

28th February 2019

Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you to everyone who completed our recent questionnaire about the introduction of a new behaviour policy in school. We had 182 questionnaires returned which represents 73% of the families with children who come to Little Paxton School.

| | YES | NO | NOT SURE |
|--|-----|----|----------|
| Are you aware that the school is trialling a new Behaviour Policy this term? | 168 | 11 | 3 |
| Have you and your child/children talked about this new policy? | 150 | 28 | 4 |

You can see from the table above that most people are aware that school is trialling a new policy and also that most have talked to their children about it. This is good to know. A copy of the draft policy was provided by email to all parents and carers earlier this term; please ask at the School Office if you would like another copy. The draft policy is also available on the policies page of the school website.

We also asked if you felt the new policy was having a positive impact on your child's experience at school. Whilst about a third (34%) felt they could definitely see a positive impact, most (54%) were unsure or didn't answer this question. A small number (2%) felt it made no difference and some (10%) felt the impact was not positive. The numbers are shown below. The new policy has only been in use for the last 6 weeks so perhaps it's a little too early to say whether the impact is positive. However, it is pleasing to note that the majority of you have not seen an immediate negative impact.

| | NO ANSWER | MADE NO DIFFERENCE | YES | NO | NOT SURE |
|--|-----------|--------------------|-----|----|----------|
| From what you have seen and heard is the policy having a positive impact on your child's experience at school? | 7 | 4 | 62 | 18 | 91 |

I know that some of you took the opportunity at the parents' evenings just before half term to talk to your child's Class Teacher, the Head Teacher or to a Governor about how you felt the new policy is (or isn't) working. This is really useful feedback and we will take all your comments, questions and concerns into account as we revise and refine the policy. We know the draft policy is not perfect. It has been introduced to try to ensure there is more consistency across the school; this is more challenging to achieve as the school grows and we have more staff.

The concerns you raised included (number of parents making the comment given in brackets):

- There is still a lack of consistency – some members of staff are harsher and stricter than others. There must be proper balance between sanctions for poor behaviour and praise for good behaviour. (11)
- It needs to be fair – for example, it is not fair that the whole class lose their golden time because of poor behaviour by a few members of the class. (11)
- Sending a child to sit in another class can be very disruptive both to the child and to the receiving class. It can be frightening for younger children. Also will the teacher of the receiving be aware of any special needs of the children sent to them? (8)
- It works well for some but not others, particularly those with special educational needs (SEN). It should be adapted for SEN and children of different ages and/or ability. (5)
- The assemblies and class sessions linked to the introduction of the new policy caused anxiety for some children who were (mostly unnecessarily) worried about the new sanctions being applied to them. (5)
- We would have liked more information or consultation before this new policy was introduced. (2)
- Children who are generally well behaved and work hard but are not exceptional can feel demotivated as they never do enough to be “worker of the week” etc. (1)
- The policy is too long. (1)

Positive comments mentioned included (number of parents making the comment given in brackets):

- We are pleased with this new approach: it has had a positive impact - children understand the boundaries and the consequences of their behaviour. It reinforces good behaviour, so behaviour has improved for my child and it is working well for us (18)
- The use of dojo points, recognition boards, golden time, milkshake Monday etc to praise good behaviour is good. Although it was mentioned by one parent that there may be too much chocolate used in the “dip in the jar” rewards. (7)
- Giving warnings and yellow followed by red cards is a good way to discourage poor behaviour. (4)
- We have no concerns about the new policy. (4)
- A new policy was needed, so good to see the school working on this. We were pleased that parents were sent a copy. (2)

There were some very specific questions which governors will look into:

- Is there sufficient co-operation and feedback between the lunch and playtime staff and the classroom staff?
- The opening statement of the policy (respect must be earned) gives the wrong message. We want our children to learn to respect all other people as of right.
- Children shouldn't be made to shake hands with others if they don't want to.
- Why are children made to sit facing the wall as a sanction?

As one parent mentioned, there are always “teething problems” when anything new is introduced but, over time, things should settle down and we will begin to see the benefits of the new policy being applied consistently across the school. Please do continue to let us know how the policy is working for your child as it is only through feedback that we can revise and improve it. All

comments we have received have been shared with the Head Teacher. If you have any questions please do ask your child's Class Teacher or the Head Teacher.

We also received some comments about other areas of school life. The topic that is causing most discussion is school meals and lunch time arrangements. The comments fall into 3 categories:

1. The quality of the food provided for school dinners has deteriorated – particularly for vegetarians. We are aware of this and have taken it up with the school caterers. It is unfortunate that the small local company that we took a contract with has subsequently been taken over by a much larger firm. Please let us know of instances where the quality is unacceptable so we have a good evidence base from which to complain to the catering company.
2. Children don't get as much of a break at lunchtime. Children are now going into lunch by class and must sit at the table for 20 minutes even if they have finished eating. This has been introduced as it was noticed that some children were either bolting their food far too quickly or eating very little in order to get outside to play. The new arrangement has solved these issues but it does mean that children can't always sit with friends in other classes. Children still get half an hour at lunchtime outside to play.
3. There is not enough adult supervision at lunchtime and the adults who are there don't always listen to the children or are unable to resolve their difficulties. Our staffing levels meet requirements and are in line with other schools. That said, Little Paxton School wants to be better than "in line with other schools". Some of our Teaching Assistants work at lunchtime which is helping to ensure continuity and consistency for the children. We have also employed a Sports Leader who runs various activities for the children at lunchtime. Some parents have commented that this is better for their children than unstructured play.

Of equal concern to some parents is the need to have mixed-age classes. This currently affects pupils in years 3 and 4. It is an economic fact that we can't spend money we don't have. The school is only funded for the number of pupils on roll. The current number is 354 which really only justifies running 12 classes (assuming 30 pupils per class). We are able to have 13 classes because of prudent budgeting in the past. We do not yet know how many pupils we will receive into reception in September so it is not yet possible to know how many classes we will need or, if any need to be, which will be mixed-age. A couple of parents asked about streaming. The school does not routinely stream children. However, children are sometimes grouped for specific subjects when staff judge it would be beneficial.

Finally, we do understand that some of you preferred parents' evenings to be held in the classrooms so you can see your child's work. You can arrange to do this at any time with the Class Teacher and you will be able to see all of your child's work at the open school evening in July.

Thank you for your support of the school – the school is fortunate to have interested committed parents who want to be involved in their children's education.

Yours sincerely,

Penny Conway
Chair of the Governing Body