



3 July 2017

Dear Parents/Carers

CONSULTATION ON CHANGES TO THE SCHOOL DAY

We received 223 responses from parents to our consultation on changes to the school day. I am very grateful to everybody who took the time to respond. Many of the responses were very detailed and having read them all personally, it is clear that a lot of thought and discussion had informed the comments that were submitted.

Your responses highlighted two separate issues. Firstly, in terms of the timing of lunch, a majority of parents have expressed concerns about moving the lunchtime to a later slot. It is felt that the morning would be too long, especially for students who travel by bus and have to eat breakfast very early. We accept these concerns and therefore any revised school day would need to incorporate a lunch that is not significantly later than the current arrangements.

Secondly, in terms of the merits of a shorter lunchtime, opinion was divided fairly evenly between those who wanted to move to a 40-minute lunchtime as proposed, and those who preferred to keep the current 1-hour lunchtime. Those advocating a shorter lunch felt that 40 minutes was a sufficient break, that many students find the long lunch boring and unproductive, and that they would value additional time at the end of the day for relaxation, hobbies, homework and so on.

Those who prefer to maintain the 1-hour lunchtime cited the value of lunchtime clubs and opportunities to see teachers and use specialist facilities (especially for older students preparing for exams), as well as time for relaxing with friends. There were also some concerns raised about the capacity of the canteen for a shorter lunchtime (which we believe would be resolvable). A shorter lunch would result in an earlier finish, which for some families would make childcare arrangements more complicated, and there were some queries about the timings of some specific buses, especially to smaller villages.

Having discussed your responses with the school's governors, we have concluded that there is a case to be made for changing the school day, but that more detailed research is needed into the issues raised by parents before any decisions are taken. **We can therefore**



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confirm that there will be no changes to the school day next academic year. During the autumn term we will investigate the issues raised in more depth, explore further options, and present revised proposals with a full evaluation of the expected impact, which will allow plenty of time for families to prepare for any changes that might be made from September 2018.

One question that was asked by a number of parents was whether the proposal to shorten the day was driven by financial pressures. The financial benefits of a change would in fact be fairly modest. Our concern is more about the quality of the lunchtime experience. It is clear that for those attending lots of clubs this is a positive one – but for many other students this is not the case. We thus need to consider how to engage more students in constructive activities, which is not straight-forward given that clubs are run by teachers entirely voluntarily during their own lunchtime. We also need to find a resolution to the difficulty we have in recruiting lunchtime supervisors at secondary schools, driven by changing work patterns over time. We are confident that over the next few months we can identify a pragmatic solution that addresses our organisational concerns but without causing adverse unintended consequences for some students and their families.

Please can I thank parents again for taking the time to respond to the consultation. I am sure you will understand that I have not been able to reply individually to your emails, but hope that this letter explains our thinking in response to the issues raised.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W Roberts', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mr W Roberts
Interim Headteacher