



The Sutton Academy

PARENT COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

Issue 2

WELCOME BACK

It was great to welcome back the parent council for the first half term meeting, in particular new members for this academic year. The aims of our council this year continue to mirror those of last year, with the additional focus on communicating updates regularly with the wider parent/carer community. The most recent

meeting got off to a great start covering two key academy initiatives for this academic year. Please have a read through the newsletter to see what was discussed and the feedback received from the Principal, Mr Willerton in response to comments and observations.

people, as well as successful. The key characteristics they aim to develop during the student's journey include being kind, reflective, resilient, and part of a community. As parents, the council acknowledged the Academy drive to focus on other elements of growth outside of academic achievement.

To better support staff in acknowledging these characteristics, the Academy has invested in a rewards system called Class Charts. The system allows staff to award points at any stage of the Academy day when they see a student's behaviour reflecting the characteristics of our chosen values. For example, a student might offer to hold a door open for a peer. This would provide a perfect opportunity to reward a selfless act of kindness, something all our students have the capacity to achieve. This information would be shared live with parents/carers who have accessed the Class Charts app, giving access to updates on their child's behaviour during the school day. The council believe this holds great value from the parental/guardian perspective on the grounds it allows for meaningful and clear discussions with their children.

Mr Willerton provided further clarification regarding conversations had and questions raised. He confirmed

- continued analysis of the data in Class Charts will be undertaken to ensure consistency between different cohorts including SEND students.
- The intention is to share additional information via Class Charts in the near future. This information will inform parents of negative behaviours/detentions in addition to the positive that is already being shared.
- In response to the council suggesting multiple platforms can cause confusion for parents/carers and students, the intention over time is for Class Charts to become the main platform. This will start by homework moving from Satchel to Class Charts in the summer term.

Academy Values

"By the time each student leaves the academy, we expect them to be"

The Sutton Academy Values

- KIND** - we expect our students to have a strong moral compass and have a disposition of empathy and respect.
- RESILIENT** - we expect our students to be challenged, we understand that learning is difficult and we will praise those who are willing to persevere.
- REFLECTIVE** - we expect our students to be critical thinkers who automatically look closely at their own work and the work of those they study.
- PART OF A COMMUNITY** - we expect our students to be outward-looking and to recognise the significant role they have in the development of the communities they are part of.

The first session this year was centred around the launch of the new 'Academy Values' initiative. The rationale behind the values system was shared with the council, along with the intended impact on the students at the Academy. The principle of the values is to not only acknowledge the achievement of the students, but to also celebrate the process that allows them to be successful. The Academy believe it is equally as important to help students be good

Together Students Achieve

Reading in the Curriculum

“Evolution from resources, initiatives, specific events / moments, to a culture where the significance of reading is reflected by the integral role it plays in each subject and every lesson”

The new reading initiative was shared with the council, outlining the Academy’s drive on ensuring reading is at the forefront of the educational experience of all students.

At The Sutton Academy we believe that:

- **Every student** should read **every day**
- **Every teacher** should impart knowledge through reading
- Students will learn more about **themselves and the world around them** through reading
- Reading is fundamental as behaviour management

The emphasis on reading in school comes from significant research suggesting the more exposure to challenging vocabulary, the better the opportunities students will receive throughout their lives. It was shared that the Academy aims to give students the opportunity to read a wide variety of books throughout their time, both for academic purposes and for the love of reading. The Academy reading canon maps out the opportunities students have during the 5 or 7 years at the Academy. These texts are carefully selected to provide them with challenging vocabulary and significant cultural capital exposure. The Academy’s aim is to approach reading with a consistent approach among staff, with research suggesting 3 key strategies being important in achieving this:

- Behaviour and Positive Framing – It is vital any examples or instances of good modelling is acknowledged and rewarded through the Class Charts system.
- Reading with a ruler – A simple yet effective technique that is proven to allow students to remain focussed on what is being read, while tracking the word they are hearing
- Pastore’s perch – A positioning technique proven to allow teachers to all areas of the classroom while reading the text. This provides the opportunity to acknowledge students displaying the academy values and challenging none compliance.

The council acknowledged the Academy’s strategy around reading and thought it a welcome step in

engaging students with reading, in particular the choice of challenging language to expose students to vocabulary outside of their everyday routines. Amongst the many conversations, the council did share the parental/carer perspective on barriers at home

- **Question: What if students don’t have a safe space to read?**

- o Response: We are exploring a project in the Academy that will allow for a purpose built library to be commissioned for our students. The project will be a commitment to the Academy drive on reading and vocabulary. In the short term, we are looking at options within the current site footprint that will afford students a space to read quietly, safely and with the support of likeminded peers and staff. We do also have a reading club at the Academy open to all students, ran by Mr Lovelady. There is an extensive library of books and DVDs on offer to enjoy in a comfortable setting.

- **Question: Are magazines an appropriate medium to engage children at home?**

- o Response: Yes, absolutely! Any form of reading is positive. A topic of interest (sports, music, film) will always open a door to reading. Research suggests hearing an adult read will often lead to a positive reading experience for children in terms of memory and enjoyment. Sharing this area of interest, coupled with reading with an adult could be a very powerful tool when trying to spark that love of reading.

- **Question: What if parents have their own difficulties reading?**

- o Response: The Academy CPD focus this year is centred on strategies to support. We will draw from the research any support mechanisms we feel would help parents/carers at home and share them with the parent community.

- **Question: How can parents support their children with reading at home?**

- o Response: We are currently working on a parent reading crib sheet in response to the council suggestion. This will include the Academy strategies, how to model them and how you can implement them in the home setting.

Upcoming Council Meetings

Date	Deadline for Discussion topics	Location
Wednesday 1 st December	Monday 29 th November	The Sutton Academy Community Base
Wednesday 12 th January	Monday 10 th January	Zoom Remote Session
Thursday 3 rd March	Monday 28 th February	The Sutton Academy Community Base
Wednesday 27 th April	Monday 25 th April	Zoom Remote Session
Thursday 16 th June	Monday 13 th June	The Sutton Academy Community Base

Contact us

If you have comments or suggestions of topics to be discussed at future council meetings, please contact us at:

parent.council@thesuttonacademy.org.uk

This email address is for parent council business only, any other business will be forwarded to the appropriate team within the Academy.

