

# Parent Forum Minutes



**CHILDREN COME FIRST.**



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**Meeting title:** Spring term meeting of the John Ferneley College Parent Forum  
**Date and time:** 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022 at 5pm  
**Location:** Meeting at the school

**In attendance**

- \* Natalie Teece, Head of School. NT.
- \* Kat Russell, Assistant Headteacher: Behaviour and Attitudes. KR.
- \* Alistair Hallifax, Assistant Headteacher: Timetable, Data and Exams. AH.
- \* Georgia Mogg, Marketing & Communications Assistant, GM.
- \* Nicola Evans
- \* Kirsty James
- \* Paula Eaves
- \* Nicola Brown
- \* Rachel Owen
- \* Calum Brown
- \* Sara Potts
- \* Naomi Williams
- \* Anna Duval, Clerk.

Apologies were received from Jacqui Fields.

## Welcome and Introductions

Mrs Teece (NT) welcomed the parents and carers to the Parents Forum meeting and introduced Mrs Russell and Mr Hallifax, Assistant Headteachers.

NT said that Parent Forums give parents the opportunity to raise any questions. There will be a focused agenda item at each meeting. The focus at this meeting will be school uniform.

NT said at the end of last summer they looked at the current uniform policy. (available on the school website). At that time, they said going forward the school wants the uniform policy to be adhered to. NT said that school uniforms are important and there is a lot of research on the benefits of a school uniform. It helps a young person understand where the boundaries are. It sets them up for later life in terms of expectations and rules. They are smartly dressed for school. It also saves them having to make a decision on what to wear every day and helps them settle into their learning.

NT said then when looking back to last summer when they tightened the regulations of the existing school uniform they could have engaged with parents and carers more. They had wanted to get it in place for the students when returning to education after Covid. NT said that it important parents are involved with the changes they are planning to the uniform.

NT said that some areas of the uniform policy have worked well. The blazer is now worn by all students, along with ties and a school lanyard with their ID card.

NT said that are looking to have a different colour lanyard for each year group.

NT said that some parents were reluctant to purchase items as they felt that by Christmas it would no longer be enforced.

NT said that KR has been reinforcing the school uniform policy in assemblies to all year groups this week.

NT said the older students have found adhering to the uniform policy harder than the younger students.

NT said that coats were being allowed to be worn indoors due to Covid restriction meaning that classroom windows are open. Now that restrictions have eased, they are returning to the policy of no coats indoors.

NT said the DoE has asked all schools to look at their school uniform policies and it gives guidance for schools to meet by summer 2022. It states that uniform is encouraged as it promotes the ethos of the school, gives a sense of belonging, and provides students with an appropriate tone for education. The guidance says that the uniform needs to be affordable and the number of branded items needs to be minimised, is available from more than one supplier and there is a supply of second hand uniform available.

Attendees were given a draft copy of the new School Uniform Policy. NT said the parents were the first stakeholders to look at the new uniform which would be introduced in the new academic year, August 2022 and invited their views on what could and may not work.

NT said the new uniform policy had a number of compulsory items that students must wear

Main points of discussion were:

**Jumper.** NT said that students must wear a blazer and may wear a jumper underneath the blazer. Previously the jumper had to be V necked but now any plain black jumper with no logos is acceptable. Parents asked if the jumper may be sweatshirt type material. KR said that it may be woollen or sweatshirt type material, V neck or round neck but hoods are not acceptable. Parents asked if this can be made clearer on the policy. NT said that jumpers may only be worn under a blazer.

NT said that they are proposing to change the colour of skirts and trousers to charcoal grey.

**Skirt and Trousers.** NT said that had asked for the school skirt length that ends on or below the knee. KR said they want to take away the need for checking the length of skirts by introducing a single branded school skirt.

Parents said that currently to get a skirt to fit at the waist and meet the length requirement is extremely difficult for some students or that they buy skirts and trousers to fit at the beginning of the year and with growth they soon no longer fit or meet the correct length.

NT said GM has sourced a list of suppliers who can provide grey skirt and showed an example of the skirt. There will be one pleated grey skirt with a standard 28" length that will have branding on the front. KR said that she had tested a ranged of skirt lengths with varying height students and the 28" was found to be the best option. Trousers will need to be grey and there will be no branding on them.

Parents said that many families pass uniform down to siblings and a change in colour will mean that current uniform cannot be passed on but also noted that last summer they were informed that a branded skirt may be introduced later. NT said there will be no plan to change the colour again as they will be signing a minimum 3-year contract with suppliers.

Parents asked where will the branding be positioned and noted that the skirt had narrow pleats. MR said the branding is small will be on one pleat.

Parents question why the skirts need to be branded when trousers are not. NT there is so much ambiguity with skirt length and the need to check the skirt length is taken away by only having the one skirt.

Parents said that some girls may not like the skirt. NT said that girls also have the option to wear trousers and that trousers are an affordable option for all and can be widely purchased.

Parents asked about the cost of the skirt. GM said the cost of the skirt is £18-£23.

Parents asked about the care quality of the skirt and noted that narrow pleats will be difficult to iron. NT said they will ask suppliers about wider pleats.

NT said the aim is for the current year 10 students to stay with black skirts/trousers and to introduce the new grey skirts/trousers to the other year groups from the start of the new academic year.

**Shoes.** NT said that shoes have caused much discussion around the durability especially for those that walk to school. NT said that they had asked for shoes to be entirely black, polishable, leather type shoes with enclosed toe and heel and that trainers were not acceptable however they accept polishable plain black trainers could be an option. Parents asked if boots are allowed, and KR said that short ankle boots are acceptable. Parents asked about patent shoes as they are not polishable and KR said they are acceptable. Parents suggested that the wording on the new uniform policy document should say footwear rather than shoes.

**Bags.** Parents asked if bags need to be a rucksack style or will other styles be accepted. KR said that it need not be a rucksack, but it should be strong enough to carry the students items and be able to fit the A4 folder in it.

**Folders.** Parents said they felt the folders were disappointing. They were not branded, fell apart easily, and asked if dividers could be provided. NT said folders will continue but they are looking to improve them and source a better quality. Parents said there had been a lack of homework set. NT said that after lockdown and home learning they wanted students to concentrate on lessons and they are now in the process of looking into homework.

**Watches.** Parents asked about smart watches. NT said students can wear regular watches, but smart watches are not allowed. Smart watches are prohibited in exams therefore they are preparing students for this.

**P.E. shorts.** Parents asked about P.E. shorts and said that some students are still wearing mesh style shorts. AH said that the P.E. department are looking at this.

NT said they will be holding uniform event evenings where potential and existing students can see the uniform and try on samples.

NT said they will have second-hand items available and will ask parents to donate school uniform items.

Parents said that a local primary school offered a second-hand uniform provision for a £1 donation. NT said she thought this was a good idea.

Attendees were given two flyers about JFCCommunity. This is a friends of John Ferneley College parents association, for parents to get involved. The first meeting will be on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> March at 5pm and there will be cheese and biscuits available.

Parents were provided with an evaluation sheet to provide feedback on this meeting. KR said that the feedback form can be returned to her at school.

**The meeting closed at 6.10pm.**