



**KING EDWARD VI
LORDSWOOD
SCHOOL FOR GIRLS**

**Headteacher's Question Time
2.00 p.m. Tuesday 31st January 2023
Room F6**

**Mrs Cooney – Headteacher, Mrs Finucane – Assistant Headteacher (Personal Development)
Sheila Allport – notetaker**

Mrs Finucane thanked the students for the variety of questions that they had submitted and as they were all very good, it had been a difficult decision to choose which ones to discuss. The students asked the Mrs Cooney the following questions:-

- 1. If you are late to school because of public transport being delayed why do you still get a late detention even though it is not your fault because you aimed to be at school in time?**
Mrs Cooney: School is about educating our students in different subjects but also preparing you for the expectations when you leave school and start work. If you are late for work, then you would lose money. If you use public transport then you need to anticipate that the bus may be delayed and put a contingency plan in place by adding additional time to your journey and catching an earlier bus.
- 2. Would there be any subject based trips for a day trip in year 8?**
Mrs Cooney: When teachers organise trips they don't get paid for doing this additional work. Organising trips includes a great deal of additional work as there is paperwork to complete, bookings to be made and money to be collected. We also have to balance the cost of the trips to parents, for example, the recent art trip to London with only one coach cost over £1,000 which has to be shared between parents and multiple trips can therefore work out very expensive for parents. There have been some trips for year 8 students but it may be that the trips were for small groups of students and therefore you were not invited. We are trying to arrange as many trips as possible this year. There is a STEM trip later in the year for year 8 students. There are also possible history and citizenship trips, but we have to make sure that we can fit in all our teaching before we commit to organising trips.
- 3. What strategies do you find best to use when running LSG?**
Mrs Cooney: The strategies I find work best are all around key skills, being very logistic and strategic. The first skill is being able to look at a range of things and prioritise each one. Patience and diplomacy is heavily tied into this, seeing different people's perspectives and working together to be a strong team. Most importantly, it is about being nice to people wherever possible.
- 4. Is there any way toilets could be available during at least one period because this could help reduce toilet queues and allow more people to not worry about not being able to go to the bathroom except lunch and break. Even if it is one period either before lunch or break, it may be very helpful.**

Mrs Cooney: There are allocated break times and lunchtimes given when you are at work. Students are able to use the toilet before school, at break time, lunchtime and after school. If we allowed you to go to the toilet in lesson times then it could disrupt the learning. You need to stay in lessons to complete your work and it is good training for when you actually start work. If the toilets were opened during lessons, we would also need to provide supervision which we do not have available; this is why you collect the medical room key if you do need to use the toilet in lesson time.

5. **Why are we not allowed phones in school but the sixth form students are?**

Mrs Cooney: Once you are in the sixth form you are allowed privileges. Mobile phones are not allowed in main school because of safeguarding reasons as phones have cameras. We cannot allow students to take photographs of other students in school as there are some students who cannot have their photos appearing on social media for safeguarding reasons because they are vulnerable. The other reason is that teachers are in school to teach lessons and not to check whether students are using their phones during lesson time. Sixth form students are mature enough not to use their phones during school time but if they do not use them properly then the phone will be confiscated in the same way as in lower school.

6. **Why do the Year 7s wear a white badge and not other years?**

The year 7 student's white badge is the King Edward VI Foundation badge. When you start in year 7 you are invited to a welcome ceremony and you are given a Foundation badge. It is a shame that other students have not had a chance to attend the ceremony, but we were not part of the King Edward Foundation when other students started at the school. Each year the students in year 7 will get a badge to celebrate them joining the Trust.

7. **Why can't we have non-uniform days regularly?**

Mrs Cooney: On non-uniform days we have many more alerts than on uniform days. The reason you come into school is to get an education. On non-uniform days we raise money for charities but we don't want to keep asking parents for money. We stopped the Christmas jumper day as some students do not have one and attendance was lower on these days.

8. **Where would you expect this school to be in 3 years and why?**

Mrs Cooney: I would hope the school to be rated as 'good' by this time and to be striving to be the best school in the Trust. It isn't just about Ofsted grades though. My ultimate aim is that students coming to school are successful and happy.

9. **Why don't some teachers give merits and praise slips??**

Mrs Cooney: Some teachers forget to say thank you and give merits to you for being so wonderful as they are so engrossed in their work. We are in the process of writing a new behaviour policy and we will be including information about giving more rewards to the students within the policy. We want students to like coming to school. We are looking at online systems that will allow teachers to give praise slips to students more easily. We need to get better at saying 'well done' to our students and I hope that you will see an improvement in this area soon.

10. **Please could we have more work experience or volunteering opportunities for year 11 and year 10 to be given to us from the school?**

Mrs Finucane: We do offer work experience for year 12 students for a week in the summer term. Next year we are planning to offer year 10 students a week of work experience. There is a careers bulletin circulated every two weeks that includes work experience and volunteering opportunities and we will be focusing on this over the next year. We also run the Duke of Edinburgh scheme and part of this is about volunteering which you can arrange to be involved in. You can also sort out volunteering opportunities independently if your parents are happy to allow this.

11. **Do year 11s get study leave?**

Mrs Cooney: In the past schools used to be able to start study leave when GCSEs started. However, the Government has changed the rules so that now year 11 attendance is reported until the last Friday in June and you are expected to attend school until this time. Although from May half-term you will only have to come into school when you actually have an exam.

12. **Can there be a quiet room for students who feel overwhelmed and can do their work in a more peaceful environment?**

Mrs Cooney: The SEND Code of Practice states that all students should attend all lessons and should not be denied a full education. If SEND students are not in lessons, then they cannot learn and so we try to make other adaptations to allow them to attend lessons. If a student is struggling and the need for 'time out' is agreed, then it would be written into a passport plan and the student may be given a 'time out' card to leave a lesson but this would be a last resort and would be to meet individual student SEND needs.

13. **Can we please have badminton club after school?**

Mrs Cooney: Teachers do not get paid for running after school clubs, they do this voluntarily because they want to give opportunities to students. We only have a small number of PE staff and if staff are offering to run a club during the lunchtime, then we cannot ask them to run another club after school. When Ofsted visited the school, the lead inspector said that we are one of the best schools in the area offering extra-curricular activities as teachers are going above and beyond their responsibilities. If there are any particular sports that you would like to do, speak to the PE department as there may be opportunities of other sports for you to become involved in.

14. **Why do we have to stand outside in the freezing cold for half an hour either waiting for lunch, break or in the morning before school?**

Mrs Cooney: It is a maximum time of 10 minutes that you stand outside before you are allowed to come into school in the morning. We are not allowed to let students into the building if they are unsupervised. Teachers don't start work until 8.20 a.m. so we cannot ask them to supervise students before then. You can go to the breakfast club at 8.00 a.m., after 8.10 a.m. SLT supervise students on the playground until enough other staff are available to supervise in the building. At break times and lunch times staff are given a break at the same time as the students so there are not many staff available to supervise you during these times. Additionally there are many benefits from being out in the fresh air as this gives you more energy and a sharper mind and academically students get better results as a result of this.

15. **Why was the student reception office extended instead of the dining area, seeing as there are loads of students and we have no space to eat.**

Mrs Cooney: As we did not need permission to extend the reception area, it was a low cost project as we only had to do a small amount of work. The reception area is about keeping our staff and students safe and there is now sufficient room for two people to work in this area rather than only one which will really help with the smooth running of the school.

The cost of extending the dining area is high as it would be a large project. We have increased the dining space by now using the hall. We are also looking at how we can have more tables and chairs outside, e.g. some schools have canopies which allow students to be able to eat outside.

16. **On some occasions, why isn't there enough food in sixth form at lunchtime?**

Mrs Cooney: I have spoken to the Catering Manager and the amount of food available has been increased by 25%. If you speak to the Student Council Reps about the type of food that is running out, we can make sure that this type of food is replaced. The sixth form has a separate canteen because as they are older they are allowed to have more food options. We have to make sure that KS3 and KS4 students are served a healthy diet of low salt, low fat, and carbohydrates for energy and that is why we have two separate canteens.

17. **Could we have benches and equipment outside?**

Mrs Cooney: We are currently having conversations regarding benches and seating space outside but we do need to have somewhere that you can sit in the shade and this is why we are exploring the possibility of a canopy, but we need the space and to be able to afford to do this. If there is any money left to spend at the end of the year, I will be looking at buying more seating for you. We will have to be careful where the benches are located as they cannot be too near the netball court as this could be dangerous.

18. **What are your future plans and aspirations for the school and what new renovations have you got in mind?**

Mrs Cooney: I have a couple of things in mind but I can't make any promises at this time. We are trying to obtain funds to install a lift as if a current student was injured and could not walk upstairs then they wouldn't be able to access lessons. We also cannot admit some SEND students who need to use a lift which isn't a good thing.

There is also the catering outside space that we have discussed and we are also looking at reporting and homework setting platforms to improve communication with students and parents.

Mrs Cooney gave the students a massive thank you for asking such good questions and said that she was so proud to have them as part of our school community.