



Friday 29th April, 2021.

Dear Parents and Carers,

Consultation on the length of the school day at Penketh High School.

As parents will know, just prior to lockdown in March 2020 and before the start of the troubling and disjointed year that we've all experienced, the school reached the milestone of being judged as a "Good" school having not been judged as Good since 2007.

A key aspect of the rapid improvement at the school over in recent years has been the dedication and appetite for improvement demonstrated by the staff at the school. Their dedication to our young people has been an inspiration for me. They have undertaken a rigorous professional development programme, committing time and effort into developing their craft as teachers and developing departmental offers for pupils. They maintained this commitment throughout lockdown, engaging in weekly professional development sessions. This has paid dividends in the classroom as staff have secured improvements in our collective approach to teaching and in developing the content we deliver to our young people. Indeed, our recent Ofsted identified that "the hard work of staff contributes to the good quality of education that pupils receive" and that "pupils now benefit from a good quality of education, day in, day out."

I'm sure you can appreciate that time in school is limited. We conduct the vast majority of our professional development during after school sessions. This limits the programme we can deliver to staff. Last year we proposed a change to the school day for September 2020 to facilitate even further professional development opportunities for staff and to help drive even further improvement at the school. The main change for pupils was a slightly later start to the day each Friday, so that we could conduct staff training every Friday morning to supplement our after school programme. This was supported by parents and we had plans in place for the commencement of the new year. Of course, the circumstances of the year and the enhanced operational restrictions due to the pandemic have meant that we haven't been able to implement this change as our school day for this year had to account for staggered starts and other arrangements to adhere to government guidance for operation.

Whilst it remains our intention to launch the new permanent new school day once restrictions are eased, I wanted to write to you with regards to a further slight change that we are proposing on the back of some successful strands this year and our pursuit of offering pupils as many opportunities to enhance their development after a year of disruption to their education.

I'm sure parents are aware that we've not been able to conduct our usual enrichment programme which became a huge feature of the school in 2018 and 2019. We conducted over 50 enrichment clubs across lunchtime so that pupils could engage in wider experiences to support their holistic development. The main reasons for us not being able to run these this year are that lunchtimes have had to be staggered, so the majority of staff are teaching when enrichments would usually be conducted; similarly we haven't been able to undertake activities that would lead to the mixing of year groups.



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THE CHALLENGE ACADEMY TRUST C/O PRIESTLEY COLLEGE, LOUSHERS LN, WARRINGTON WA4 6RD. COMPANY NUMBER 10689247

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Principal: Mr J Carlin BA(Hons) NPQH





We're very much looking forward to the return of a more comprehensive enrichment programme but, crucially, we're also listening to pupils who have indicated to us that they like the separate lunchtimes with their year group having their own space. They feel it's a calmer break in the day. Pupils have also told us that sometimes they find the choice between going to the enrichment clubs that they really value or taking some time in the day to see friends difficult, essentially they want to do both, which is completely understandable. Obviously, as it stands, without running enrichment sessions at lunchtime there are no further opportunities to offer such a comprehensive offer that we know both pupils and staff value.

This year, because of the staggered times that make up our school day, we've been able to conduct additional revision and tutorial sessions with Year 11 in what has effectively been a period 6. As their day has commenced at 8:30am and subsequently concluded at 2:15pm, we've been able to conduct the extra academic tutorial and revision sessions between 2:15pm and 3:15pm. This has been hugely successful and pupils have preferred to have access to these sessions that provide extra opportunities to consult with staff in preparation for examinations and still conclude their school day by 3:15pm, rather than staying until 4:15 or 4:30pm.

As this has been such a successful arrangement, we propose that next year we lengthen the school day by 15 mins across Monday to Thursday. This additional time will allow us to facilitate a lunchtime that reflects arrangements this year but also provide a sixth period of the day which will be time dedicated to either enrichment and personal development for Year 7 – 10 or academic tutoring time for Year 11.

We have been working hard over lockdown to put together a more formalised approach to holistic skill development and we'll be introducing this in September as part of our Dual Curriculum. This scheme will focus on the development of pupils' wider skill set beyond their academic development in curriculum lessons. An enrichment programme conducted across the proposed sixth period of the day will provide pupils with the time and the focused approach to develop these wider skills. It is these skills that employers value greatly and precisely the abilities that support applications to college and university.

We also want to ensure that we have the capacity to support pupils where they need additional input following significant disruption to their education over the last year. This additional sixth period will provide us with the time in the school day to provide pupils with intervention where this is an identified need to support them in "catching up", without detrimentally impacting on their curriculum time.

I would like your views on our proposal to change the school day from September 2021. The proposal is that across Monday - Thursday the school day would be extended by 15 minutes to facilitate the additional sixth period which would be 45 minutes long; starting 10mins earlier at 8:30am and finishing slightly later at 3:15pm. Pupils, as they have this year, would have a morning break, registration period, a 30 minute lunch period with their year group and the 5 hours of daily curriculum teaching of the academic curriculum would conclude at 14:30pm. Pupils would then undertake an additional 45min period which would focus on their wider holistic development for pupils in Year 7 – 10; whilst Year 11 would engage in a programme focused on academic tutoring, study skills and careers in preparation for their examinations and subsequent transition to college and/or employment.



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The proposal for Friday is for the school day to start later as was decided last year, with pupils starting at 9:15am and finishing at the normal time of 3:15pm. Pupils wouldn't lose any of their academic delivery time and would still attend 5 x 1 hour lessons during the day on Friday as they do now. The proposed times are below.

There will be clearly identified areas available in school for pupils to access before the commencement of the school day, these will be supervised. One of these areas will include the canteen where pupils will be able to access the breakfast service.

School buses times will be adjusted accordingly to accommodate the proposed changes.

It goes without saying that plans are dependent on any guidance on school operations from the government in response to the pandemic and we will keep parents updated in relation to this.

Consultation opens today and closes on Friday 14th May, 2021. Responses will be considered throughout the consultation period and a final decision will be communicated to staff, students and parents/carers on Friday 21st May, 2021. If the proposals are agreed, it will allow a period of 14 weeks before the new arrangements come into operation.

Feedback on the proposals should be emailed to;

schooltimesconsultation@penkethhigh.org

Proposed and current school day timings

Monday - Thursday			Friday		
	Year 7, 8 and 11	Year 9 and 10		Year 7, 8 and 11	Year 9 and 10
08:30 - 09:30	Period 1	Period 1	08:20 - 09:15	Staff CPD	
09:30 - 10:30	Period 2	Period 2	09:15 - 10:15	Period 1	Period 1
10:30 - 10:45	Reg	Break	10:15 - 10:30	Reg	Break
10:45 - 11:00	Break	Reg	10:30 - 10:45	Break	Reg
11:00 - 12:00	Period 3	Period 3	10:45 - 11:45	Period 2	Period 2
12:00 - 12:30	Period 4	Lunch	11:45 - 12:15	Period 3	Lunch
12:30 - 13:00	Period 4	Period 4	12:15 - 12:45	Period 3	Period 3
13:00 - 13:30	Lunch	Period 4	12:45 - 13:15	Lunch	Period 3
13:30 - 14:30	Period 5	Period 5	13:15 - 14:15	Period 4	Period 4
14:30 - 15:15	Enrichment and Personal Development/EPS	Enrichment and Personal Development/EPS	14:15 - 15:15	Period 5	Period 5

Yours faithfully,

Mr J Carlin.

Principal.



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