

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

22 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, governors, parents 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 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 and will enable practical subjects such as PE, technology and science to undertake extended practical tasks more effectively. Under our proposals a 'normal' school day (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday), for KS3 and 4 students will in future consist of eight 40 minute periods. The school day on Wednesday however will differ and will consist of only six 40 minute periods. This means that the school day on Wednesday will end at 2.10 pm. 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 - 3.30
Wednesday	8.30 - 3.00	8.30 - 2.10
Thursday	8.30 - 3.00	8.30 - 3.30
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.

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.

At the same time we are proposing to alter our arrangements for lunchtime by introducing separate lunchtimes for Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 students. This change will significantly reduce the pressures on the school dining facilities enabling all students to eat within designated areas which will be properly supervised. We also believe younger students will feel happier socialising in an environment that consists exclusively of their peers.

As you will see from the attached diagram the new school day does not contain any morning or afternoon registration sessions. In future all students will be formally registered at periods one and three.

The new tutor session will comprise of some taught sessions including a new "Learning to Learn" course in addition to Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) and opportunities for tutors to provide academic guidance.

We appreciate that some parents may have concerns about child care arrangements on Wednesdays. In order to address these concerns and support students to undertake independent study, the school will be providing supervised preparatory sessions running from 2.10 till 3.30 each Wednesday. These sessions **will not** be compulsory for all students but some students for whom we have concerns over homework will be required to attend. Further information on arrangements for these sessions will be available post the consultation period.

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**