



Parent Forum

The Axe Valley Community College
& Sixth Form Centre

Supporting Parental Involvement in Pupil Learning

Final Report - July 2014

The prime aim of The Axe Valley Community College is to try to ensure that **all** pupils make the best progress that they can through their college life and attain the best possible outcomes. Active parental involvement in supporting the learning of children has been shown to have a significant positive effect on the outcomes. The College has sought the views of parents/carers regarding this involvement in their child's learning and progress through school with the aim to find out how better the College can support them in this role.

OBJECTIVES

- To seek the views of parents of students in Years 7-13 regarding:
 - homework and the use of student planners and the Learning Platform
 - the importance and ease of contact with teachers.
- To ascertain other ways that the College might support parents with their child's progress.

OVERVIEW

- Questionnaires were handed out at each year group parents' evening.
- The level of response varied: Year 7 – 39; Year 8 – 44; Year 9 – 39; Year 10 – 48; Year 11 – 22; Years 12 & 13 (joint parents' evening) - 19.
- The percentages given in the graphs are of those parents that responded so are not necessarily representative of all parents in any year group.

Homework

- The student planner
 - Less than 10% of parents from all year groups did *not* find the student planner useful for monitoring a child's homework.
 - The planner seems to be less useful to parents as their child moves up the school.
 - Approximately 40-60% of parents in each year group find the planner useful.
- The Learning Platform
 - Approximately 80% of parents of years 7 & 8 look at the Learning Platform with their child but this drops to approximately 60% in years 9 & 10 and then to 40% in years 11, 12 & 13.
 - Almost half of all parents of years 12 & 13 pupils were not aware of the Learning Platform.

- The majority of parents would like personal access to the Learning Platform, particularly in the lower years.

Contact With Teachers

- All parents felt it was important to be able to see teachers at parents' evenings and only a very small minority considered it not important to be able to see teachers at any other time of the year. *(Please bear in mind that this survey was taken at parents' evenings so it can be assumed that these events are a priority for this group of parents. It would be useful to consider the views of parents who do not habitually attend parents' evenings).*
- The majority of parents (60-80%) have found it very easy to contact a teacher/Year Leader. Less than 20% have not found it easy with a few having mixed experiences. Approximately 10-20% have not tried to contact a teacher/Year Leader outside of parents' evenings.
- The preferred method of contact with staff is either by telephone or e-mail with up to 30% preferring to meet in person. Many thought that the appropriate method of contact would depend on the issue.

Subject-Specific Information Evenings

- Up to 80% of parents thought that it would be a good idea to offer evenings where the courses could be explained in greater detail.
- Up to 40% of parents from the higher years were uncertain about the usefulness of subject-specific evenings but did not rule out the opportunity to attend completely.
- Less than 20% of parents from all year groups had no interest in subject-specific evenings at all.

COMMENTS & SUGGESTIONS

These can be broadly grouped into six categories although there is a degree of overlap. Where more than one parent has made the same comment or suggestion the number is given in brackets. Similarly, if a comment is pertinent to a specific year group, that is also given in brackets.

Parents' Evenings

- More frequent parents' evenings.
- Parents' evenings earlier in academic year (Year 10).
- Tutor and Head of Year to be available at parents' evenings.
- If a teacher is unable to attend parents' evening a quick e-mail/text would be appreciated.

Homework

- Better communication of homework that has not been completed. Possible use of texts (2).
- Homework information (task, set date and submission date) communicated to parents by teacher rather than relying on student. Possible use of Learning Platform (4).
- More feedback on homework by Learning Platform/e-mail (3).
- Keep the Learning Platform up-to-date. Particularly useful if pupil is absent.
- More regular marking of homework (often not looked at) (3).
- Provide feedback on all homework.
- Provide more homework.

Reports

- A few sentences on the report explaining attitude and level achieved as opposed to target.
- Written subject-specific reports.
- More information on reports, not just grades (KS5)
- Write the school reports in English instead of cryptic code!

Teaching and Learning

- After school revision classes are a great help.
- More lunchtime learning available rather than after school.
- Provide more information on examination boards and revision papers.
- One to one tutoring in subjects that pupils do not understand.
- Provide joint parent and student evening classes so parents can continue to help at home.
- Look at alternative, more creative teaching methods.
- Publication of reading lists on website for each year group (2).
- Provide further reading/book lists linked to topics to broaden understanding; possible use of school web site and Learning Platform (3).
- Encourage independent learning.

Communication

- Early advisory of any issues with child, including detentions, schoolwork and personality (2).
- Regular signing of planners by parents and tutors.
- School is very supportive and communication with individual teachers is, on the whole, reliable (2).
- More frequent updates perhaps by e-mail (KS5 x3).
- Would like to follow progress on-line (4).
- E-mail test results to parents as they become available.
- More frequent communication of reading progress (Year 7).
- Would like to receive e-mails pertinent to pupil's year group e.g. clubs etc..
- Keep in touch with child and parent regularly if child is off with illness.
- Acknowledge e-mails.
- Regular updating of newsletter and web site of all trips, clubs and extra-curricular events.
- It would be useful if teachers provided their e-mail addresses.

General

- Hold a meeting on work experience procedure (Year 10).
- Details of positive and negative behaviour points and in which subjects.
- Letters home about how Student Planners work.
- More information about the Learning Platform.
- Make better use of the Learning Platform.
- More information on career options to be available to parents, not just students.
- Domiciliary visits from teachers are a great help when a student is off school.
- Tailor help to the individual pupil.
- Happy with current methods (8).

GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF RESPONSES

