

**The British School – Muscat
Senior School Parents' Panel
Meeting held in Multi Purpose Room
on Tuesday 23rd June 2009 12.40pm – 1.55pm**

Attendees: Helle Rantsen, Barbara Garden, Marta Casson, Sarah Whitelaw, Marianne Bos, Sue Williams, Terry Megnin, Paul Keach, Julie Towler, Amanda Armstrong, Marion Withers, Ban Aziz

Senior School Parent Panel Vacancies: Mr. Keach welcomed Ban Aziz as the new YR9 representative and proposed to send out an e-mail to all senior school and YR 6 parents asking for new members to fill the following openings for the next academic year: 2 Representatives for YR 7, one for Year 8, one for Year 9, one for YR11, one for YR12, two for YR13 and one Dutch School Representative. The following parents have agreed to remain on the Panel (see last page for contact details):

Year 8 – Sarah Whitelaw, Barbara Garden
Year 9 – Amanda Armstrong
Year 10 – Ban Aziz, Marion Withers
Year 11 – Helle Rantsen
Year 12 – Terry Megnin
Board of Governors – Julie Towler

Issues	Action Points
Mr. Keach thanked all SSPP members for their work over the last year. He believes it has created a forum where parents are able to bring up issues which they feel need addressing to benefit the school. Thanks to the SSPP and the weekly newsletter he feels communication between the parent body and the school has greatly improved.	
<p>1) Matters arising from Previous Minutes</p> <p><i>Amount of homework</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The new system whereby parents/students will be able to check on-line for homework will be in operation from next academic year. This will also enable the school to monitor the amount of homework set and deal with any inconsistencies. <p><i>Cover for Absent Teachers</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Keach informed the Panel that class representatives have been instructed to report to the office if a teacher is absent and there is no cover so that immediate action can be taken. This seems to be working very well. <p><i>Year 10/11 play area</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Board of Governors confirmed that this area will be refurbished during the summer holidays to include solid shading. Whether or not there will be fans and tables/chairs is not 	Julie Towler to confirm?

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<p>yet clear. In the meantime, Year 10 were offered the use of the 6th Form Common Room but very few took it up.</p> <p><i>Eating out of the heat?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It had been suggested that teachers remain in their classrooms 10 minutes longer to give students an opportunity to eat their snacks indoors during break time. Mr. Keach reports that teachers were not too keen, as they need a break too. • It was suggested to look into the possibility of using the prefects to supervise the younger ones • Is there any way lunchboxes can be stored inside the classrooms instead of lockers, especially in summer so that the content is slightly more appealing in this heat? <p><i>School Charter</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Home-School Agreement, which the panel feels would be a great improvement to the school, is currently being drawn up by Mr. Howland and should be ready for the next academic year. 	<p>Mr. Keach to discuss with Senior School Leadership Team?</p> <p>Mr. Keach to discuss with SSLT</p> <p>Mr. Howland</p>
<p>2) Newsletter</p> <p>The panel agrees the weekly newsletter has been a great success and contributes to improved communication between school and parents. It would like to make the following comments/suggestions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Continue on a weekly basis. b. Can it be kept short and to the point (max 2 pages, possibly longer if it includes pictures)? c. Put “returning” important items at the end and only move them to the top if there has been some significant change (e.g. swine flu information). All other repetitions to be avoided on a regular basis, but keep putting them in maybe once a month (seatbelts, phone, sun cream, hats) as a occasional reminder and for new parents. 	<p>Mr. Keach to discuss with Mr. Howland</p>
<p>3) Consistent Disciplining/Sanctions</p> <p>Sue Williams pointed out that there seems to be an inconsistency when it comes to disciplining and/or sanctioning students following an incident. Mr.</p>	

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<p>Megnin informed the panel that a Behaviour Policy including Sanctions is currently being written by the school which will address issues in Primary and Senior School separately. Once it is completed it will be published on the website and available to all parents. He also informed the panel that two new KS Leader jobs have been created to deal with disciplinary issues: Key Stage 3 Leader: Mrs. L. Grey Key Stage 4 Leader: Mr. T. Goodwin</p>	
<p>4) GCSE Exam Results Mr. Keach confirmed that GCSE exam results will be issued in closed envelopes from now on.</p>	
<p>5) Computer Virus? Mr. Keach confirmed that the school does seem to have an internal virus. They are in the process of purchasing new software to address this problem.</p>	
<p>6) Self-Sign out for 6th Formers? Mr Keach reported that this has been discussed with Mrs. Megnin (Head of 6th form) and she does not want students leaving the site during the school day. Students who are not in class at any particular time should be studying unless they have to leave the school for medical reasons. For students who drive themselves to school the following was suggested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In case of the pre-arranged visit to the doctor/dentist, the student should be allowed to sign him/herself out with a note from his/her parents. • In case of an emergency, the school nurse should contact the parents and sign the student out after being given verbal permission. 	<p>Mr Keach to discuss these options and report back to SSPP.</p>
<p>7) Green Team Marta Casson suggested that the good work of the Green Team should be more noticeable throughout the school. The following was discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The school should enroll in the “green schools” programme - Mrs. Turner, who runs the “green programme” in Primary, should be invited to write an article in the newsletter to inform parents on how we can contribute to be greener, what can be recycled at the school. 	<p>Mr. Keach is working on this</p> <p>Mr. Keach to ask Mrs. Turner</p>

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<p>8) Prize giving This year’s prize giving was organised following a new formula on a trial basis. The school has received many comments/suggestions and the panel discussed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Should Key Stages be grouped and prize giving be held on different days for them to cut down on time? - Should Key stages be sat together to facilitate getting up and getting to and from stage - Don’t inform students ahead if they have won a prize – keep them interested! - Sit students at the front, not parents - Call out names in subject groups faster - Do we need as many VIPs as there were at last year’s event and do they need to speak? Is one dignitary handing out prizes maybe enough? - How can we avoid giving a few students a multitude of awards? - Special awards not to be kept until the end of the ceremony, can they be dotted throughout the ceremony to receive the recognition they deserve? 	<p>All these suggestions and probably many more will be taken up by Mr. Keach and discussed.</p>
<p>9) Bullying Some panel members questioned whether inappropriate behaviour is sanctioned in a correct manner by the school and if the school is doing enough to make students aware of the consequences of their actions. Suggestions made by the Panel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bring in professionals to address these issues - Run workshops for students/parents/teachers - Emphasise the issue in PSHE 	<p>To be put on next agenda for further discussion.</p>
<p>10) Noise during exams It was noted that some students had commented on how noisy their working environment was during exams.</p>	<p>Mr Keach to speak with Examinations Officer</p>
<p>6) Agenda Items for next meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minutes of previous Meeting - New SSPP Members? - Bullying 	
<p>Next Meeting: To be arranged once Panel members have been decided.</p>	

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SSPP Representatives

Year 7:

Year 8: Sarah Whitelaw (sjwhitelaw@gmail.com)

Year 9: Amanda Armstrong (amandhar@omantel.net.om)

Year 10: Marion Withers (withersr@xtra.co.nz)

Year 11: Helle Rantsen (helle_rantsen@yahoo.dk)

Year 12: Terry Megnin (megnint@britishschoolmuscat.com)

Year 13:

Dutch School:

Board of Governors Representative: Julie Towler (jetowler@yahoo.co.uk)