

PTA 2014/2015 – Minutes for Meeting 7

Date – Wed 20/5/2015

Time – 8.30 – 9.45am

Location – Chapel

IN ATTENDANCE

PP1		Camila Giannella	CG
PP2		Juliana Mendonça	JMP
PP3		Gabriela Rinzler Mizne	GM
P1	Secretary	Robert Davies	RD
P2	Absent	Daniela Preti Magalhaes	DM
P3	Chair	Adriana Sancovsky Shor	AS
P4		Susan Purdie	SP
P5		Maria Pasquatti	MP
F1	Absent	Mariana Tarraf Conte	MTC
F2	Absent	Angelica de Diego	AdD
F3		Beatriz Madureira	BM
F4		Kyone Ogura	KO
F5		Leda Machado	LM
L6	Treasurer	Maria Martha Costa Mace	MCM
U6	Absent	Analia Pescio Valentini	APV

Head & Senior School	Ms Simpson	LS
Deputy Headmaster	Mr Morgan	PM
Prep School	Mrs Allum	SA
Pre Prep School	Dr Baldisseri	AHB
Bursar	Mr Sapsezian	NS
Admin & Comms Manager	Mrs Godwin da Silva	HGS

Administration and Communications Manager

Ms Simpson introduced Ms Heather Godwin da Silva (hgs@stpauls.br). She will meet later with the PTA to discuss how to coordinate and get feedback on how parents perceive the communications and how intelligible and useful they are.

Non-Academic issues

'Outside school' behaviour and bullying.

There is a general feeling of increasing bullying, especially in the 'virtual world'

- PTA would like to hear the school's views on its role and procedures for 'outside school' bullying (cyber or otherwise)

- Situations in which school might take into consideration who the child is in school as well as outside (prize giving criteria for example)

Mrs Simpson was clear that in today's world of social media the boundary between school and home has blurred further. The school is continuing to develop programmes to raise children's awareness about behavioral standards. There is another session planned for next week building on Cathy Wood's work last term.

The school is aware that it cannot, and should not, monitor social media behaviour systematically, and that children need their own space. What the school does do is treat seriously any behaviour that comes to its attention that is either having an adverse effect on another child at school or that is well beyond the realms of acceptable behavior. Both instances would be addressed and dealt with appropriately.

Mrs Simpson also pointed out that the school can only do so much, and that the parental role in helping children to be aware of the consequences of their acts is critical and supports the school's endeavours. It is a shared responsibility.

As a way of raising parental awareness on this type of bullying, the PTA strongly suggests that the school should continue to promote talks with parents similar to ones given by Ms Allum this year, showing real school cases, as well as addressing e-awareness, and sex and drug and alcohol awareness programmes for children and parents.

Ms Allum's talk is being put on the agenda again due to its success last time.

Communications Project

PTA would like to reiterate its desire to contribute in areas specific to communicating with parents.

Heather Godwin again reiterated that she would like to sit down with the PTA to go through their ideas as to how to be more effective in communications with parents.

Ms Simpson described a meeting where the school will be bringing in speakers. She mentioned that the PTA could liaise with the school to suggest possible themes and individuals.

To be considered: how to request permission for the PTA to include information in Contact List at the beginning of term. It was again reiterated that the school will ask parents if they are happy for their names to be given to the PTA. As part of the paperwork signed for the school contract, parents will be given the option of ticking a box to say they do not wish their details to be shared with the PTA. The details of all parents who do not tick this box will be passed to the PTA at the beginning of term.

The PTA also pointed out that sometimes the lists passed to the PTA by the school didn't have the most up to date information. Mr Morgan was emphatic that parents need to keep data up to date for health and safety reasons, particularly emergency telephone and e-mail numbers, as well as information on any medical issues.

Admission process; positive feedback

Positive comments received from families that they received letters with clear explanations as to why child was / was not accepted. For those that were not accepted, it was especially appreciated having the opportunity to meet with Ms Simpson to talk about the decision.

Ms Simpson commented that the school was using a structured assessment for admissions testing that they have found useful for giving constructive feedback to parents.

'No bags on the floor' policy

Prep school has a firm "no bags on the floor policy". Due to the large number of bags on the floor of the play areas, it is a hard rule to implement other than in the Prep areas. There was a question as to whether the issue of the bags on the floor in the play and field areas is due to there being no clear rule, or if the rule is not being enforced?

The school understands the concerns and will look to install more bag racks in the play area and encourage children to use them. The situation will be monitored to see if there is any improvement.

ECA cancellations

Parents have commented that if an ECA is cancelled, there is not always a notification to parents. For children without mobile phones, parents do not find out and are unable to adjust their pick-up times. This leaves children floating around school for an hour or so. Can we please develop some way that parents can be consistently notified on cancellation?

The school believes that there have been improvements in this area, but will continue to work on making the communication process clearer and more effective. Certain IT solutions are being looked at and these should be available for parents shortly.

Dengue

April is the peak month for Dengue. This year's growth on last year was considerable and followed a geometric progression from previous years, both in cases detected and in deaths. The eggs that have been laid now can survive 12 months waiting for next year's humid and warm months. There are strong reasons to believe that next year the incidence rates in Sao Paulo will therefore continue to increase at the same rate. Could we urge the school to use the Dengue Recess Period from now to December to understand the risks and research ways to protect pupils at school? Many parents apply "Off" before sending their children to school, but after play, swimming and 7 hours, effectiveness will have reduced considerably. Do long socks protect? Leggings? Leggings with Off applied? Can "Off" be made available at strategic points? Should teachers have a role in re-applying after sport for younger children? Etc.

Ms Simpson took a clear position on using the time from here to December to research the potential to increase preventative measures and to roll these out before January. This could include bringing in external speakers, developing health codes and increasing education for children and parents.

Traffic

Mr Morgan reported back that there has been some increased activity from the CET in Rua Juquiá including modifications to the traffic light sequence that will allow a slightly greater flow of cars out of Rua Juquiá per minute during peak times. Also, the school has added a paragraph to the school's contract requesting that parents register cars that are used for drop-off and pick-up. Combined with the installation of more security cameras along the road, the school will be better able to talk to parents whose cars are not following the voluntary code and creating flow issues. The PTA welcomed these initiatives.

Fund raising

There was a brief update on the preparations for the International Day. Ms Simpson said she was positively impressed by the marquee and stalls that were being put up for the event and that next year she would look at how the school could 'share' some of this temporary infrastructure for its own events and help amortize the costs. The PTA was in favour and suggested that they should come to an agreement on a date for next May early next term, if the event is to be repeated by the incoming PTA.

Education conference Next year's education conference is being planned. This is a flag-ship event for the school bringing 400 delegates from around Brazil and from other Latin American countries. The school is actively looking for sponsorship. There will be several high profile key note speakers. Any parents wanting to understand more about the event, either as a delegate, sponsor or speaker should reach out to Ms Simpson or Heather Godwin as soon as possible.

Parent and pupil surveys

The school will be sending out parent surveys similar to the ones that have been sent before. They will be sent on Thursday 21st May and parents will have two weeks to complete them (they will be asked to complete it once for each child they have in the school.) The survey for pupils in Prep 3, 4

and 5, plus Form 5 and Upper Sixth will also be sent out on Thursday and the others for Forms 1, 2, 3, 4 and L6 will be sent on Monday 8th June (after the assessment period and end of year exams) and will be completed in ICT/computer studies lessons for Prep to Form 3.

Parent-portal: Firefly

This is now its last stages of testing and the school will invite members of the PTA to run a final test before it is launched to the entire community.

Financial support from PTA for school projects

PTA to present the Fund Request Form for approval.

Ms Simpson will send this out to appropriate staff members to be filled out and returned by the end of May. A sub-committee of the PTA will meet with the school, and then the full PTA will consider all requests and distribute funds raised throughout the year by June.

AOB

Election for PTA: the process will begin soon. PTA would ask the school to send out an email describing the role, process and to ask for volunteers to come forward.