



**Learner Council Forum**  
**Minutes of the Learner Council Forum held on**  
**24 March 2022 4pm**  
**via MS Teams**

**Chair:** Belle Carrad – SU President Early Years Dartford

**Members:** Deputy Executive Principal (Teaching, Learning and Improvement) Rhiannon Hughes (RH)  
Student Engagement Officer – Trevor Fox (TF)  
Assistant Principal (WD)- Wendy Davies (All Sites)  
Assistant Principal; (JB) – James Butterfill (Multi – sites)  
Assistant Principal (CL) – Chris Lydon (Hadlow)  
Teaching and Learning Officer (DG) – Dawn Gould

**Student Union Representatives:**

Belle Carrad – Early Years  
Paul Minascurta – Public Services  
Katie Kayes – Art  
Annamay Reed - Acting  
Calum Hawkes - Sport  
James Ledger - IT

**College Governors:** Keith Norman (KN)  
Sarah Henwood (SH)  
Louis Jones (LJ)

1.	<b>Introductions</b> Introductions were made by all members of the Learner Council Forum. It was noted that this was the first Learner Council for all Campus's.	Action By
2.	<b>Feedback on points from the last meeting ( Appendix 2)</b> Trevor Fox, Wendy Davies, James Butterfill, Chris Lydon and Rhiannon Hughes fed back on the points raised from the previous meeting (see below Appendix 2).	
3.	<b>Summary of points raised (full details attached – Appendix 1)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dartford:</b> The Student Union at Dartford is losing its base room. Please could the college find a suitable alternative for meetings and equipment storage.</li> <li>• <b>Hadlow:</b> Could the sports courts and fisheries be used for activities that would improve students' wellbeing.</li> <li>• <b>Dartford:</b> Lack of availability of hot food for students who do not finish lessons until 1:45pm in the canteen.</li> <li>• <b>Tonbridge</b> Computing: Lecturer absence and cover.</li> <li>• <b>D/G/T</b> – Condition of the cleanliness of the toilets especially in the "old "buildings.</li> <li>• <b>Gravesend:</b> Canteen closes too early and sometimes by 1pm there is a lack of hot food available.</li> <li>• <b>Tonbridge:</b> Early Years - cancellation of lessons due to open days.</li> <li>• <b>Dartford:</b> Sports Hall roof is leaking.</li> <li>• <b>All Campus's:</b> - A request for more gender-neutral toilets.</li> <li>• <b>Dartford</b> - E Block Photography, Katie raised an additional point regarding a leak in the roof.</li> </ul>	RH  CL RW/RH JB RH RW/TF RH JB RH RH TF TF/RW/PM TF/RH/SM
3	<b>Action:</b> A call to estates to be logged re the Photography room leak <b>Action:</b> Meeting with some Gravesend students in Paul's class, Trevor Fox and Rob Wainwright to be arranged. <b>Action:</b> Separate meeting with SM (Sean McCormick – IT Director) to discuss Wifi TBA	
4	<b>Future Learner Council meetings.</b> The Leadership team wanted to know whether the student members would like to have campus specific Learner Council Forum meetings in the future or carry on with just one meeting? The student members voted on having campus specific Learner council meetings. All students agreed to Learner Council Meetings per Campus. SH asked how would cross college issues be dealt with? TF- responded to say that the learner voice would collate issues to see if there are any cross-campus problems. <b>Decision:</b> To hold Learner Council Meetings per Campus. This will begin in May 2022	

5	<p><b>Close of Meeting</b></p> <p>Learners, staff and Governors were thanked for their attendance and valuable contributions. JB - Very impressed with how articulate and the professional way in which they conducted themselves. The College leadership will take on board your comments. Very well done. RH – echoed and added that it was a good opportunity to come together. We will hopefully have some more positive news to feedback from the points raised.</p> <p>KN – Thank you very much on behalf of the board. It is very important that issues and concerns are raised by the students. Hopefully the students will be encouraged by the positive responses. It is important that these points are dealt with.</p>	
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## Feedback Sheet (Appendix 1)

### Learner Council Final Points March 2022

	Point raised	SLT Response
1	<b>Dartford:</b> The Student Union at Dartford is losing its base room where equipment is stored as well as where the team hold meetings. When the Canteen block closes, we do not have anywhere to use. Could the College please locate a suitable room which we can continue to operate from please.	WD/LOM - Would it be possible to use the room opposite the T&L hub? My understanding is that the room is only used as a breakout space for HE learners. I'm sure it could double up, especially as we will have less HE from 22/23.
2	<b>Hadlow:</b> As part of the course, we would like to do more activities at Grove Farm Fishery. e.g., Outside group activities (5 aside football) (fishing club for mental health)	CL - Brian Bailey is organising fishing sessions on Wednesday afternoon. The outdoor court area is being renovated and the moss has been removed. The floodlights are being upgraded but this area should be available post Easter.
3	<b>Dartford:</b> Our lessons on a Thursday and Friday end at a time in which there is no warm food left or the canteen is closed. We don't get the same options as the rest of the college, and this isn't fair. – Can this please be investigated as we cannot get there until at least 1.30pm/1.45pm	LJ - We usually have food until the end of service but may occasionally run out of a meal slightly earlier if we have been busier than usual, generally this is not an issue as by 13:30 the Hot counter is quiet. If there is a need for more food at later times on certain days that would be no problem, but I would need to be notified by teaching areas if there are going to be late breaks, as if I were to cook more food when service is coming to a close everyday to cover this then it would potentially cause a large amount of wastage. Curriculum areas have been asked that for next year, to ensure that lunch is timetabled earlier where they currently operate a 1.30pm finish. The only subjects this will not apply to is for E&M, where the middle day slot must finish at 1.30pm.
4	<b>Tonbridge:</b> We are still missing one lecturer we were told they would start at Christmas then at the beginning of the term and even now we still have	JB - The computing department have had one member of staff absent from work; this was initially on a short-term basis but has been extended on several occasions. Cover lessons have been

	no idea when they will start. As a result, we are not learning at the rate we should be. - <b>Computing</b>	put in place and staff have managed the situation, there is an agency member of staff now available and agreement for a permanent replacement. The department is now fully-staffed and we do not anticipate any further disruption.
5	<b>T/G/D:</b> Toilets in general across Gravesend, Tonbridge and Dartford have been highlighted as being very dirty during the day, with no cleaners seen to be cleaning them. Most highlighted are the toilets in “older” blocks.	<p>LJ - The cleaner on duty has a fair bit to deal with during the time (topping up toilet rolls where someone has pulled tons out and blocked sinks / toilets, boys intend to enjoy throwing it wet at the ceiling / walls). I will speak with the cleaning contract manager to see if they maybe can come up with a solution to cleaning issue obviously without additional costs.</p> <p>We have a toilet janitor for 5 hours a day at all campuses, but the reality is that due to the number of toilets they will be only checked/recleaned once after they have had the morning clean. Some of this is down to students and personal responsibility and that message needs to get back to students, the majority of whom behave very well but a small minority create a terrible mess!</p>
6	<b>Gravesend:</b> The canteen at Gravesend closes too early at lunch time as we must finish our lessons early so we can get down to get some food. Sometimes hot food is gone by 1pm and this means we have no chance to get a main meal, only the quick fry food is then available.	LJ - Hot counter closes at 1.45pm. We are not aware of any issues at 1pm , but students can make staff aware they want something at morning break for the lunchtime service.
7	<b>Tonbridge:</b> Lessons need to stop being cancelled because of out of hours events – <b>Early Years</b>	<p>SC - Learners are referring to the two open days that have taken place at Tonbridge. We have tried to minimise any disruption to lessons however where lessons have not been able to continue on these occasions, any time missed has been included into future sessions.</p> <p>L9T108Q – This group was noted to be over hours and a timetable change was made. It was explained to the group why this change was made. This group also have 7 hours of study with</p>

		their personal tutor to allow for opportunities for 121 discussions. (This was noted within the learner feedback)
8	<b>Dartford:</b> The roof to the Sports Hall at Dartford is leaking quite badly and is affecting the teaching when we need to use the room - <b>Sports</b>	JB/LJ - The Estates team have been working on this with BAM for a long period of time, initial work was undertaken on March 8 <sup>th</sup> 2022 with the remaining work to be undertaken in the coming weeks. This is hugely frustrating for all members of the department and we are continually working with the contractors to rectify issues.
9	<b>All Campuses:</b> The Wi-Fi across the campuses is very patchy and keeps dropping out. This is not helping when we are using portable IT equipment in our lessons. It is not very reliable at all	SMc - Following the Covid-19 lockdowns students and staff are making more use of mobile devices and Microsoft Teams than in the past. The College has commissioned a company to provide coverage and WiFi strength maps and where necessary changes or additional access points.
10	<b>Dartford:</b> The turnstiles always seem to be broken recently causing a bottleneck trying to get both in and out of college. Can these be repaired, or an alternative given to make entering and exiting easier please.	LJ/SMc - All four turnstiles were recently serviced, however there are still some issues. The college has been investigating the reported problems with these turnstiles and will rectify as soon as possible. There will soon be another two turnstiles opened at the back of the campus once the Miskin Arts Centre new build has been officially opened (possibly May 2022 or September 2022 at the latest).
11	<b>All Campuses</b> Please can we have some more Gender-Neutral Toilets. We would prefer them to be real gender neutral and not just converted disabled toilets, if possible, please.	RH - A request has already been placed with Estates to order signage for gender-neutral toilets. In the new build these are for all toilet cubicles which are not specific to any gender. However, in the existing buildings it is not possible to build designated non-gender toilets, so it will be adding signage to existing disabled toilets to be gender neutral.

## Feedback on points from Spring 2021 Appendix (2)

Course Area	Question for Learner Council	SLT Response	2022 Update
<b>Sports Academy</b>	Can something be done to improve the football pitches?	The football pitches are only used by college students, despite numerous requests we do not let external groups hire them in order to keep them in good condition. Training takes place on the training pitch and not on the match pitch in order to preserve the condition. The contractors mow the grass once per week at present. In the height of the growing season this is sometimes not enough. We will liaise with the contractors so that if the contractors alert the team to their schedule, the college will move the posts off the pitches rather than the contractors mowing around them as they leave a long patch of grass when they mow. We will also ask about mowing the grass more regularly but again, this needs to be negotiated with the contractors and costs reviewed.	The contractors have changed their schedule to try and ensure the pitches are in peak condition for match days. James Butterfill has worked personally on the pitches to improve the growth and the quality of the grass. We hope this has improved the pitches for this season.
<b>T&amp;T</b>	The laptops are not good at all and we need to get them replaced. More decent laptops to be made available for support at home. Especially those that do not have the technical requirements. Home learning a bit more patience and understanding to the individual needs.	<p>These Classmate devices are tablets (not laptops) designed for web Office 365 and Internet and work reasonably well if used for this basic purpose. If used for other applications, they will be slow. IT Department works with the area managers to provide equipment that is affordable and sustainable. Other PC rooms with more powerful PC's are available to be timetabled in the same building. IT will refresh these devices over the summer and label them for web use only.</p> <p>The College does not have facilities at present for devices to be loaned to students routinely for home although we have supported a significant number of learners during the Lockdown with a device as they are not needed inside the college at present during Lockdown.</p> <p>The lead Assistant Principal for the area is reviewing whether it is possible for a capital bid to gain higher specification machines to do activities beyond the web related activities, but we will not have</p>	<p>Wi-fi boosters have been put in the Events, Travel and Tourism to try and speed up the use of the tablets.</p> <p>Classmates have been replaced with Acer tablets under the capital bid system and with the wi-fi boosters it has improved connectivity and usage. Students no longer have the facility to borrow computers for home use.</p> <p>Capital Bid successful, tablets now in place.</p>

		confirmation of this until July.	
<b>Creative Media</b>	1: The computers in media are not the best. They crash and do not save they could all be updated. 2: The learners would like that 'hats being banned rule' looked at especially when walking around campus.	<p>1. We did upgrade some of the Macs in Media to help with tasks like rendering this year. Because rendering is a resource hungry exercise, two special heavy-duty Macs were provided off the network for this purpose. The College continually works with the area to review and purchase appropriate equipment, however, must be affordable.</p> <p>2. The Campus Expectations are to be reviewed at the end of the academic year via the Assistant Principals' and T&amp;L Forums to discuss more broadly the impact they have had on learner behaviour over the past 12 months. Currently, hats are allowed whilst walking around campus but not in teaching spaces.</p>	<p>This has been a good solution. The computers and the Macs have been updated.</p> <p>The campus expectations have been successfully reviewed and a compromise reached.</p>

<b>Course Area</b>	<b>Question for Learner Council</b>	<b>SLT Response</b>	<b>2022 Update</b>
<b>Carpentry</b>	Please can we have Air Con in the Carpentry workshop, as it does get warm in there	The installation and running of a full aircon system which could operate in such a large area is prohibitively costly and bad for the environment. We will work with technicians and Estates to try and alleviate the issue through ventilation and limiting peak use to the cooler parts of the day in Summer. For the few particularly hot days, where this becomes a major issue, it will be better to hire spot coolers and additional ventilation when this becomes necessary.	<p>Spot Cooling is in place during the hotter months to ventilate and keep the areas cooler.</p> <p>Last year in the summer this worked well.</p>



<b>Construction</b>	Although new college canteen at Gravesend is good, there is very little area to sit in poor or bad weather.	We have been discussing with the Student Union the possibility of opening up a supervised student zone at the Gravesend campus. There will be a cost to the College, and a need to ensure that learners treat the area with respect and keep it clean and tidy. In order to justify the cost and become confident that behaviour and tidiness will be acceptable, we agreed that the facility would be offered as a reward to students for their engagement in a variety of College projects around campus tidiness, care for the environment, and socially responsible behaviour. A proposal for how the reward system will operate, and target date for the zone to be available, is to be jointly developed between the VP Gravesend and the SU ready for roll out in September. There is clearly going to be some uncertainty as to how such a zone would operate given the current COVID situation, but we are committed to planning for a facility to be available in the medium term as students are willing to play their part and demonstrate their commitment to making it work.	Following Covid we have not had the opportunity to revisit this proposal.  This will be re-evaluated in the coming months.
<b>Construction</b>	Gravesend canteen needs to be open though out the day with more hot food, some group have no choice and no hot food in their break times.	Just prior to Lockdown, hot food had been available either on the Coffee Bar (grab and go) from 8.00am until 1.00pm, or on the Hot Food Counter between 12.00pm and 1.45pm. The overall opening hours need to be restricted because the overall takings do not cover our staff costs. We are aware that there may be limited choice for students who arrive after English or maths sessions finishing at 1.30pm, and are planning to experiment with a range of opening and closing times which may help e.g. (8.15am to 2.00pm) to see on which days, and on which counters there is sufficient demand to justify the staff required to provide the service. We will also work with curriculum to ensure that timetabling of classes is aligned as best as possible to the Canteen opening hours to ensure an even spread of demand, and therefore better choice throughout the sittings.	Staffing levels have prevented us from having key areas open as we would like this year.  Going forward we have introduced a system where students can order food in advance so that they will hopefully be able to get food as and when their lessons end. Last year the time shifts were trialed, but this has been unable to continue this academic year due to no catering students helping in the kitchen once the area of responsibility was changed.

Course Area	Question for Learner Council	SLT Response	2022 Update
Public Services	<p>We need a student zone at Gravesend.</p> <p>Restrooms in C Block at Gravesend and in S Block in Dartford are not always in the best state of repair.</p> <p>The water point in S Block at Dartford has not worked all year.</p>	<p>Please see notes above regarding student zone at Gravesend.</p> <p>The toilets in C and S Blocks are cleaned daily. We do try to keep these in a good condition and have refreshed toilets where possible. S Block is repainted annually however, due to ongoing vandalism it is hard to keep these toilets in a condition that we would like and would ask that students help in notifying us when they witness ill-use of the facilities causing the damage to the toilets.</p> <p>There has been an issue with poor behaviours in the downstairs boys' toilet/changing room in S block. We have discussed with Estates possible solutions of reducing the size of the area to try and prevent the opportunity to spoil the facilities for others. We have also requested an extra clean at the end of the day before the external users come in. This is a very busy area, sadly with poor toilet etiquette employed.</p> <p>The water point usually works but it leaks, this has been reported to Estates for repair. This is a very busy water point, directly outside the Sports Hall and adjacent to reception so we appreciate it gets much use throughout the day.</p>	<p><b>This has been brought forward to the March 2022 Learner Council as it has not improved.</b></p> <p>There has been a reduction in the size of the male changing rooms at Dartford in S block because of the repeated level of vandalism. This has had the effect of reducing the vandalism issue.</p> <p>The poor toilet etiquette persists.</p> <p>This water point does not have a leak but it is a very well used point and the users need to be careful when filling as the spillage is causing a small puddle to develop around the water point. There is a yellow sign next to the water point to warn learners, staff and evening and weekend users of the centre about the dampness. We are working with estates to see if there is a solution.</p>
Early Years	Can we have more seating areas in other parts of college to spend break times	<p>We will provide some additional benches outside to accommodate the use of more outdoor space seating. This should ensure that learners continue to respect that there should not be eating in corridors.</p> <p>Also see above re introduction of a student zone at Gravesend.</p>	There have been more picnic tables situated around the site for learners to use when they are not in lessons. We are pleased to see them being well used.

**Key**

Gravesend	
Dartford	
All	
Tonbridge	
Hadlow	