**Minutes**

**Multi-schools meeting – Colchester**

**Lawford Primary**

**Wednesday 09th November 2022**

**In attendance**

Lawford primary

Stanway fiveways

Bishops William ward

Little Garth

Colchester Borough Council

St Joseph’s

St Janes’s

Doucecroft

NEECA

ECC Virtual Schools

Hazelmere

**Apologies –** Dedham (Attending virtual)

**Minutes**

A new academic year (doesn’t feel new anymore, I am sure!) and more MSC meetings, getting back to the numbers we had before the pandemic struck. Lot’s of new faces today too which was great and we hope these minutes can be shared across all the schools that were in attendance today.

We started the meeting with a video from Clare Kershaw, director for education in Essex, who spoke about the importance of this group and how seriously the council were taking the attendance report which came out in the summer and will soon be available for all schools. After our introductions we went straight onto discussing anti-bullying ideas. Bullying was the top reason why some young people don’t attend school and here were some ideas;

* Use powerful messages to make it stop
* Have some school assemblies
* More safe spaces in school
* Listen to those who have experienced it
* Focus on *why* people might bully
* Have more buddy systems
* Write a book from young people’s perspectives
* Capture anti-bullying week

Really, interesting ideas which we will compare across the county over the next 3 weeks.

Next up was our conversation around deaf awareness. Young people have been telling us they would like to learn more about people who may be deaf. In 2023 we will be visiting some of the deaf units across our county and we asked the group what questions they would like to ask but also any ideas they may have. We were blown away with their suggestions:

* How does it feel to be deaf?
* How do you shop?
* Are people supportive?
* How does it affect your learning?
* How do you communicate?
* We should all be learning sign language **(very popular!)**
* We should have buddies for support
* Schools to have clubs for sign language
* A deaf sports tournament to raise awareness
* Would you like is to learn sign language?
* Could we do some fund raising to support resources
* Have a day in schools where we can’t talk and use other ways of communicating

As mentioned, this will feed into our wider deaf awareness work but also help our deaf awareness ambassadors. The group was working very hard, so we stopped there for a break. As always, the biscuits were very popular!! It was fantastic to see so much conversation in the room!

Following our break we moved onto another hot topic for young people. We asked the group what their thoughts and concerns were around the cost of living and young people living in poverty. The question prompted various conversations such as how we could be sharing food better, making sure we look after the environment, the rising cost of bills, the cost of uniform, inflation, not being able to get a job or worrying about their parents losing their houses, not being able to pay rent, making sure we turn off the lights, having non-electricity days in school, making sure we don’t throw away food and more support for hot water in homes. We will be inviting professionals to read these comments and the things young people are talking about in relation to the cost of living.

The next part of the meeting was led by ECC Virtual Schools as they wanted to find out what would support young people with moving on and change. This was in relation to moving school, moving year group or even just change in general. The group thought the following may help such as making sure year 7’s worked closer with year 6’s to share experience, more of a chance to get to know people better, have more buddy systems to help people settle in, have a week transition rather than just a day, more safe spaces around the school, more handshakes and hugs, use zones of regulation to help manage change, have open evenings, make sure we involve parents, make sure staff know more about us, have a sensory room in *every* school and make sure there are very clear rules. The virtual school’s team will be using this feedback and will then feedback to you all.

Our final agenda item was a great one! Rosie, who is one of our ambassadors, led this part of the meeting. We were looking for ideas towards a MSC mascot which we hope to launch in 2023;

* A wheelchair that is being pulled by someone
* For it to have a hearing aid
* A Fish – because of it’s scales and we are all different
* Bumble bee – because of it’s stripes and we are all different
* Crab, many different shells
* A Duck (popular)
* Octopus
* A bear, lots of different textures (popular)
* A dog, different breeds
* Butterfly, bright colours
* Ants because they work together
* A world with young people around it
* A skin condition as not enough people talk about it

We will be taking ideas at each of our 9 meetings and at our meeting in January with our ambassador team we will make a final decision!

Really inspiring meeting, our highlight was how everyone came together to discuss the deaf awareness ideas. Our star for this meeting was Ella from Hazelmere school for her contributions throughout – well done!

**Next Meeting –** Thursday 9th March 2023, 10am – 11:30am, Little Garth Primary

**Follow up points**

* Can you/do you include some sign language in your school – tell us about it!
* How do you share these minutes with your school – tell us about it!