

Learner Council Forum

Minutes of the Learner Council Forum held on 7th February 2019 in DS103

Chair: Teaching and Learning Improvement Partner – Sue Barry (“SB”)
Members: Principal – David Gleed (“DG”)
 Deputy Principal Curriculum – Rhiannon Hughes (“RH”)
 Assistant Principal, Performance & Development – Chris Lydon (CL)
 Student Engagement Assistant Dartford – Lorna Goddard (“LG”)
 Student Engagement Assistant Gravesend – Trevor Fox (“TF”)

Student Union Representatives: Jade Hart
 Charlotte Davies
 Charlie Cooper
 Simmy Hayre
 Kai Wright
 Megan Irving
 Serena O’Brian
 Courtney Fitness
 Cameron Moncrief
 Fred Titshall

Clerk to the Corporation: Yolanda Hughes - (“YH”)

College Governors: Keith Norman
 David Martin
 Jon Gurney

Action By

1. Introductions

SB welcomed all members to the meeting of the Learner Council Forum.

2. Feedback on Points from Last Meeting

You Said We Did:-

Insufficient picnic benches around the college

Picnic benches purchased and are in situ on the Dartford campus.

Agency Engineering staff concerns

Steps have been taken and a new member of staff has been appointed.

Additional water fountains for Dance studios and E block

This has been investigated and is not felt to be a viable option due to health and safety concerns.

Printing credit allowances are insufficient in some curriculum areas

Staff have the authority to request additional (free) credit for learners if needed as part of their course.

Speed ramps at the back of the campus have started to lift off the road/large pot holes around the site

Both of these were rectified over the summer break.

Shuttle bus issues

See below for update.

Canteen issues

See below for update.

Use of lifts for learners with health conditions

This has now been resolved; learners with health issues can now have access to lifts.

3 Points from this Term's Learner Council

See tables below.

4 Any other Business

Refectory Opening Times

The question as to whether the refectory at Dartford could be opened earlier in the morning was raised. Currently it opens at 9.00 am, just as lessons are starting for some learners. The Principal responded that in the past it has opened earlier but was found not to be well used at this time. However, if it could be determined that there is a demand for an 8.30 am opening, this would be considered. It was agreed that a survey would be conducted via the SU.

SU

Later opening of the refectory– by 30-40 minutes – was also put forward. The Principal responded that timetables change each academic year and opening hours are dependent upon demand. The DP agreed to make contact with Curriculum Managers with regard to their curriculum planning and take these points into consideration.

DP

5. Close of Meeting

Learners were thanked for their attendance and valuable contributions.

The meeting finished at 5.00 pm.

Feedback Sheet

Learner Council Dartford Final Points

	Point raised	Suggested Solution	Response
6	Students would like to have common rooms where they can socialise and sit in break times	Learners could police this and make sure areas designated are kept clean. It would involve representatives having different responsibilities but ultimately the students taking responsibility for their areas. No food and drink to be allowed. This would demonstrate leadership within courses and bring students from different courses together and be made available for group activities. Fund raising for furniture, PCs etc	This is a nice idea. There would be some difficulty in rolling this out in all areas of the curriculum. If you identify a place in your own area and speak with your Curriculum Manager and if we think the space is there, we can trial.
4	The heating in DB001 is very cold; this has been reported to Estates many times over the past few years with the promise of permanent heating to be investigated. There was a reply from John Doran in Sept 2018 stating that the room temperature was on the low side in winter and rather than put temporary heaters they were going to be looking for a permanent solution in half term (additional plumbed in radiators).	The situation was to be monitored and if temporary heaters were required, they would be sent over. This does not appear to have been actioned, so for the time being we have to rely on portable heaters. There is not adequate heating and it is still very cold, and we find it difficult to learn in this room. We often have to wear coats in our lessons	Apologies. The heating in B block is fully computerised, automated and set between 19 and 23 degrees. Moving forward, Estates are looking at having some plumbed in heaters in this room but there is no fixed timeframe (likely next year). In the short term, we will put some more portable heaters in the room.
1	Shuttle bus- As part of the Learner Council May 2018, it was discussed that the 6.30 pm bus would be monitored to record its punctuality. The last bus is still an issue. It often goes early and often	Could this late bus be monitored to check that it is to timetable and is arriving as published? The bus company could be contacted to reiterate the importance of sticking to the 9.30am, 10am etc as	We have spoken to the bus company with regard to the 6.30 pm bus and we are able to track this via an app. The timing of buses is directly related to the traffic issues around Dartford and is

	<p>not at all. At other times buses go early and not to the timetable and this makes it difficult when we arrive to catch the bus and often results in us being late. On some buses students are not scanned and on others they are; this is not consistent. We are concerned that people could enter the bus who should not. It was stated at the last meeting from mid-September all buses would scan id. Is this data being checked to see if the buses are running to timetable and the usage on different routes</p>	<p>published. Can it be confirmed whether all buses run a scanning system and whether this information is being checked in relation to the timetable published and late bus?</p>	<p>difficult to solve. They do try to stick to a timetable. However, on the bus app, you are able to track where it is. The 6.30 pm bus leaving early – we are dealing with this issue.</p> <p>With regard to scanning when boarding the bus, drivers are aware that this is the procedure. Where students do not have their pass, the decision has to be made whether to leave them at the station or allow them on without a pass. There will always be an element as students coming to the college for interviews and other visitors are also permitted to use the shuttle bus without a pass. There is CCTV on the bus for security. Any issues/concerns should be reported to staff at college.</p>
3	<p>Toilets – The cleanliness of the toilets seems to be a very big issue around the campus, especially in S block and B block. S Block first floor toilets smell very bad most days. S Block toilets have been reported to Estates on many occasions, but nothing seems to change.</p>	<p>Is it possible to have a monitoring system on the wall signed by a member of cleaning staff to say when checked as in most public toilets? Can there be staff that check and clean toilets throughout the day. Can more air fresheners be supplied in all toilets. There are also a number of cubicles with no useable locks on the doors. Overall maintenance needs looking at.</p>	<p>The Principal and DP did a walk around 2 days before the meeting looking specifically at toilets. Estates team have started to go around the facilities and taking photos as evidence where there are concerns. However, with regards cleanliness, some students are not cleaning up as they go – students and staff need to take responsibility. It was agreed to do further walk arounds in the future. Air fresheners are a possibility and will be looked into.</p>
2	<p>Accessibility - There is a lack of cleanliness within the lift in E block and it often breaks down so I can't access</p>	<p>Have cleaning staff regularly clean the lifts at least on a daily basis in E and M block maintain this daily. Could students be</p>	<p>The Principal has photos of all toilets in E block and acknowledges the soap dispenser issue. This will be changed. It</p>

	<p>the upper floors. This is often dirty and makes it difficult for me to move around safely. The overall standard of the disabled toilet in E block on the first floor is often dirty and poorly maintained. The sink leaks leaving puddles of water that are left unattended, sinks are often turned off without an alternative or even a warning, sanitation bin being placed far away from the actual toilet, soap dispenser being out of reach for most users especially me. The lack of walkway space when travelling through particular hallways in E- block make it difficult for me and others to move around safely.</p>	<p>restricted from using lifts if able to as they are at Gravesend, this may help to keep the litter down.</p> <p>Have restrooms mopped to prevent slipping and solve all leakage errors as soon as possible. Sinks, either provide a notice on the restroom door stating that the sink is out of use or have sinks immediately repaired. Incorporate mirrors into disable restroom. Place sanitary bins beside the toilets. Either install another soap dispenser closer and lower to the sink or leave bottled hand soap on the sink basins.</p> <p>Have all motor doors monitored on a regular basis to prevent machinery errors and alert disabled students known to use those doors.</p> <p>How to alert disabled students: Create an email group of all students with ECHPs/mobility issues and LSA's and send emails whenever an issue arises. Create a disability forum for learners to discuss such issues</p>	<p>was noted that one of the flushes is too high. Staff need to be reminded to ensure that paint brushes are not washed in toilet sinks and to be mindful of debris in the Art department. The male and female toilets to be changed around (2/3 toilets for boys and 1 for girls at present). Lack of privacy – female ground floor toilets noted.</p> <p>In terms of the lift, no rubbish was evident at time of inspection. We will make arrangements when the lifts are out of order. Lifts are serviced .</p>
5	<p>The Canteen food and drink prices are too expensive even though last year there was promises of 'street food, grab and go food' that would aim to reduce the price. Prices are still very high. More healthier options are needed as food is still 'junk food' in the majority and</p>	<p>Can the prices be lowered and the opportunity of a franchise - this would cover the healthy options. What has happened to the 'street food, grab and go boxes?</p> <p>Can there be more healthier options increased and the option of vegan food.</p>	<p>Food prices have increased by 10% since last year. The Refectory Manager has tried to keep prices the same so has had to change the offer in terms of ingredients to keep it affordable. Drinks prices have increased due to Sugar Tax.</p>

	<p>although there are vegetarian options, can vegan options be also added. The healthier option of 'street food, grab and go food' does not appear to have materialised.</p> <p>Canteen staff are all seen sitting at the table together eating and at this time students cannot get food. The atrium café is closed sometimes for this to happen. This makes it difficult for food and drink to be purchased as the queues become long and we often only have short breaks.</p> <p>Students work late nights on campus and have no access to food. Can the café be opened later? As we only have access to vending machines and only take money and are not contactless and often are not working.</p>	<p>Also would like to see more than one vegetarian option for those allergic to quorn.</p> <p>Please stagger the closing times for the staff breaks so that there are still opportunities for us to purchase food at either café or canteen.</p> <p>Can the Atrium Coffee Shop stay open late nights for us?</p> <p>To have more staff in Atrium Coffee Shop during peak times.</p>	<p>Street food and grab and go boxes is to be piloted this year.</p> <p>Please pass on any issues to the Refectory Manager as well as any thoughts/menus for vegan and vegetarian options.</p> <p>With regard to healthy options, there is a supply and demand issue. The Refectory Manager is trying to balance the demand with what students want.</p> <p>Staff break times to be looked at. Staff are entitled to a break but should not do so all at the same time.</p> <p>The Atrium Coffee Shop has proved to be very successful and additional staff are to be recruited. Evening opening is always tricky as the demand is not always the same each week. The Atrium does have to be closed occasionally due to staff sickness.</p> <p>Vending machines will be able to take contactless payment and cash in due course.</p>
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	Cabinet shows allergen but foods should be kept separately ie nut allergies.	Can this be checked as there are a number of learners with allergies.	Your point with regard allergens is well made and very topical. This will be addressed.
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Feedback Sheet

Learner Council Gravesend Final Points

	Point raised	Suggested Solution	Response
1	Students are always asking for lockers in the college to store valuables when they are in practical lessons. The ones that the college have are often old and are not in good condition, so we would like lockers we could use please	Could the college look into purchasing communal lockers like ones in a leisure centre that are coin operated. They could be kept in the canteen and available for students to use throughout the week, this way there is no worry about areas having to look after them and they are in an open area under a camera. The College could make some money for the scheme to give back to students with activities etc.	Good news - we have received an email from a locker company who supply the locker and the student rents for £18 per academic year per student. Students can call the company and pay online and they then receive a code for the locker. The lockers could be sited in the canteen at Gravesend – maybe trial 50 at Gravesend in the first instance.
2	Can students have more benches. Currently there are 10 benches – 3 under trees and near smoking area which isn't very nice.	A few more benches in free space would be nice.	Agreed.
3	The canteen at Gravesend was promised to have some changes made to improve what was on offer as well as cheaper "Grab & Go" items at the last council meeting. Please can we have an update on moving forward with this please. The hot food is sometimes all gone by 12.30 pm. Some students don't finish until 1.30 pm.	Grab and go would be good or maybe a franchise.	Franchise would be an expensive option. We are looking to do something quite different around the refectory at Gravesend. Plans are being drawn up for the next academic year.
4	The online courses we have to do are repetitive and we keep doing the	Second year students only need a refresher and any new information.	We are currently looking at this for the next academic year as we appreciate that you

	same ones again. Also, not all of us have a computer at home and not everyone can come into college on their day off to do these courses.		don't need to do the whole thing again. However, the Safeguarding course does need to be repeated each year.
5	Students on the Gravesend site would like more of a "Common Room" that is a quiet area to use during breaks and especially at lunch. It needs to be a warm room as the canteen is too cold and more of an area for meeting maybe with a console / board games		This comes back to the re-design of the refectory. Watch this space!