

## The new school day - September 2021

Dear parents and carers

You will remember that in March and April we put out a proposal on some changes to the school day at HCCS and asked for your views on this. It was a very useful consultation and we received some excellent feedback from the school community. We received more than 200 responses to the survey which can be summarised below:

- A significant proportion of respondents (almost 80%) were supportive of the earlier finish to the school day of 3.15pm every day.
- A move to an earlier break at 10.10am was also positively received, with more than 75% of respondents supporting this change.
- Approximately 65% of respondents were in support of a consistent finish time with an additional tutor period on a Friday to help to re-establish routines and focus on personal development.

As part of the consultation, it was very useful to receive some additional comments and questions about the proposed changes. We have attempted to categorise these as questions below, with some response about how we intend to address these queries.

- 1) How will a shorter lunchtime and the possible ramifications to eating and food choice?
  - Over the last two years we have steadily improved and increased our food provision at HCCS. We now operate two food outlets for Years 7-11 and sixth form students have their own dedicated cafe.
  - Whilst a reduction in choice has been an inevitable part of running the school lunch provision during the Covid pandemic, over the last few weeks, we have steadily increased the choice available to students in our restaurant. By September we will be back to a mixture of hot and cold 'hand-held' and plated options for all students. When the school is at full capacity, we normally have all students through the lunch queues and eating within 25 minutes. We also rotate the order in which year groups access the restaurant, so that there is fairness and balance.
  
- 2) How will a shorter lunchtime impact on extra-curricular clubs
  - Whilst it is inevitable that the time available for lunchtime clubs will be reduced, we still anticipate being able to run a full extra curricular programme with a combination of lunch and after school sessions.
  - We also feel that the earlier 3.15pm finish will better support after school clubs, which will effectively also finish 15 minutes earlier and this will be a benefit to staff and students.
  - This also improves the potential to be able to run after school interventions and in some cases, run these for longer than an hour.

- 3) Concerns about the impact on learning time as a result of the removal of 'movement time'
- We identified the intention to improve movement time between lessons as one reason for making these changes. As a senior leadership team, our observations over this year and previously are that the five minute movement time is actually counter-productive. Some students recognise the sense of purpose needed to get promptly to the next lesson and start their learning, whereas some students try to take the full five minutes and in some cases more. This leads to a blurred and inconsistent start to some lessons. In some cases, as a leadership team we have spent considerable time moving students on from parts of the school where they are utilising the 5 minutes as an opportunity to socialise, which is not intended. We are the only school that currently operates a movement time locally, and we firmly believe that this move will lead to a more purposeful and focused lesson changeover time, which we believe will have positive impacts on the attitudes to learning at the start of lessons.
  - Please be assured that staff will take cognisance of which lessons children have come from at the start of their lessons and will ensure they are fair in challenging lateness.
- 4) Will the shorter school day have an impact on learning, especially in the context of Covid recovery?
- Our current finish time of 3.30pm is later than any other school in Cheshire East and there is no other school in Cheshire East that has a finish time later than 3.15pm. Several schools within LA finish at 3pm or 3.05pm, so we don't feel that we are out of line with other local schools.
  - We were pleased to see the response that more than 80% of respondents supported the earlier finish time. Whilst we do acknowledge the question as to whether a longer school day is needed to help our children catch-up lost learning from the Covid pandemic, we believe that this change represents a tighter school day which will not lead to any diminished learning time.
- 5) How will the additional tutor time be used to help with children's personal development and
- The additional tutor time allows for a range of possibilities in terms of personal development and consistency of standards. Our experience suggests that a start to the day in form, where tutors can check on wellbeing, standards and set students up for the day, is a key contributor to success in the school day.
  - It is also a great opportunity for additional assembly time and interventions, whether they are student support based or academic.

I hope that you have found it useful to read some of the questions and answers that our community has raised. I would like to confirm that the new school day will run as follows, with the only change to the proposed model being a slightly later start of 8.45am. I am sure that this change will bring a number of positives to life at HCCS and I am sure you will also see the benefits in your children's learning, progress and wellbeing.

## School day timings with effect from September 2021

### Monday - Friday

8.45am	Tutor period
9.10am	Period 1
10.10-10.30am	Break
10.30am	Period 2
11.30am	Period 3
12.30pm	Lunch
1.10pm	End of lunch
1.15pm	Period 4
2.15pm	Period 5
3.15pm	End of school day