

Discussions from Y8 & 9 Coffee Morning

18th October 2017

A) English GCSE

Parent Query: Changes in GCSE timing for Y10 English Language & Y11 English Literature

IS Response: Change is demand driven and decision taken after 2-year evaluation process. *Y9: See email on October 27th for explanation on the changes.*

B) Homework

Parent Observation: Difficult for Y7 & Y8s to make adjustment to Y9 due to sudden increase in workload especially homework. Homework is communicated in different ways by different teachers. Parents cannot access all homework.

IS Response: The aim is to help students take on more responsibility, in preparation for future assignments e.g. in higher learning, and as a life skill for their careers. All homework is posted in Google classrooms. For Y8, a consolidated list can be accessed via ISLE.

Suggestions to help students:

- 1) Breaking up the project work into mini-deadlines.
- 2) Using the planner for planning and prioritizing homework. As homework is posted in Google classrooms, no need to repeat in the planner.
- 3) If issues with homework load continue, discuss with subject teacher and form tutor.

It was also noted that revamp of school communications is still ongoing. The newsletter has a new format, and next the school web sites will be addressed.

C) Tests & Assessments

Parent Query: Tests & Assessments schedule is usually unknown.

IS Response: Learning Schedule given at start of year, posted on website, giving estimated milestones with key assessments and tests. This schedule is not set in stone as its dependent on student learning. Parents can ask subject teachers/VP if it's not on the website.

IS desires students to develop continuous effort & pride in very bit of their work, not just focus on the final assessment. Accordingly, more comments are given than grades, so kids continually develop.

D) Substitute Teachers:

Parent Observation: 3 Substitute Teachers in a day + Teacher in school but not attending class (relayed by student)

IS Response:

- 1) General Rule: Teachers absence should be limited to 3 per year. However, rule is not hard & fast due to a) certain situations e.g. illness b) special programs, workshops etc. On that specific day, absences were related to MYP certification.
- 2) When a subject teacher is absent, try to use same subject substitute teacher otherwise substitute teacher will be fully notified of the work assigned, and this will be communicated to the class. Substitute teachers also monitor assigned tasks are executed.

E) CPD Days

Parent Observation: Too many CPD Days

IS Response: CPD Days are to update current learning techniques, learn new ones, and ways to deliver what's learned. They are accounted for in the number of teaching days.

F) Group Work

Parent Query: Methods, Monitoring and Assessment of Group Work

IS Response: Group work helps students learn to collaborate, understand why group failed in an objective, learn from mistakes and find ways to succeed.

Whilst individual assessments are made by the teacher, parents suggested to also have students evaluate team members. For example, this teaches students focus on achieving objectives instead of personalities.

G) Student "Coasting"

Parent Query: If student is doing well or poorly, parents find out. But if student is coasting/getting by/doing OK, there is no news or way to find out where student needs to improve.

Test Papers should be seen by parents (not done always) and answers posted on website, then parents can help address needs. Parents could also sign back test papers, so they remain informed.

IS Response: Teachers & students review and assess the test results together.

Posting the test papers and results on website is not solution as it stops learning and learning becomes result driven instead.

Strong encouragement given parents to contact teachers – both are important partners in this space.

H) Parent Workshops

Parent Query: Hold workshops for parents on assessments, teaching methods including parenting techniques etc.,

IS Response: Welcome this idea – opportunity for parents learn school learning systems. But most importantly, parents should trust the school as well. For example, the system has demonstrated results with all graduating students of last academic year who wanted to attend to university being admitted to one.

I) The Isle & Evidencer Websites

Parent Observation: Isle & Evidencer Websites are complex to use & navigate.

IS Response: Welcome further & more specific feedback from parents to help improve the websites.

J) Science as a compulsory / optional subject

Parents Query: Other ESF Schools have made 3 science subjects compulsory. Why is it optional in IS?

IS Response: Taking 3 sciences is possible through a combination of entrance and elements courses. It is the right choice for some students, but not necessarily for all as students have different education and career plans.

K) Student Counseling:

Parent Query: Can students be counseled earlier to help guide their career choices.

IS Response: Help students become aware of their strengths. They can then take the next opportunities to develop their strengths, which could lead to a suitable career.