



Issue 1

## INTRODUCTION

Last academic year we invited parents and carers to join our first Parent Council. We believe the parent/carer community can provide valuable feedback in all our Academy initiatives and play a vital role in achieving the vision set out by Mr Willerton and the Academy Leadership Team.

Working closely with our Parent Trustee Natalie Morley, we have put together a format that we believe will give key stakeholders the platform to feedback on systems, policies and initiatives that will give students the best possible experience at The Sutton Academy. We have decided that moving forward, following each council meeting (half termly COVID permitting), a newsletter will be distributed informing the wider parent/carer community of the key points and actions from the discussions.

The council is currently made up of parents and carers with students from year groups ranging from Y7-Y13. We would like to take this opportunity to thank each of them for giving up their time to make the Academy the best place for all students to unlock their potential.

### Council Aims

- Help the Academy take the needs of the parents into account when making decisions
- Provide parents with a mechanism to ask questions of the Academy
- Help the Academy to access parental expertise
- Improve communication between Academy and home
- Support and promote the work of the Academy
- Develop a partnership between home and Academy so that every one works together for the benefit of the Academy and all students.

### COVID Recovery

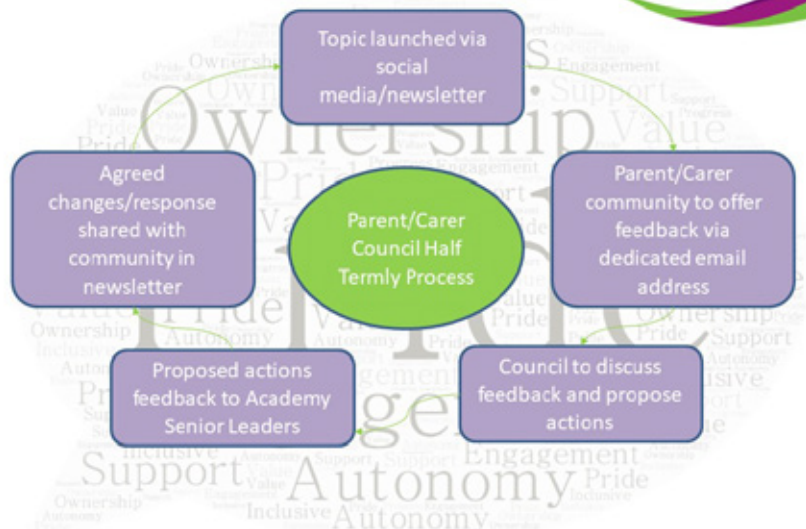
The council held some positive discussions around the Academy's response to the COVID pandemic and expressed their gratitude towards the Academy Leadership Team for having the foresight to provide students with 3 facemasks each before this rule was rolled out nationally. The Parent Council challenged the Academy around cleaning staff to ensure the appropriate hygiene levels are adhered to, and the Academy confirmed the changes that had been made.

- Additional cleaning staff distributed around site throughout the day cleaning all touched surfaces after each lesson.

- Hand sanitiser stations set up in all teaching and communal areas throughout the site.
- Signage and floor markings set out by the site team to remind staff and students about social distancing.
- Acrylic screens set up in all teaching and communal areas that require staff/students to face each other.

As an Academy we continue to review our systems regularly in response to the guidance surrounding COVID, and communicate any changes accordingly.

### Parent/Carer Council



This newsletter has been put together to give you some insight into what has been discussed during this academic year.

## Remote Learning

Following the lengthy period of remote learning during the 2019/20 academic year, extensive discussions were held on the subject and we gained a great insight into the parent/carer perspective of dealing with the current challenges and systems. The parent council offered some simple tweaks to better support parents/carers during periods of remote learning. These included:

- Reducing/limiting the use of colour when asking for documents to be printed from home.
- Numbering pages for reference when sending large documents.
- Sharing useful links with home learning posts to support parents/carers
- More consistency in the tasks and expectations of the work.
- Live lessons where possible.
- Directing parents/carers to useful resources (eg. Wellbeing, e-safety and online learning support)

These points were actioned during the second period of remote learning and we feel this had a substantial impact on the remote learning experience for our students and parents. The feedback we received from the parent survey suggested the inclusion of parental voice improved the experience for our students.

## Tracking

We had the opportunity to discuss how tracking is communicated to parents/carers during the academic year. While the conversation prompted some positive points there was some constructive feedback around how we can develop these systems. In response there have been some changes made to the way we send out the tracking information, including the removal of current data for some year groups and the use of colour to highlight attitude, both of which parents suggested created confusion and at times additional anxiety for some students.

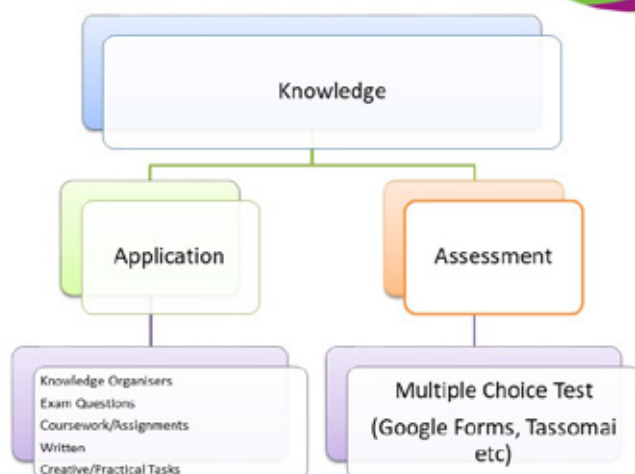
While the Academy are happy with the way tracking is now reported (particularly during what has been a difficult period for student, parents and staff) they are always keen to develop where needed. With this, as we progress with the council, we will be dedicating time each year to a tracking and assessment working party.

## Home Learning

At our most recent council meeting Mr Bibby presented our new homework system designed to streamline our approach to homework. Following some student voice feedback, it was suggested that the homework set across the academy was too varied and was sometimes confusing in terms of expectation. To combat this, the new system breaks down home learning into two categories: Assessment and Application. This will mean the students will know what type of homework they are doing, and how it will need to be completed. The council generally found this approach to be positive but suggested some parental perspective to consider when setting work on Satchel One.

These included communicating the changes to parents and carers, setting feasible/consistent submission dates, and ensuring all homework is consistent across the Academy. All these points were appreciated by Mr Bibby and he fed back accordingly to The Academy Faculty leaders.

## Home Learning





## Rewards

Mr Trainor kindly presented his vision for rewards at the Academy moving forward, highlighting the importance of a consistent platform for our students. The council welcomed the discussion and offered some parental insight into how best to move forward. It was suggested by the council that it is important to ensure all students at the Academy can access the rewards systems, and not just a select few. The rewards at the Academy are now aligned to rewarding everyday brilliance not only in attitude and performance, but in the way students support and treat each other. These virtues remain a high priority when helping students realise their potential and we believe it should be acknowledged within our rewards system. We are always developing these systems and will be looking for more feedback in the future.

## How to contact us

The current council members have been able to communicate with their smaller parent communities and feedback any praise/suggestions/concerns on their behalf, which in its current form has been positive. As the council becomes more established, we will need to widen the net to gain the insights of all our parent/carer community members. With that, the council are looking to set up a dedicated email address which can be used to communicate any suggestions for the council to discuss or offer opinions on the proposed topics for scheduled meetings.

This address will be monitored by Mr Purcell and our Parent Trustee Natalie Morley. This email address will be dedicated exclusively to council business only. Any communication not linked to the council will be redirected to the appropriate team within the Academy.

[parent.council@thesuttonacademy.org.uk](mailto:parent.council@thesuttonacademy.org.uk)

