

Supporting On-Campus Childcare (SOC) Meeting

1st November 2022

Attendees:

Janice Bindon (Deputy Childcare Services Manager)

Fiona Dickinson (Parent)

Tamsin Foxwell (Parent)

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

Pauline Young (Childcare Services Manager)

Apologies:

Blake Walker (Student Union community Officer)

1. Matters arising (November SOC)

- a. CY reported due to sickness absence in the University's AV department there remains a delay in the Nursery being able to borrow the 360 camera to film the rooms. There was a discussion around whether the filming was necessary now as prospective parents can visit the nursery in person for show arounds, however, it was felt for those parents who were unable to visit before accepting a place it would be a useful tool for the nursery to have. **CY will contact AV to see if there is someone else who can support with the filming.**

b. Food hygiene

The Nursery have been liaising with Cheryl Herbert (Food Safety Compliance Manager) and have a meeting scheduled for 08.11.22 at the Nursery to review the updated food safety documentation. PY asked if the Nursery kitchens could have some spray taps installed to help remove food debris from the empty baking trays etc from Bath Spa which need cleaning before being collected the following day. **CY to liaise with Campus Infrastructure.**

c. Food Provision

Meat Free Day – this is still not routinely in place on the menu but was raised at a meeting with The Bath Spa and the Nursery Senior Management Team on 20th September 2022. The Head Chef is currently on paternity leave and is due to return to work in the next few weeks. FD raised the possibility of having two meat free days per week. **PY/JB will pick this up with him again once he has returned.**

d. Forest School signage:

There was a discussion around having signs installed in the Forest School area. Previously there had been damage to a bridge which had been made by parents. It was felt that having signs might work as a deterrent from there being further damage to the resources. PY and JB reported that there had not been any further episodes of resources being damaged. **CY had previously spoken to Estates about signage and would contact them to find out where they currently are with organising that.**

e. Events in the Rooms:

Parents had been invited into the nursery room and preschool rooms for a variety of activities including art and craft activities, reading stories, cooking activities and to share tea with the children and other parents.

PY advised that Baby Room will be arranging an event for parents. The baby room is currently very busy with lots of new babies being settled in. The invitation for baby room will probably be a Christmas event. The Management Team are scheduled to the following day (02.11.22) and will be discussing Christmas events and celebrations across the nursery.

Pauline thanked FD for the handmade cooking and craft aprons which she had provided. They were greatly appreciated by the Nursery Team.

f. Election of New Parent Representative

PY reported that an email had been sent to all parents inviting applications for the new Parent Representative with a closing date of 11th of November 2022. There have been two applications received so far. **PY will organise an election once invitations have closed.**

2. Terms of Reference

It was felt any discussion around the Terms of Reference should be postponed until a replacement parent representative had been elected.

3. Childcare Services Managers Report

- a. Election of third Parent Representative as previously discussed (see 1.f)
- b. Permanent recruitment continues to be very challenging. The nursery may only receive applications from 2/3 candidates and often this will reduce perhaps to one applicant by the interview date. Other nurseries appear to be increasing the salaries that they offer to their staff. There was a discussion around whether things such as parking could be free for the nursery staff as this might help financially but it was noted that this would affect many other staff within the university who are on similar grades. CY noted that two Cost of Living payments have awarded to staff including those in the nursery. **CY will go back to Reward and ask if they can carry out some analysis around pay.**

PY advised that the nursery has recruited Julie Woolway into the post of Nursery Assistant (0.8 FTE) and she is due to start at the nursery on 7.11.22. As part of the interview process a candidate for the Nursery Nurse post (0.7 FTE) has been invited to a further interview on 09.11.22.

- c. Occupancy- The nursery occupancy is increasing gradually over the year.
- d. Food provision- as discussed in 1.c, the nursery had a very successful meeting with the team from Bath Spa on 20.9.22.
 - The food is excellent and is arriving in good time to be served.
 - There is now a daily food matrix which is much better for the nursery and is working well. Bath Spa are keeping their own monthly matrix as well.
 - Bath Spa are providing custard and gravy as requested

- Meat free Monday should be put in place once the head chef returns from paternity leave
- There are better options for children with allergies
- The portion control is generally good but the numbers of children in nursery are increasing. In the absence of the Head Chef the nursery needed to ask for bigger portions which Bath Spa responded to.

TW asked if the menu was stored anywhere electronically. The menu has been emailed to parents and is also on windows near the drop off/pick up points for the children. FD advised that most schools are having meat free days twice a week. It was raised that changes to the menu may not always be straightforward as Bath Spa also cater for the nursery on their campus. PY stated that a new menu should be available in the new year.

- e. Maintenance – The roof is currently being replaced. CY explained the roof had reached the end of its life and was absorbing water. Parts of the roof had to be replaced completely. The new roof should provide much better insulation and the sky lights are being replaced free of charge. FD raised the problem of water coming off the roof onto parents and staff at handover and wondered if there could be a canopy put in to prevent this happening. It was felt this may improve once the roof is finished but **CY said he would raise the possibility of a canopy with Estates.**

4. Finance

CY explained about the nursery finances. At this point in the nursery year occupancy is low due to the pre-school children having left to go onto school. This results in the nursery making a significant loss, however, around January as occupancy increases finances should move onto a more even keel. The breakeven point is 77% average across the year.

Fee schedules have gone to parents and should now provide them with a predictable monthly cost.

Parents eligible to claim for 15 or 30 hours – this is different from parent to parent. The nursery does send out reminders asking parents to re-register for the 30 hours and to share their codes with the nursery. The codes are then forwarded to BANES. Hourly fees received from BANES for the 15 and 30 hours are underfunded at just £4.14 per hour.

5. Childcare Provision Review

CY advised that as part of this financial year's funding round a bid had been submitted for funding for a review of the nursery provision. The University had approved this bid and CY is in discussion with procurement to source a provider to undertake this review. CY explained that the review is intended to be wide-ranging and will look at all aspects of the Nursery provision and this will include all issues such as how we can meet demand from staff and students, improvements to facilities, pedagogical issues, and recruitment of staff. CY explained that the purpose of the review is to look at how we can best meet the needs of our community whilst also continuing to ensure that we continue to provide a high quality and sustainable setting for the children.

It was agreed that discussions with Nursery staff, parents and carers, as well as wider staff and student groups, such as Athena Swann representatives, would need to be a key aspect of the review.

FD asked about timeline and whether there were any active plans for a new Nursery building. CY explained that timeline for commencing the review was currently unclear but that this would need to be completed this financial year as that is when the funding would need to be spent. CY explained that there was no existing plan to build a new nursery building, and that there is no guarantee that this would be included in the current university campus masterplan. However, the review brief will include a specific request to look at all options around this subject as this is obviously a key aspect of the Nursery provision and will have a bearing on both pedagogy and any future expansion that might be required.

6. **Parental Feedback**

Invitations for parents to take part in an activity in the nursery or come for tea in nursery room and preschool were received very positively by parents. In particular, the invitation to tea and had enabled parents to meet and get to know other parents who they would not normally have had the opportunity to talk to.

The rooms will be inviting parents to events in the lead up to Christmas.

7. **AOB**

Nursery information on TEAMS.

There was a discussion around TEAMS. Each room has a TEAMS group just for the parents of children within the individual room however, there is also a main TEAMS group for all parents.

The main TEAMS group has proven difficult for the nursery to upload policies to. This is due to the group being set up as 'CHAT' which enables parents without university email addresses to be easily added. **PY said that she would ask Lucy Farr to undertake TEAMS training so the nursery could manage the TEAMS groups more effectively.**

Date of Next Meeting:

To be confirmed.

Location to be confirmed.