

Minutes

Multi-schools meeting - MID Secondary

Thursday 17th June 2021

Virtual meeting

In attendance

Notley High

William De Ferrers

Alec Hunter

Chelmer Valley

New Rickstones

Beaulieu Park

Apologies - Columbus, SEND Navigator, Essex police, Saffron Walden County High, Orminston Rivers

Minutes

This was one of our best attended meetings with our MID Essex strand even though we are still virtual. Lots of children involved and before we started with this meeting's agenda, I updated them on the topics chosen for the new academic year which are racism, animal cruelty and keeping active.

Our first item was to discuss questions for our VI and blind group. The children would like to find out, how does it feel, does it change your life decisions, how does it effect friendships, do you have to adapt your daily activities, how do you get transport, is braille available in all schools, do all schools have audio books available, how can we help support you without offending you, what else would help you in school, how should we behave with guide dogs and do you ever face discrimination? There was a big emphasis on making sure support didn't offend people, that resources are available in schools and how discrimination must be challenged with more awareness. Some great points from everyone.

Second up was the groups ideas on an inclusive event to help break down perceptions. Ideas for an event included a big festival (very popular) that

included demonstration of skills, stalls addressing key issues for children such as racism, food stalls, markets to raise money, parades, and a real push on educating. Other ideas included a school's master chief, a bubble/colour run, poems to be made to spread awareness, an inclusive video made between schools to challenge discrimination and an art exhibition. Ideas will be considered alongside our other Essex strands. We then stopped for a break.

After our break the focus switched to social media. We know social media can cause many problems for young people and we wanted to discuss ways on how to address this problem. Lots of ideas were spoken about;

- Having a clearer definition of bullying that was shared across all school settings in Essex
- More awareness and assemblies in schools
- Giving people the confidence to own up to their mistakes online
- Quotes on the effect it can have on people who are bullied online
- Make sure we are educating parents too
- Having better tools to report bullying
- A better consideration on children's mental health and the use of social media
- More advertising on how to report bullying
- Having anti-bullying ambassadors in schools
- Talk around stranger danger online
- Picking up and addressing fake news early
- Better online support groups
- A focus on why still in 2021 do we still have cyber bullying
- Bigger consequences

The final discussing was around self-esteem and this also led us to discuss more about children's mental health. We asked the group to come up with ways to help boost children's self-esteem. Ideas included;

- A better focus on confidence building in schools
- A push on kindness
- The word 'banter' not being so widely accepted as sometimes it is not just 'banter'
- Having more peer to peer support in schools (popular)
- More exercise in schools
- After school clubs setup just to allow children to talk
- A push on expressing yourself and be confident in who you are

- Uniform - looking at how this makes children feel
- More awareness around the types of food we eat and better language around this
- More celebrations of achievements across schools
- Growth mindsets to be pushed further
- That feeling sad is okay - it's how we deal with it
- Better signposting to support
- Having more student support centres or wellbeing hubs in schools
- More inspirational posters around the school
- Giving children responsibilities
- More sessions in schools on mental health
- Teachers working better together to break up the amount of homework given at one time

The group were very passionate about this item. The children felt that schools can be a very negative place for children's self-esteem because of the constant comparisons. Many of the children agreed that it was a massive issue in their schools and that the mental health of young people should always come before their education. One child said they felt many teenagers were still suffering in silence. I would also like to visit some of the hubs setup to see if we could share some good practice.

Our star of this meeting was Ollie from Chelmer Valley for taking the lead on many of the questions and speaking very well. He had some very good suggestions throughout but especially within the big event section.

Next meeting - Wednesday 20th October, 10:30am - 12pm, Venue TBC let us know if you would like to host ASAP.

Follow up points

- **Can you do anything to support us with our fundraiser building on the ideas in these minutes? Here is our go fund me page - <https://gofund.me/7b5f2b51>**