silent work spaces.
- The issue of slow internet connection on the loft computers was raised.  
Point of Action: Lara and Bethan to speak to Mr Cable so as to find a solution.

### **Item 7 - Sixth Form displays**

- Students have expressed the idea of displaying artwork in the common rooms that has been done at GCSE by sixth form students.  
Point of Action: Students, and the Art Department, to be asked if their work can be used for display.
- It was acknowledged that all old notices have been taken down in the common room, and that the displays in Room 37 are being worked on.

### **Item 8 - Smoothwall**

- The issue was raised that Smoothwall has blocked many websites that are needed for students' work.  
Point of Action: Students were reminded that if they find a website they need blocked, they should email the IT helpdesk so as it can be unblocked for everyone, and gradually websites will become available. It was also discussed whether it would be possible for the sixth form to have access to certain sites that the lower school cannot.  
Point of Action: Bethan and Lara to discuss with Mrs Mulgrew.

## **Any Other Business**

### **Item 9 - Form times**

- It was raised that within some sixth form tutor groups, form times are not being used constructively.  
Point of Action: Students and form tutors are reminded of the need to make sure form times are constructive but not draining.

### **Item 10 - Folder checks**

- Students felt that folder checks were unnecessary.  
Point of Action: Students are to be reminded that folder checks are simply to prove that they are organised.

## **30<sup>th</sup> April 2019**

### **Present:**

Dr Palmer, Mrs Hiett, Mrs Ellen, Bethan Evans (Chair), Lara Gigov (Secretary), Anna Champion, Jessica Shaw, Ellie White, Rebecca Watt, Leah Callan, Elizabeth Bacon, Jess Steadman, Fiona

### **Feedback from last meeting:**

#### **Item 1**

- Dr Palmer apologised as he had not yet been able to find out any further information regarding the use of the VLE. This is to be discussed at Academic Board on the 8<sup>th</sup> May.

#### **Item 2**

- Lara and Bethan fed back on their discussion with Mr Cable. He explained that the connection in the loft was being worked on and also informed us that all of the computers and printers would be upgraded this summer.  
Point of Action: Form representatives are to inquire as to whether students would be happy to pay more for colour printing.

## **Sixth Form teaching and learning:**

### **Item 3 - Content not required for exams being taught after the Easter break**

- It was explained that the teachers have to continue teaching new content in order to finish the A-Level course by the end of Year 13.
- It was also mentioned that serious lessons do continue after half term and therefore attendance must be kept up.

Point of Action: Bethan and Lara to ensure that all students are aware of the matters mentioned above.

### **Item 4 - Continued issues with cover inconsistencies**

- Students mentioned that they had encountered some difficulties in finding cover work. Dr Palmer reiterated that this work should generally be emailed to students unless a better arrangement exists.
- The problem was raised that often more cover work is being set than can be completed within the time set aside for the lesson and homework.
- It was also mentioned that continued cover means that occasionally students are set homework on topics that have not yet been covered.

Point of Action: Teachers are to be made aware and if possible, to inform students in advance how long each exercise should take.

### **Item 5 - Guidance for revision for A-Levels**

- It was discussed that form tutors should suggest other methods to revise and if possible, that teachers could try to give more exam style questions because exam questions help to blend topics whereas textbooks don't always do that. However it was pointed out that it is the responsibility of students to figure out what works for them.
- Students that take essay subjects were also encouraged to make up their own questions in order to avoid using up all the specification questions.
- The point was raised that revision is more about actually thinking and processing content rather than pretending to revise in the common room, however one would hope this was obvious.
- Guided revision in lessons was said to be much more helpful than teachers saying revise yourself, which should not happen in any case.

### **Item 6 - Tests in class just before exams**

- It was fed back that these are considered useful as they force students to revise earlier for their exams which helps them figure out which areas they still need to look over.

### **Item 7 - Clearer rules regarding dropping subjects**

- Students felt that there were some inconsistencies regarding dropping extra subjects such as Italian. Dr Palmer explained that subjects should not be dropped unless for medical reasons until after exams.
- It was highlighted that students must continue to do work regardless of their intentions to drop, and nobody should be opting out of revising hard for a subject before exams in order to keep up and focus on another, in case their exams do not go to their desired plan.

## **Any Other Business**

**Items 10 and 11 were postponed until the next meeting due to a lack of time.**

**However Bethan and Lara will be speaking to Mr May regarding PE payments before the next set of payments are due.**

- Students to be aware that the demolition of Bancroft will begin on 24th June, so lockers will need to be cleared nearer the time. Sixth Form students may not all be able to have lockers next year.