

Parents' Evenings In Covid

Key Points

1. It is unlikely that face-to-face parents' evenings will meet safety standards. If aiming to do so a full risk assessment will be needed. Welsh and Scottish governments both recommend not to hold face-to face parents' evenings in the autumn term.
2. Whilst the DfE has directly to address parents' evenings yet the current rules on visitors to schools would presumably apply at this stage, including record keeping, minimising the number and cleaning.
3. A number of schools hosted virtual parents' evenings in the summer term and there are some Twitter feeds and blogs that suggest some key themes:
 - i. Parents appreciated the contact and positive conversations were held.
 - ii. Success was celebrated and support with remote learning possible.
 - iii. There were administrative challenges around setting up appointments and moving through parents. I haven't found anyone who tried this with a large year group with multiple appointments but schools were able to make this work with:
 - Primary Classes
 - Sixth Form
 - Tutor-contact
4. A mixture of video and phone contact was needed to reach parents.

Possible Models

- 1) Face-to-face to continue with careful risk assessment and tracking of individuals across the site. Use of individual rooms with family groups distanced from teachers 2m+. Needs full risk assessment.
- 2) Video conferencing. Being used by some Secondary Schools. Limited access to technology affects some parents. Timings need to be tight. MicrosoftTeams allows a sort of "call waiting" function. There are some firms that will handle the technology for us (see below).
- 3) Primary model. Parents' have a single (extended) appointment with a child's tutor who has gathered information from a range of subjects (via data drop). Feeds questions back to team and follows up with parents at a later point. Increases appointment efficiency.
- 4) No parents' evenings: a series of home contact points worked into the school calendar for teachers (or tutors) to make calls home and have learning conversations with parents.
- 5) Delay parents' evenings: shift all parents' evenings to April-May in anticipation of a possible vaccine and improved situation.

Using GoogleMeet

It is perfectly possible to set this up using our current system and edtechschool have produced a guide on how to do this here: <https://edtechschool.com/a-google-meet-parents-evening-ideal-setup-permissions-and-optimisation/>. However a quick scan through will show you that this seems highly cumbersome with high levels of administrative demand.

Other Technological Solutions

One popular option seems to be <https://www.parenteveningsystem.co.uk/> from **SchoolCloud** which offers a booking and communication system. A one year subscription for a school of £1000 students is £499.

The service operates a booking administration system:



There is a free trial we could use to find out more.

Parents' Booking also runs a similar service and have now created a video add-on: <https://parents-booking.com/why-choose-us/video-calls/>. But their pricing structure is hidden – I have emailed for more information. Their pricing information is hidden but I emailed for an estimate which came back at £750 (£600 for booking and £150 for video call function). Their instructions PPT is attached.

Reading

There is very little available at this point. There are a couple of subjective blogs/accounts from teachers or school leaders who have held remote parents' evenings via schoolsweek or TES, but they are light on information and detail.

Cotswold School Gloucester have adopted a remote online system and have sent out the following FAQ sheet for parents: <https://cotswold.gloucs.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/FAQs-for-parents-FINAL.pdf>

Radical Alternative: Is It Time To Scrap Parents' Evenings? TES.com <https://www.tes.com/news/it-time-scrap-parents-evenings>