



To: Parents/Carers, Key staff at Parkwood Academy
From: Sharon Court, Project Worker, Autism in Schools.
Date: 20.04.23
Title: Feedback from Parent Meeting.

Date of Meeting

20.04.23

Number of attendees

5 parents
SC from SPCF
LO, NH and Vicky from SEND team

Discussion Points

LO and SC discussed the AIS project now not finishing in July but extended, and if this could be beneficial for the transition of Y6 to Y7. LO to feed this back to SEND team and have further discussions with SC.

LO said there had been disruption prior to the Easter Holidays (teacher strikes, snow, Ofsted) and they'd noticed an increase of issues and need for extra support. Another 2 strike days have been announced for April/May and there are several Bank Hols in May.

Stimming

Following from a discussion at a previous meeting, the group talked about stimming. Parent/carers shared the various ways in which what their young person stims from being very young. Discussed the negatives and what to look out for e.g. self injury, self-harming. How it can be worrying for families, how we accidentally try to stop it without realising. Also the stigma attached to stimming. SC said there is help for those who self-injure or self harm via medical services and also the app. Kooth may be useful for the young person and the web site Young Minds www.youngminds.org.uk which has info, a helpline for young people and their families, also info for professionals

Discussion on how stimming can help the vestibular system, some people find having to be still feels like they are free-falling and if they move in little ways e.g. rocking, twisting etc it can stop that feeling. This can be difficult in a class environment as movement not viewed as acceptable behaviour.

Some parents talked about how their young person uses their parent as a stimming mechanism e.g. picks at their parent's skin. LO said there was a fidget gadget that might be useful to skin pickers <https://www.sensorytoys.co.uk/category/pick-n-peel#BodyContent> other types available on Amazon.

Discussed the positives and how some stimming methods are more socially acceptable, e.g use of Rubic cube.

Discussion regarding stimming in the school environment. Lack of understanding by staff/peer group. Young people use different stimming methods in school so they don't stand out/ appear different.

Fidget gadgets were discussed as being useful.

SEND team said discrete small, quiet fidget gadgets are allowed in class.

Parents said this wasn't the experience of their young people – some had gadgets removed in class. SEND team to look into this and ensure staff are aware what types of gadgets are permitted SC to check if the Fidget gadget info was sent onto Parkwood from Kids.

Communication

Strikes

Parents said the information about strikes and students who had mocks had been lacking and they'd been unsure of what was happening which raised anxiety.

A parent described how no info had been given regarding school dinners on a strike day for the Y10's doing mocks. The small café areas had been closed and students not aware they were supposed to go to the canteen. Several students did not have any food that day. One parent said their young person never goes to the canteen because it is big/loud/smells causing them stress and anxiety.

Staff

Parent said they had emailed the form tutor for their young person before Easter Hols and still had no response. Never sure if to keep emailing as don't want to appear to be a 'pain'.

Detentions

Parents said they have not been receiving notification of their young person staying behind for a detention. Parents said they have raised this as a concern to staff and been told it appears on the App – but it does not appear on the App until after 5pm - which means it appears after the detention has occurred and student is back home.

Parents said they are often left outside waiting to collect their young person wondering what is happening. Parents said after recent shooting close to school it creates anxiety.

All class detentions viewed by parents as difficult to explain to an autistic/ADHD student. Parents understand how class detentions are applicable if all/vast majority of class not behaving but not when it is a minority.

LO to remind staff to inform parents especially imperative for vulnerable students.

Timetable

Changes made to timetables creating confusion as not been communicated out. New timetables not on the App. Interventions have not been linked to changes, therefore the support not been in place.

Interventions/Support

Parent said the Time Out passes had been renamed to "Time In".

Parent said their young person has not been reissued a pass, they understood they were still eligible for a pass.

LO confirmed the student is eligible for a pass and will ensure pass is issued.

March Newsletter

Parents concerned about information of expectations in the newsletter and would like clarification of wording; "Track the speaker to show that your ideas and their's matter"

Parents asked if this was a reference to making eye contact – needs to be realisation by the school that eye contact can be problematic for SEND students and needs to be reasonable adjustments.

Y7 students and parent/carers

Y7 parent/carers said they would like some form of communication about how their young person is settling into school. They feel the parents evening in June is late and would welcome the opportunity to meet/talk to staff earlier.

Would like to know when conversations/information are held about support for students moving into Y8

Form Tutors

When do students find out who their form tutor will be next year?

One parent said their young person has established a good trusting relationship with their form tutor and will miss them next year, meeting the new tutor before the start of next term for a chat may help reduce anxiety.

One parent talked about problems their young person and parents have been experiencing with the form tutor. This has been escalated up to SLT.

SC advised parent to talk to another member of staff for now when they need to contact school due to the history and will speak to LO as this is having a negative impact on the young person's mental health.

LO to arrange meeting with parent and look at contacting external agencies to help support student

Homework

Parents referred to a previous meeting attended by the Headteacher;

Discussion on the school ethos of homework. The school does not 'punish' for homework not done. School views homework as important and imparts to students it will help them perform better and achieve faster progress.

Some parents asked if there was change to this because been told in Maths classes if they have not done their homework they have to stay in on Friday after school for 45mins.

Parents said maths homework on the App has various difficulties.

- The amount – too much to do in 1 go. Off-putting. Needs to be broken down.
- App asking them to do aspects of maths that they have not done in class. Parents wondered if this is due to lessons being disrupted or late?
- App shows progress wrongly e.g may show progress of 65% but the student actually did all the work but got questions incorrect so it looks like they've not finished it.

Behaviour & Rewards

Parents mentioned recent social media coverage of an Award ceremony. Parents wondered how many SEND students are recognised? Parents do not want token gestures, they want awards to be given on merit but it to be recognised that SEND students may achieve differently/different time rates to their NT peers but that doesn't make it less important to them.

Attendance

Parents talked about attendance rewards, how difficult it can be for SEND students to have full attendance as comorbidities often linked. One parent who received a letter for 95% attendance questioned if it should be looked at on a more individual basis, more relative to situation of young person.

Other

Parents talked about their thoughts on the recent Chris Packham TV series Inside our Autistic Mind and thought it would be beneficial for staff/students to watch. Available on iPlayer.

The National Autistic Society was referred to at the meeting. Below is a link to the site.

www.autism.org.uk

Following the shooting of a teenager near to school, some parents said they have noticed anxiety about coming to school and leaving. One parent said their young person had been developing independence going to the local shop but now refuses. One parent said they have to take their young person to school and collect them. Parents wondered if the school have discussed with the students the incident.

Parents asked about the recent advert for Assistant Headteacher/SENCo Lead, if changes were to be expected in the SEND dept.

Parents recognise teaching is difficult at the moment and feel the majority of staff really do want the best for the students. SEND team viewed positively. Several parents said Justine (SEND Admin) has been particularly helpful lately in getting info to parents.

Parents said the Parent Group Meetings were helpful. Got to see the school in a working day, see the SEND team, find out info, able to voice concerns and ask questions.

Celebrate and Good News

One parent said their young person had a curry for the 1st time ever and enjoyed it. Parents were particularly impressed the curry was a Bhuna (sensory overload on flavour and different textures!).

One young person has mastered the Rubics Cube – 30 seconds to complete it !

One family have the grant to go towards the musical instrument for their young person.

Parents said they thought one of the parents in the group is doing amazing with their young person in having good communication and connection while going through a particularly tough time.

This parent/carer group is impressively supportive to each other. When a parent is struggling, they show empathy. They share experiences, they are inclusive, they are respectful of each other's situations, they laugh together, inform and educate each other. They want to find out information and have a proactive attitude.

Areas Identified for Development/Training

Themes

- Communication
- Homework
- SPARX app
- Detentions
- Changing timetable – impact on interventions/support
- Strikes
- Disruption
- Behaviour/rewards
- Attendance
- Form Tutors
- Trusted Relationships
- Y7 contact with families

Impact

- More understanding of stimming, how it can manifest in different ways
- Fidget gadgets suitable in class – staff to be informed they are permitted
- Info sheet by SC on stimming to be sent to parents and to the SEND team
- Detentions – staff to inform parents prior to detention
- LO to resolve issue of Time Out/Time In passes
- LO to meet with parent to talk about issues in school and look into support internal and external
- Parent support

This parent/carer group is impressively supportive to each other. When a parent is struggling, they show empathy. They share experiences, they are inclusive, they are respectful of each other's situations, they laugh together about the ridiculous, inform and educate each other. They want to find out information and have a proactive attitude.

- LO to give feedback to Maths Dept about App.
- External support given – NAS, Young Minds etc..

To Do

- Find out homework policy – if ethos changed
- Changes to timetables – info to be available for parents/carers and to all staff to ensure support/interventions in place.
- Clarification on Expectations – tracking/eye contact

<u>Actions</u>	<u>To be completed by whom</u>	<u>Date to be completed</u>
SC to do meeting report	SC	24.04.23
SC to include Stimming info sheet	SC	24.04.23
LO to check report	LO	Prior to next mtg
LO to send onto HT	LO	Prior to next mtg
LO & SC to liaise on transition	LO & SC	May/June
LO and SC to discuss June/July meetings	LO & SC	April/May