

Ipswich Academy Council Meeting
8 February 2022 at 11:00am - Online

Present:

Abbie Thorrington - Headteacher
Sarah Woolven – Academy Council Member
Julie Trout – Academy Council Member
Louise Leah – Academy Council Member
10 other Parents

Covid update

Abbie updated the meeting on current processes in place. Masks are in place within social areas and encouraged but not essential in classrooms. The school has good ventilation and distancing is encouraged. There are no mass gatherings such as assemblies – these are done virtually. Staff are also not getting together in groups. Testing is encouraged and there is a good uptake of home testing. The school conducted mass testing before returning to school after Christmas and the uptake was 87% of students which is a fantastic effort. The situation with the pandemic is reviewed regularly and communicated, with changes made as necessary to keep everyone safe. Now the school is currently at level 2, there is an online provision for those who are isolating. All students have been trained in using google classroom – there is a mix of pre-recorded and live lessons. There are some staff shortages.

Hinterland Offer

Hinterland is a project across the school to increase the opportunities available to students, outside of their usual curriculum, such as trips, visiting speakers etc. The aim is to give students 6-8 experiences for each year group. Paradigm has the ethos that every student should have the same opportunity and contributions towards costs from parents are voluntary. There is no expectation and each trip is open to everyone. Paradigm has put substantial money aside to fund these. Parents were really impressed and appreciative of this investment into the children's school experience. Plans are still being finalised but the plans could include:



Year 7 – Mersea Island Adventure, University trip, guest poet, urban walk, theatre trip

Year 8 – Art gallery visit, theatre tip, sporting event, 3 course meal

Year 9 – Theatre tip, art gallery, sports event visit, 2- day residential

Year 10 – Depending on which options student have chosen

Platinum Jubilee celebrations

To celebrate Queen's platinum jubilee, activities are planned for the month of May, possibly events including parents/carers. Afternoon Tea is being looked into. A suggestion from a parent was an art project or statue as a permanent fixture in the school of this celebration. Any other ideas would be welcomed from parents.

Uniform

Abbie asked for views from parents on possible changes to uniform which could come into effect in September 2023. Blazers are not as warm as sweatshirts and are a higher cost to parents. Parents were asked if they would like blazers to be optional, with a sweatshirt available. Abbie has been looking into these, which could be black, with a purple trim and the Ipswich Academy badge. These sweatshirts could cost around £11, compared with the blazer £35. The school has considered whether these are sold in house through school, with the potential for badges to be sewn on by parents, to reduce the cost. Abbie had an example to show. Old versions of the jumper and blazer would still be worn until replaced over time and would be gradually be phased out. A parent asked if students had been consulted yet - Abbie replied that not yet, but they will be consulted, as well as a wider parent consultation.

Facebook page and Email address

A Facebook page has been set up by Louise Leah for other parents to join. This is separate to the school and it is hoped to build a community space for parents to communicate, ask questions and share information. The page is called **Parents/Carers of Ipswich Academy**. This also helps Academy Council Members to get a flavour of the important issues. Parents are encouraged to join up. Academy Council Members can be messaged through the page of by using the



dedicated email address - AcademyCouncilia@ParadigmTrust.org (don't forget the 'ia' after AcademyCouncil)

Parking

Can be congested, particularly in bad weather with some people parking over people's driveways. This has been monitored by Parking Attendants, but they come during the day when there isn't a problem. Children's safety is at risk. School have been giving road safety information to pupils in assemblies etc. If the public reports students to school, school will give consequences to students who are acting in a dangerous way. Parents have previously been asked to support school by having these conversations about road safety at home. A parent questioned if a staggered start was possible but the logistics of this are unmanageable. A parent commented that it is scary, and parking is horrendous around their local property. Students will ride their scooters down the hilly road, in the middle of the road. Abbie said that if residents give a description of students, she will follow this up in school. A parent asked if perhaps more hard hitting footage of accidents/scene of an accident etc could be used in road safety talks to shock the children and have more impact – Abbie will look into.

Any other business

A parent questioned the mental health support available in school and whether counsellors could be put into place in school – Abbie outlined that the government is trying to fund this in schools and currently Paradigm funds its own mental health support package. The school funds 4YP, has an extensive Inclusion Team made up of 9 Learning Mentors with various expertise. The Pandemic has increased the support that is needed to support students. School can also refer to a private counselling service called Teenage Mental Health Trust which Paradigm funds.

A parent asked if this was all advertised somewhere in school for pupils to see – Students are aware of ways to access support via school staff and if concerns are raised by teachers/pupils/parents, then this goes to Learning Mentors who can put further interventions in place and access further support as detailed above. The school website/intranet site has a section under PSHE, called the Wellbeing section, if students are struggling out of school hours, they can click on the 'Help Me' button and school staff will follow up with them on the next school day.

Parents will receive an email today about the new Parenting Hub – This is separate to school and is a place for parents to seek support if they have concerns.

A parent questioning about the mental health ambassadors in school – Abbie informed us that 50 students have been trained to be ambassadors. Emily



Thorrington, (Mental Health Lead), achieved some funding for this training. Students can have that support from peers. It was felt that students may be more comfortable approaching a peer in the first instance in order to see support.

Next meeting

Tuesday 17 May 2022 at 2pm – maybe same day as afternoon tea

It was agreed that to accommodate more parents' attendance, this would be in person in school, with the option of joining virtually for those who prefer.

