

PARENTS' FORUM (SPORT)

RACHEL OWENS - HEADMISTRESS & ANDREW CORNICK - DIRECTOR OF SPORT

THURSDAY 1 FEBRUARY 2018

1. Rugby at SGC

- 1.1. *Several parents have asked about the poor season for Lower School Rugby and what is being done to improve performance?*
- 1.2. ANC is very aware of the poor performance in some teams and there have been continued lengthy discussions with Ben Johnston, Head of Rugby on how to change and improve with better structure, coaching and more focussed training. Unfortunately, it has been an unusual feature of the fixture list this year that our lower school teams have not always matched up size-wise with other school teams, which has been detrimental to the SGC team's success. Rest assured ANC + JBJ are continually working to change things (special skills sessions over the summer, top rugby coach for U14 and U15 tours) for a more successful rugby programme.
- 1.3. *Diversity (vs Rugby alone) has been raised by several parents as a real concern within Sport. The College policy appears to be that children are forced to take part rather than have a passion for sport.*
- 1.4. The College aims to keep students engaged in sport and offers hockey, rowing, tennis and netball for girls as well as rugby. Football is offered within Sixth Form. Yes, we accept that engagement with sport could be improved and we should work to make sessions more fun for those that are not engaged. However, whilst compromise is good, it could be that to give too much choice in the lower years would dilute sports teams too much. It's a positive learning curve for younger students to show commitment to the school. The opportunity to try other sports does broaden further up the school. (RCFO)

2. Communication - SOCS System

- 2.1. *The flow of information about fixtures is still unreliable – what is the College doing to improve this?*
- 2.2. We plan to move over to use of SOCS system over the summer term. This is a school sport administration site with on-line access for staff and parents which gives details of fixtures, including team sheets, match locations and contact details for staff. This would be an extremely positive move both for parents as well as staff, and a key marketing tool – very visible and immediate providing league table information nationally, with real results!
- 2.3. *Communication varies significantly between the different sport staff – Hockey is great but Rugby is still poor!*
- 2.4. Thank you for this feedback. We are aware that parents need to be alerted more quickly and this is a particular development point for Rugby which JBJ is working on. This should definitely improve with the introduction of the SOCS system.

3. Coaching

- 3.1. *Several parents raised concerns about the aptitude of coaching by academic staff for the B teams and below.*
- 3.2. Whilst we are aware that the structure for coaching is not always right, we feel that it is essential that academic staff receive support for their coaching and to educate these staff with proper coaching skills and to empower them to push the students to do their best. Please be aware that it is not just the A teams that get the best coaching! (RCFO). Academic staff training for coaching gives them a different perspective on their students and is a useful skill.
- 3.3. Rest assured, we are continually working to get the coaching right for staff. So far, there have been two INSETs this year for coach training, there have been workshops by specialist coaches and a workshop at the Woking Gym Club with GB gymnasts.

4. PE GCSE

- 4.1. *Would it be possible to introduce PE as GCSE option, in addition to the current A Level?*
- 4.2. PE at GCSE is under active review, but please be aware that were it to be introduced, it would not begin until a few years hence. It is accepted that GCSE PE would create a good balance for other subjects. The new PE GCSE is now more theory weighted and therefore, leads better into A Level PE. The Sports department is keen to introduce this, but it will be carefully evaluated before it is agreed.
- 4.3. *My daughter is desperate to take GCSE PE – would SGC allow her to take the external exam?*

We would accept that the GCSE PE be taken externally but it cannot be taken from SGC for technical reasons – we are unfortunately not certified to do this at this stage. We can offer the venue for the written examination; please get in touch if this is desired.

5. Playing Up - Block Fixtures vs Tournaments

- 5.1. *What is the policy of how teams are selected, particularly when this involves children playing up year groups? I understand that the school wants to do well in certain tournaments but for more regular matches, should the focus not be on year group teams?*
- 5.2. For block fixtures, staff are encouraged to use the bench and rotate all children for play but for tournaments (cup competitions) there is a slightly different policy whereby students are played up *provided* this will improve the team as a whole but the priority must be to play those within the year group. This policy is reiterated to sport staff and is essential. There are, of course, some occasional exceptions - such as girls' season hockey because there is a struggle to find the right level of fixtures.
- 5.3. *Unfortunately, as a parent, in reality this policy is not fulfilled in practice. For example U14A Hockey on Saturday when up to 16 played up vs Whitgift!*
- 5.4. Thank you for this feedback. It is vital that playing up is balanced so that students are stretched and challenged but never to the detriment of a year group. ANC's priority is to steer his staff – who can be reasonably ambitious (!) - to be balanced and prioritise fairness for each child. For example even at tournaments, those children who are not actually selected, should come to the

event so that they are on the same journey. It is about managing expectations and open transparency with each child.

6. Fixture No-Shows

6.1. *What is the official policy for students who do not turn up for fixtures?*

6.2. The policy for no-show is an after-school detention on Friday, but the student is always approached on the following Monday and feedback may be received from parents which is taken into consideration. Sometimes, given the circumstances, there is a warning for first occurrence. We are aware that sometimes parental circumstances have been involved!

6.3. *What if my child is unable to attend a fixture if called-in last minute?*

6.4. Of course, given the late notice, we are sympathetic if a student is unable to participate in a fixture if he/she already has plans! We recognise that it is not ideal to call last-minute and do appreciate it if a child is able to come in at short notice.

6.5. *My daughter recently was given a warning for not attending a fixture but had not been able to participate due to long-term flu illness – this should not have happened.*

6.6. Agreed, this is not good and careful consideration must be made in terms of illness. Our sickness policy is that absence from sport is allowed due to an injury only but of course, given circumstances such a flu, we would advise children not to take part. Sickness must be assessed on a 'case by case basis' - a hard line policy to work from is essential but it does not mean we are not flexible! (RCFO)

7. First Year Boys

7.1. *All of the First Year boys' teams both in Rugby and Hockey have had disappointing results this year. They seem to have been told that they are 'bound to lose' against teams from all boys' schools which has become self-prophecy... where is this message coming from?*

7.2. This is noted but would be surprised if this message has come from our competitive sports department – although this is not an excuse! It is worth noting that communication not only comes from the sports team, but parents also must give a positive message and encourage their children to get on the pitch to win! (RCFO)

8. Sport Scholars

8.1. *Is there a programme for 'excellence in sport' throughout the College?*

8.2. Yes, there is an extensive Sport Scholarship Programme in place and within this a Sport Mentor Programme when scholars meeting either side of half term. There are also regular talks aimed at Sport Scholars as well as Master Classes, such as nutrition talks. These events are intended to stretch our scholars and keep them at the top of their game. There is an opportunity for scholarship reviews on entry into the First & Third Years and into the Sixth Form.

9. Tour Dates

9.1. Is it possible to get tour dates well in advance?

9.2. Absolutely! All proposed tour dates over the coming five years are published on Firefly. We aim to cover all age groups for various trips and also encourage UK based trips to be more inclusive for all students.

If there are any further concerns or questions which have not been raised at tonight's Forum, please do not hesitate to contact Rachel Owens by email: headmistress@stgeorgesweybridge.com or Andrew Cornick: acornick@stgeorgesweybridge.com.

The next Forum for College Parents will take place on **Thursday 1 March regarding SEN** and the Headmistress will be joined by Mrs Tracy Medhurst, Academic Support Specialist Teacher.