

Minutes from the Parent Representative Meeting on Feb. 3, 2018

The next meeting will take place on April 21, 2018.

1. User survey Summer 2017.

The headmaster presented a selection of the main results.

2. School food and kitchen management

Information about the school's experience with and framework for work with external suppliers and the school's food policy.

3. Lower school inspection

According to the law of independent schools and private grade schools, section 9, it is the responsibility of the parents of children attending an independent grade school to provide supervision with the school's general activities. The parent group, according to section 9a, must choose one or more certified supervisors, or - alternatively - the school may supervise itself through self-evaluation. The school's practice in the area was explained. The following was agreed upon: Grade school management introduces several candidates to the parent representative board (FR). FR will then submit their candidate to the grade school management.

This was followed by further items for discussion at the pre-meeting. The parent work groups presented their views from the pre-meeting.

4. Traditions at Herlufsholm - shared by all - inclusion and well-being

The school and its parents are focused on the integration of boarding students and day students. A range of opportunities to further this is to be discussed at the meeting. There are plenty of opinions and opportunities: mandatory presence for all at the traditional events, affiliation of day students with dorms, etc. The plan is to expand the topic and discuss it further. The extra-curricular program and its role in the integration may also be discussed.

Suggestions as to how boarding students and day students can improve their integration is also a point for discussion - can parents and school do more to create progress here?

It might be advantageous to broaden the discussion to include issues concerning inclusion between IB and STX students - this is an area where the school feels an additional effort is needed and calls for awareness and input from parents on the topic.

The groups presented various points of view, including some of a more long-term character:

We are dealing with a long-term process. It has to be approached as work with the HH culture. Prerequisites for a completely integrated community:

- All students need an affiliation with a dorm

- Mandatory shared physical activities

- On-site stay for everyone for 2-3 weeks

Affiliation with a dorm:

The day students ought to be included by also being affiliated with a dorm.

One might also create a merit system where each student can collect points for his or her dorm during the year.

Mandatory shared physical activities:

Everybody needs to participate in after-school physical activities in the afternoon. That will also strengthen the bond between the students across the various groups. In addition, it creates contact with adults, e.g. coaches and others. Unfortunately, there is a lack of follow-up on after school activities. If there were more follow-up, a higher degree of participation would create a greater sense of community and esprit de corps.

On-site stay for everybody at the school at the beginning of the year - ideally across classes and, naturally, across day students and boarding students. The sense of school community can also be strengthened by enforcing the dress code. This is done for the boarding students, but to an insufficient degree for the day students.

JNO: All day students in 6th through 8th grade have to sign up for an extra-curricular activity at the school. Students in those grades who have a long commute or who practice elite-level sports in their own clubs may be exempt. We have followed up on absences from extra-curricular activities all along, but with the current greater emphasis on follow-up, we

have indeed seen an effect in the form of a decrease in absenteeism.

Headmaster: Pointed out that the rules apply to all and are enforced for everybody, but that the boarding students participate in more activities where they experience control, e.g. at breakfast and dinner time and in the dorms. The Headmaster then asked if there was a special boarding student community. Some parents feel that something extra needs to be done for the boarders. Some people would like there to be a difference. Is this a potential conflict?

Parents: What does management want? Are all students to be Herlovians on equal footing, and how can we ensure that if that is what is wanted? This could be part of the strategic planning work.

Headmaster: We would very much like to integrate day students and boarding students and would like to have the help of the parent representative board. It is one of the reasons why we ask the question. The flexi-boarder model that we are currently working on is just one example of how we attempt to build a bridge between the boarding students and the day students.

Parents: What kind of administrative and operating issues are there if the day students are getting greater access to the dorms? The school itself advertises that the boarding students are like one big family. Do we want a unified school or do we want to separate the groups?

ALB: We cannot and do not have to differentiate between various groups even though they may have different needs and have to be treated differently in certain situations. In the lower school we work with a student profile that builds on community and tolerance. Most of the students in the lower school are day students. In this case, it may sometimes be the boarding students who need to be integrated. One example of an important shared activity which we already have is les lanciers.

Management: Increased expenses in connection with the flexi-boarder model will be paid for by the users.

Parents: Boarders and day students have to know each other, but it is important to know what you pay for. We have to be careful here. Integration is important, but not to the point of watering down the dorms. It is their home. They have to be protected. The school itself says on its website that a student house is a home. The boarding students see their friends as extended family. That environment and the connection to the dorm must be protected, and if parents are buying a different package, the school itself must be clear about it - or it will lead to great dissatisfaction among the parents. An integration of boarders and day students should not mean that one can come and go in the dorms as one pleases. You have to take into account that boarding students are under greater pressure and stress than students who go home at 3:30 pm. That is why they have to be protected and have a peaceful environment in the dorms.

Parents: An integration of boarders and day students in the form of an affiliation with a house or a dorm is possible at many British boarding schools. It should also be possible here.

NCK: We take our role as home/community very seriously. The above focus on the boarding students on the school website is precisely a wish from parents. We are able to build a bridge between boarders and day students while at the same time having an environment in the houses that protects the boarding students with shared activities for this group only.

A number of suggestions were made to promote the integration between various groups of students:

Shared happenings: across years and classes.

More freedom for the boarders to spend time with the day students.

Pancake day where the day students are guests in the dorms.

Culture café where students from other countries talk about their country.

5. Everyday life at Herlufsholm

A returning point of interest in the school/parent cooperation is everyday topics, such as dress code and the way the school is handling the students' use of stimulants and intoxicants, i.e. alcohol, smoking and (more recently) snuff.

The school wants a continuous dialog about these topics in order to be able to adapt its efforts and balance expectations about what can be/should be done and how parents can help create improvements where possible.

Parents: A lot of people do not think there are a lot of problems. But part of this discussion is also part of the discussion regarding boarders and day students. The school does a lot. Nonetheless, visible management may be the way to go. A few people felt that the issue of courtesy has suffered. In some schools the students are greeted at the door by the headmaster or an inspector every morning. More follow-up and enforcement of rules might be in order. Here there is a difference between the boarders and the day students. It might be possible to use the prefect system to a greater extent in order to do some bridge building between the boarders and the day students but also to create a feeling of security and to enforce the rules, especially at the tables.

Management: As mentioned above, it is correct that the day students experience more freedom in certain situations, but that is exactly why we appeal to the parent group and the support we expect from them. It may, for instance, be difficult to send a day student home to change clothes. Here we need the backing of the parents. What takes place outside the school is important for the learning environment.

Parents: We also ask for more information from the school, both of a more general character, but also about actual cases. The school may be able to work with various projects where they research what works. We would like to be prepared to talk to our children.

Management: We would like to look more into and work with well-being. At the moment we have several projects that serve this purpose. In this group we have already discussed the surveys of student well-being. Headmaster: We can mention specifically that - among other things - it deals with problems of well-being among IB students, some of whom feel excluded and discriminated against.

Parents: The school has to accept that the students have a private life outside the school walls that the school should not interfere with. We parents should not feel guilty if our children invite a few friends home to enjoy themselves. If someone is not invited, it is often because of friendships that quite naturally are closer between boarding students. It may also be a matter of practicality. It is not a certain thing that one has room to invite the whole class or the whole year. It is not a question of bullying or systematic exclusion. It was then said that this is a division line we all know - the fact that boarders and day students do not take enough pleasure in each other's company.

MHA: Pointed out that the students' actions and behavior outside school unfortunately influence not just the school's reputation but also the learning environment. The school is working to make the students aware of good behaviour on social media. In this case free time and school time are extremely interconnected. Another issue is the party culture during vacations and travel weekends. Last year the ski trip organized by the students resulted in a significant increase in absences after the vacation. It is to be expected that this will happen again this year. This means that the school has to take into consideration what the students do in their spare time.

JNO: Last year we asked the parents to support the school's ski trip. There is ample opportunity to have a good time, but a group of students unfortunately did not want to travel with the teachers.

6. Other business

Parents: Feedback on the discussions and suggestions by the parent representative board was requested since it was unclear if and to what extent there had been follow-up on the parent representative board's discussions. Many of the topics discussed have been dealt with previously, but it is unclear where we currently stand in this regard.

The Headmaster noted that alcohol, smoking and well-being are issues that will be worked on continuously. Many topics are always timely and will therefore be repeated every year. The parent representative board can help by identifying areas of needed action and provide inspiration for solutions.

Management: It is possible to name a series of initiatives relating to the items on the agenda that have been put into effect during the past year or are about to become reality, such as hiring a student (well-being) counselor, the flexi-boarder concept, new initiatives in the extra-curricular program as well as bridge building and mentor activities in the high school to name a few.

It is possible to present initiatives and results at the next parent representative board meeting. There was general support for this suggestion.