

Supporting On-Campus Childcare (SOC) Meeting

2nd August 2022

Attendees:

Pauline Young (Childcare Services Manager)

Janice Bindon (Deputy Childcare Services Manager)

Gabriella Caruana (Parent)

Fiona Dickinson (Parent)

Tamsin Foxwell (Parent)

Chris Young (HR Deputy Director: Safety and Employee Wellbeing Services)

Apologies:

Meg Crossman (SU Community Officer)

1. Matters Arising (August SOC)

a. Parents Interactions with Nursery

CY has arranged with AV for Nursery to borrow the 360° camera to film the rooms. However, this has been delayed due to sickness absence in the University's AV department. **CY to follow up.**

A list of Frequently Asked Questions was provided by parent reps. CY advised that he had approached the Room Leaders with a list of signposted resources that could be added to the Nursery webpages. Initial Room Leader feedback was that whilst they were happy to generally signpost resources, they feel that it would be more beneficial if parents approached them directly for advice and guidance specific to their child. The reason given for this is that whilst generic guidance may give a reasonable starting point, some of these issues will change as the child moves through the nursery, for example a fussy baby will have different weaning advice to that of a child in the Pre-School room.

It was agreed that pages will be provided on the Nursery website to signpost general guidance, but these would be accompanied by a reminder that nursery staff are very happy to support parents with general enquiries.

2. Childcare Services Manager's Report

a. Recruitment (permanent staff)

Permanent staff recruitment continues to be challenging. The former member of staff that had expressed interest in a role at the University had to withdraw as she required more hours than could be offered.

JB provided an update on recruitment from Bath Spa Nursery. It appears that many of the staff currently working in that setting have decided to leave childcare when the Nursery there closes.

JB advised that there had been a significant number (c20) applications from students to work as casuals within the Nursery. The original advertisements were re-written, and these

were signposted with the assistance of the SU which seems to have proved successful in attracting candidates.

Lucy Farr has been recruited to replace Nabeeha Dodson and has settled well into the administrator role.

b. Food Hygiene

The kitchen defects noted in the recent Environmental Health Inspection have now been rectified. There is further work planned to refresh the tiling within the kitchen area.

Work is ongoing to update the Nursery's food safety documentation. **PY to liaise with Cheryl Herbert (ahs food safety manager) and update at the next meeting.**

3. Food provision.

A contract has been agreed with Bath Spa to provide food and snacks to the Nursery. Feedback to date is that the food is popular with the children.

Following feedback from Nursery, BSU has tweaked some of the menus to limit choices as this was increasing waste. In addition, the Nursery has been monitoring portion sizes and has been able to reduce orders to further ensure that waste is minimised.

FB had previously asked whether it would be possible, in line with the University's net zero strategy, to reduce the number of days when meat is served. This is being explored with BSU – **PY / JB to provide an update at the next meeting.**

4. Finances Update

A letter has been sent out to all parents advising of a rise in fees coming into force as of 1st September 2022. As previously noted, bids had been made in annual planning for additional funding from the University to offset rises in operational costs, notably rises associated with increases in VLW. These have been reflected in the fee rise that has been implemented.

CY advised that there had also been a successful bid made for an external review of the Nursery to be undertaken. The purpose of this review being to look at all aspects of the provision to identify how this might be improved (including setting and facilities, recruitment, and how the provision can be modified to better meet staff and student need). It was agreed that in addition to staff and parents, and students, any review should also consult with the Athena Swann committees and other ED&I groups to capture wider views of the provision. **CY to update on procurement at next meeting.**

5. Feedback from parents

The possibility of getting some signs installed to advise people that this is the Nursery's "Forest School" was discussed. **CY to speak to Estates about getting signs installed.**

It was asked whether there was a possibility for more small events in Nursery to enable parents to come in and see their children in the facilities and to interact with Nursery. There is an afternoon tea event scheduled in September for the Pre-School room. It was noted that baby room struggles to get events in place but were exploring the possibility of doing something in October / November. **PY / JB to follow up with Room Leaders.**

FD advised that she would be happy to come into Nursery to do some sort of demonstrating linked to her job role (potentially as an age-appropriate introduction to Science) and advised that other parents had expressed an interest in doing similar. **PY / JB to discuss with Room leaders.**

6. AOB

CY noted that this meeting was the last one that Gabi would be attending as her child would be moving on to primary school after the Summer. Attendees all thanked Gabi for her contribution to the group and wished her well for the future.

CY noted that there would be a lot of new starters in September and October and canvassed views on when the next SOC elections should take place. It was agreed that these would be held in the new academic year to enable new parents to express an interest in taking up the role / to be actively engaged in the election of a new representative. **PY to arrange for an election in the new academic year.**

Date of Next Meeting:

1st November 2022 @ 10:30 a.m.

Location: TBC