

WFD/js/parlet/0809/all/consult school day sixth form

21 April 2009

Dear Parents/Carers

### **Consultation on proposed changes to the school day**

I am writing to consult with you on proposed changes to the school day which we plan to take effect from September 2009. Many of you who attended the various meetings we have held post our Ofsted inspection will be aware that we have been looking to make improvements to our present school day. These changes are necessary to address a number of issues identified by staff, the student council, parents, governors and Ofsted.

Since September the staff have been working extremely hard to ensure that standards improve for all students as quickly as possible. The leadership team would like to take this opportunity to thank parents for their overwhelmingly supportive and constructive contributions towards our endeavours. As part of our raising achievement plans we have agreed with the local authority and Ofsted to make some significant changes to what our students study. To support these changes to our curriculum we are proposing to alter the structure of the school day.

As you are aware our school day currently consists of five one hour periods, one morning break and two lunch breaks. We also, in common with many schools operate a two week timetable cycle consisting of 50, one hour periods. Ofsted agreed with our view that the current timetable and the associated arrangements for the school day did not allow us to deliver a curriculum which was best matched to the needs of our students.

The changes we intend to make are designed to address the shortcomings in our current provision and to improve the supervision arrangements for students particularly at KS3 and KS4 at lunchtime. The new timetable will be based on 40 minute periods. However, most lessons will be timetabled as doubles which means the majority of lessons will be of 80 minutes duration. This change alone will considerably reduce the amount of wasted movement time across the school day for all years and will enable all subjects taught at KS5 to extend learning more effectively.

Under our new proposals the school day for KS5 students will be significantly different throughout the week. On a Monday and a Friday the day will begin at 8.30 am and end at 3.30 pm; on a Tuesday and Thursday, students may find their lessons ending at 4.20 pm, following an 8.30 am start and on a Wednesday, all KS5 students will be expected to fulfil a community service commitment, either in the school or within the local community, which will be closely monitored to ensure all students are taking an active part. If a KS5 student finds that they have a timetabled lesson in the 'twilight' sessions on either a Tuesday or a Thursday, it is compulsory that they attend as this will form part of their allocated teaching time for the specific subject and forms part of their school day.

The table below provides a comparison between the new and the old school days.

	Current school day	New school day	
Monday	8.30 - 3.00	8.30 - 3.30	
Tuesday	8.30 - 3.00	8.30 - 4.20	Twilight for some KS5 subjects
Wednesday	8.30 - 3.00	8.30 - 2.10	2.30-3.30 community service
Thursday	8.30 - 3.00	8.30 - 4.20	Twilight for some KS5 subjects
Friday	8.30 - 3.00	8.30 - 3.30	

In our current model the contact time between staff and students amounts to 25 hours a week. Under the new proposal the teaching contact time will be increased to 25.3 hours. In addition students will, from September, benefit by having dedicated tutor periods consisting of 40 minutes each day.

KS5 students are expected to register regardless of whether they have a lesson at 8.30 am each day. If they have a lesson then they will be registered by their subject teacher, if they do not have a timetabled lesson, students will be expected to register on time in the Sixth Form centre with a member of staff. Any students who fail to attend registration in the morning will potentially compromise their place in the Sixth Form. The second registration of the day for KS5 students is 12.10 pm when they have their daily tutor period, made up of academic mentoring sessions, briefings and PSHE.

Students at KS5 are responsible for their own attendance record and must ensure that their attendance meets the 94% school target as a minimum. If a student needs to leave the school site at any time, or return outside of the scheduled registration periods, they must take responsibility for completing the signing in and out book at reception. It is essential that our KS5 students make this a priority, not simply to keep their attendance record up to date, but for their own and others personal safety in case of a fire or other incident.

You will also be aware, having read the findings contained in the Ofsted report, that our priority since September has been to improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school. In order to secure the necessary improvement more rapidly, we are planning to invest even greater amounts of time and resources into staff training next year. The proposed changes to the school day outlined in the attached diagram will create dedicated time at the end of the school day on Wednesday to undertake additional staff training and development. This is a model which has proved to be very successful in other educational institutions and is one which we believe will significantly and rapidly impact on the quality of learning and teaching.

We would very much like to hear your views about the proposed changes and invite you to submit your comments by e-mailing [myvoice@denefield.org.uk](mailto:myvoice@denefield.org.uk). Alternately you can submit a letter outlining your views on these proposals. Please ensure all correspondence is marked "changes to the school day".

The consultation period will end on **Friday May 22, 2009** after which the governors and I will inform you of the outcome and confirm arrangements for September.

We look forward to receiving your comments.

Yours sincerely

**Glyn Whiteford**  
Head teacher