

**Attending:**

From the Firs - Adam Campbell, Kerry Mercer

Parents - Dawn Leonard, Elina Radionova, Emily Chaney, Laura Inskip, Kate Mysko Von Schultze, Sorina Balint, Zoe Davison, Sima Vaghela and Vicki McQueen

**1. Pine induction and transition further up the school**

- How did the induction process feel for parents?
- How successful was the process for your child?
- How was the communication with the school through the process - did you get all the information you needed?

Parents (who represented Pine, Y1, Y3 and Y4) were all very positive about their child's transition into the next year group. Even though a Y1 child missed the play element of Pine, they had managed well and were ready for the more structured approach. A Y1 parent felt that the transition was handled really well regarding the maternity cover and their child had coped well despite having a few different teachers. A Y3 child joined The Firs in September and had happily settled. Her teacher had helped her to make friends. Pine parents commented that the Stay and Play sessions had really helped, especially the lunch session and having these sessions meant that their child could talk about what they were looking forward to in September. A Pine parent said their child was ready for school and it's helped to take the excess energy out of him.

The staggered start in Pine can make it tricky to organise childcare arrangements. One suggestion is whether Saplings can be used for wrap around care for the first 2 weeks which the school will look into. **Action** - KM and AC to talk to Saplings.

Another suggestion was that after the home visits, the transition takes place over 3 days- Autumn born children (Sept-Dec) start on the first day, Spring born children (Jan-April) start on the 2nd day and Summer born children (May-August) start on the 3rd day. Pine transition used to work in this way before it changed to the current way as the current way means that only half the cohort are in at any one time which gives a higher adult to child ratio which is so important in giving children that extra attention and support in those critical first few days.

**2. Parking and safety at pick up and drop off times**

- Currently as you know, Martin Lees our premises manager puts cones out at the end of the service road, to restrict access to permitted vehicles.
- This has, in our view, made a significant difference to safety in and around the service road area.
- This is only a temporary situation and we are exploring a more permanent solution.

- It has not resolved the issues on Station Road of course and this is something both ourselves and Alameda are aware of.

Mr Campbell explained that the school has no jurisdiction regarding issues on Station Road because it is a public road. Parking Enforcement / Police Officers have come out periodically as they are aware of the issues. Some parents are parking on the corner/double yellow lines of The Crescent, making it very dangerous for themselves and others. One parent suggested asking the council to build something on the corner of this road in order to stop parents parking there. A parent asked about parking in Parkside and Mr Campbell explained that Parkside has agreed for Alameda parents to cross over to park on the land owned by Alameda but there was no agreement in place for Firs parents. Parents were also concerned about cars mounting the pavements along Station Road because some drivers would not give way to oncoming traffic. Double yellow lines printed on both sides of Station Road would prevent this but this would make it difficult for residents to park outside their house. Mr Campbell mentioned that a Governor had posed the idea of removing the bollards at the far end of Station Road and making Station Road a one way street. The bollards could be replaced by a timed barrier in order to prevent the road becoming a 'rat-run'. This will have considerable cost implications, isn't something that will likely be supported by Central Bedfordshire Council.

There was very positive feedback from parents about Martin supporting traffic issues on Station Road. One parent also said how Martin had helped a Blue Badge Holder park nearer to the school when the disabled bay was in use.

Mr Campbell explained that although Martin Lees was doing a very good job in using cones to restrict access along the Service road, this was not sustainable. He went on to explain that The Firs are working with Alameda to have a barrier fitted.

### **3. The use of mobile phones by Y4 pupils in the summer term.**

- Currently our approach is to allow children to come into school with a mobile phone from April when they can walk to and from school independently. The phone is kept in a basket in the office and is given back to them at the end of the day.
- What are parent views about this?

Mr Campbell explained that in allowing this, some parents may feel that the school are encouraging children to bring their own phones in. A parent explained that allowing their child to have a phone for walking to and from school gives parents security. One parent talked about their experience of their child in Alameda being bullied because they had an old model of a phone- at the beginning of the day.

phones were placed in a basket and at home time, the child giving out the phones said 'Here's your rubbish phone'.

A parent spoke of a website called 'Smart phone free childhood'. It's a parent led website which focuses on decreasing the pressure to buy expensive phones with access to social media sites. It offers practical advice about which phones don't have social media. Big phone companies are now meant to be making more aesthetically pleasing phones, which limit the social media apps. One parent, who works at a lower school, explained that the children have to take their phone straight to the school office. Another parent explained that children can be 'tracked' by their parents using an Apple Air Tag, which can be worn on a lanyard and will work provided the child is near someone with an Apple phone. This does not even require the child to have their own mobile phone.

There was general consensus amongst parents at the forum that it's the parent's decision as to whether they allow their child to take a phone to school. **Action** - Mr Campbell said that he would speak to the Heads of the FARM schools (Firs, Alameda, Russell, Maulden) to see what their current thinking is regarding children bringing phones to school. Mr Campbell will also tweak the letter which goes home to Y4 parents to make clear that the school is not trying to encourage phone use and that phones will be given out by an adult at the end of the day and children will not be permitted to use them on the school site.

#### 4. School Uniform

- Children being smart and wearing their school uniform is important as it creates a sense of community and children's appearance has a direct link to how they approach school life, impacting behaviour and learning.
- Any feedback on our uniform policy?

This will be moved to the next agenda as there wasn't time to discuss this.

#### 5. Any additional points parents would like to raise?

##### Packed Lunches

- One parent inquired whether stricter rules on what can be included/not included in packed lunches would be advisable. Mr Campbell explained that if a lunchtime supervisor saw sweets in a child's lunchbox, a phone call home would be made.
- **Action** - The school agreed to put something in the newsletter, giving clearer guidance.

### White Rose Maths

- One parent expressed that their child did not enjoy the recording in maths because there were lots of worksheets being used (this is the design of the White Rose Maths scheme). A parent suggested that once or twice a week, practical maths activities are planned for instead of the use of worksheets.  
**Action** - This will be raised for discussion in a staff meeting next term.

### Writing Club

- A child had attended a Writing Club at their last school and wondered whether we could have one at The Firs.
- Mr Campbell explained that staff run lunchtime clubs in the spring/summer terms.
- A parent suggested some of the Y4s could run a club but it was felt they were too young.
- Another parent spoke of 'Stop, Drop, Write' which they use in their school and this is where all children in the school write (or draw) depending on the age of the child for half an hour each week.

### Three tier moving to two tier system

- A parent asked whether there was an update regarding this issue.
- Mr Campbell explained that there is currently no date yet for the Ampthill area so we are still probably many years away from this happening.