



Changes to the timings of the school day.

Dear Parents and Carers,

I'm writing to inform you of changes we are planning to make to the timings of the school day from September 2019. The changes are explained below. I would welcome feedback, suggestions or questions; details of how to contact the school are at the bottom of this letter.

The main changes are:

- On Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays school will start at 8:30am and finish at 3:20pm.
- On Wednesdays school will start at 8:30am. The teaching day will be shorter on Wednesdays, ending at 1:10pm. At 1:10pm, having had lunch, students will either be released to go home or will stay in school in extra-curricular clubs and activities, supervised, until 3:00pm. It will be up to parents and carers to decide whether students can leave school at 1:10pm or at 3:00pm. Whilst the extra-curricular clubs and activities are running each Wednesday, school staff will have dedicated professional development time.
- Lunchtime will be shortened to 40 minutes, breaktime will be lengthened to 25 minutes.
- Lessons will be lengthened to 65 minutes meaning each week students have fewer, but longer, lessons. Instead of thirty lessons per week of 50 minutes, students will now attend twenty-three lessons per week lasting 65 minutes.
- There will only be one tutor time each day, in the morning, from 8:30am - 8:50am.
- On all days apart from Wednesdays, year 7 will have lunch on their own at 12:30pm. Years 8-11 will have lunch at 1:35pm.

Proposed timings of the school day - September 2019

Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays			Wednesdays	
	Years 8-11	Year 7		All years
AM Reg / Ass	8:30 AM	8:30 AM	AM Reg / Ass	8:30 AM
P1	8:50 AM	8:50 AM	P1	8:50 AM
P2	9:55 AM	9:55 AM	P2	9:55 AM
Break	11:00 AM	11:00 AM	Break	11:00 AM
P3	11:25 AM	11:25 AM	P3	11:25 AM
P4	12:30 PM	Lunch - 12:30PM	Lunch	12:30 PM
Lunch	1:35 PM	P4 - 1:10PM	Activities / CPD	1:10 PM
P5	2:15 PM	2:15 PM		
End of day	3:20 PM	3:20 PM	End of day	3:00 PM

Why are we making these changes?

The main reason we are making these changes is to create time each week for staff to focus on professional development and to give students access to a wider range of exciting extra-curricular activities.

Why is staff professional development important?

Highlands is an outstanding school but, like any successful organisation, we must be relentless in our attempts to improve further and make ourselves even better.

The last few years have seen rapid and significant changes in teaching. These include new exam specifications at key stage 4 and 5, the removal of National Curriculum levelling at key stage 3 and the brand new OFSTED framework - to be implemented from September. To review the changes that have been made and to prepare for changes ahead of us three or four inset days over the course of the academic year are not sufficient. Furthermore, weekly professional development time gives staff a regular opportunity to feedback to each other on the quality of teaching, marking and assessment, to discuss students' progress and to work together on making sure we are constantly reviewing and improving our curriculum and the lessons that students are being taught. Weekly professional development time will result in a higher standard of curriculum planning, teaching, marking and assessment. As well as moving CPD to Wednesday afternoons the school will move all meetings to Wednesday afternoons. This means that staff at Highlands will be completely free on Mondays, Tuesday, Thursday and Fridays to offer targeted after school interventions classes to students preparing for exams.

Why is the length of lesson changing?

Longer lessons will allow students to spend a greater proportion of each lesson on the phase of learning when they are required to work independently, fully focused, on producing their best work. Having watched many 50 minute lessons this year it is sometimes the case that once students have arrived, unpacked, settled, engaged with the starter, the teacher exposition and the modelling of a task or activity, there is not enough time to focus on the application of the new learning that has taken place. Students should also have time to reflect on their work at the end of a lesson. This is very difficult to fit into a 50 minute period. This problem is even more pronounced in subjects such as PE, food or technology in which equipment or clothing changes or setting up equipment have to be factored in to lesson times. Local primary schools teach English and maths in one hour blocks so this move will make the secondary school experience more consistent with students' experience from primary school.

Why is there only one tutor time session each day?

At the moment students register with their tutors twice a day, in the morning and in the afternoon. This used to be very common in schools as the morning and afternoon registration mark would be used as the official attendance mark for the morning and afternoon session of each school day. However, since electronic registration systems became widely used, it is common to use the registration mark from the final lesson of the day as the official attendance mark. We will do this from September. The morning registration period will be 20 minutes long and will be an opportunity for form tutors to check that students are in appropriate uniform, equipped for school and ready for the day. Tutors will also deliver the tutor time programme at this time. Assemblies will take place in the mornings, rather than in the afternoons.

Does the change in lesson length mean that pupils will have less teaching time?

No. Thirty lessons of 50 minutes is 1,500 minutes of teaching per week. Twenty-three lessons of 65 minutes is 1,495 minutes, a five minute difference. However, reducing the number of lessons per week reduces the learning time lost moving between classrooms so the five minutes will be more than compensated for. We have evaluated the impact of the changes to the timings to the school day alongside the revisions we have made to the year 9 curriculum. Over five years from year 7-11 students do not spend any less time in their English, maths or science lessons, or their GCSE options subjects. They will spend slightly more time in the arts. The time saved by removing afternoon registration and by shortening lunch allows lessons to end at 12:30pm on Wednesday without a reduction in the time students spend being taught.

Will all pupils be released from school at 1:10pm on a Wednesday?

No. The only students who will have permission to leave school will be those whose parents wish them to be released early. Parents who do not wish their children to be released will be able to book them into clubs and activities. Some of these clubs and activities will be free. Some will have a cost. Before the start of each term the school will publish the programme of

clubs and activities and students and parents can book into them. The school has already started to put together this programme. We expect the extra-curricular offer to include sports (on site and off site), music, performing arts and creative writing and subject specific sessions such as science and technology clubs. The school also would like to offer many of the clubs and activities that students currently participate in at primary school such as chess club, 'ready steady cook', orienteering, gymnastics and cheerleading.

The school is planning to make the extra-curricular programme compulsory for year 7 students so they would all remain in school until 3:00pm.

The school may also make the extra-curricular programme compulsory for year 8 students; feedback on this suggestion as part of the consultation process would be welcome.

Why is lunch shortening?

With improvements to our canteen facilities we will be able to serve and seat all students within 40 minutes. Students will still have time to eat, relax and play. Break is lengthening by five minutes to make sure students who wish to eat then have time to do so.

Why is year 7 lunch separate from the older years?

The transition from primary to secondary school should be managed as carefully as possible. We believe that giving year 7 students the opportunity to get used to the dining and play facilities without older students around will smooth the transition process.

Feedback from parents and the community

The changes outlined in this document have been presented to the Governing Body and to staff. I would welcome feedback, suggestions or questions from parents and the community. To contact the school about these proposals, please email postbox@highlands.enfield.sch.uk. The consultation period will end on 21st March.

I will review all feedback and respond in the school newsletter at the end of March. Unfortunately I will not be able to respond to correspondence directly.

Vincent McInerney
Headteacher