



The Northumberland Church of England Academy

NCEA SECONDARY

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29 June 2018

Dear Parent / Carer,

Consultation outcomes - timings of the Secondary School Day

I am writing to confirm the outcomes and decisions from the recent consultation process in changing the school day for September 2018. I would like to thank parents/carers who gave feedback on the proposals, and particularly to those who made helpful suggestions for us to consider. All comments and suggestions received have been considered and we have made some changes to the initial proposed structure of the day as a result.

It is fair to say that we received very few responses that disagreed with the overall spirit of the proposals. However, the most contentious area of the proposal was the timing of lunch, with most respondents expressing that the proposed time was too late. As you will be aware, the dining room on this campus is a shared facility, and any decisions have an impact on other users. However, as a result of the feedback we have been able to change plans to move back the secondary lunch time to 12.45pm on each day of the week. I am confident that this will make a better structure to the day for everyone, and grateful to our catering and facilities staff for making this possible.

I can now confirm that the times of the school day from September 2018 will be as follows:

	Mon / Tues / Thurs / Fri		Wednesday only	
LESSON	START	FINISH	START	FINISH
Action bell will sound:	8.45		8.45	
Lesson 1	8.50	9.55	8.50	9.55
Lesson 2	9.55	10.55	9.55	10.45
Break	10.55	11.15	10.45	11.05
Lesson 3	11.15	11.45	11.05	11.55
Lesson 4	11.45	12.45	11.55	12.45
Lunch	12.45	1.20	12.45	1.15
Lesson 5	1.20	2.20	1.15	1.40
Lesson 6	2.20	3.20	1.40	2.30

As you can see, the new combined tutor lesson / assembly / collective worship will take place during Lesson 3 on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, and during Lesson 5 on Wednesdays.

I believe that these changes will bring a number of benefits to our pupils and the progress that they make at school, and the opportunities that we can make available during the school day. A number of comments were received as part of the consultation process, and a 'frequently asked questions' section follows this letter with responses to those most frequently raised points.

Thank you again for your help and support in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SG' with a stylized flourish.

Steve Gibson

Principal Director: Secondary

Parent/Carer Consultation: Frequently Asked Questions

Lunch time is too late and not all families can afford to support children eating at lunchtimes and at break.	<i>We have changed the proposed time of the lunch break from 1.40pm to 12.45pm. We have made this consistent on all days in the week.</i>
A 35 minute lunch time does not give the children time to queue for lunch and eat it.	<i>Currently, our dining room is usually clear after around 25 minutes of the 45 minute lunch time.</i>
These changes have been implemented because the Academy cannot afford to employ more kitchen staff.	<p><i>This is not the case. These changes are being implemented as we feel that children will benefit by changing the shape of the current school day.</i></p> <p><i>Lunch time considerations are complex on the Josephine Butler Campus as one dining room facility is required to serve the three schools which share the site, therefore, the times of lunch are not directed by staffing levels, but by availability of the dining room. We have responded to concerns by bringing lunchtime forwards to 12.45pm.</i></p>
The 30 minute lesson is a waste of time.	<i>Currently, pupils spend 15 minutes in the morning and 20 minutes after lunch with their form tutor. We believe that tutors can make more of an impact on pupil progress and pastoral care if we merge those times together into one block, allowing more to be accomplished than could be achieved in two separate, shorter time frames.</i>
Primary and secondary finishing at different times will be an inconvenience.	<i>Primary and secondary pupils currently finish at different times. A range of out of hours activities are available to those who wish to stay in school.</i>
Primary and secondary finishing at the same time will lead to problems.	<p><i>One of the reasons why primary and secondary pupils have previously finished the day with staggered times has been to limit the pressure on the central reception area and drop-off zone.</i></p> <p><i>The staggered times were set up nearly 10 years ago when the Academy opened. Much has changed in this time, including how children enter and exit the building, which used to be through the main reception area. This has been eased by Josephine Butler Primary now using a separate entrance and exit to the building from Thorntree Gardens and Secondary pupils now use a separate entrance and exit and leave the site via the main pedestrian gates leading to Exeter Drive.</i></p> <p><i>The gate from the central drop-off zone into the primary yard is also now locked, and ensures that all pupils exit the campus from the appropriate place.</i></p> <p><i>Secondary pupils will end at 3.20pm as currently on four days per week.</i></p>
Not having morning registration would make authorising sign-out sheets for appointments impossible.	<p><i>Morning registration will still take place, but within the first lesson of the day, rather than in tutor groups. Lesson 1 is also 5 minutes longer than other lessons in order to complete the register.</i></p> <p><i>We will set up a Pastoral Help Point on the ground floor</i></p>

	<p><i>where pupils can come to before lesson 1 to organise passes, catch up with pastoral staff, or relay messages / problems to the team. Pastoral staff will be available at that Point each morning to help with any queries.</i></p> <p><i>Morning break has been brought forwards to 10.45am/10.55am, when pupils can speak to a member of the pastoral team, and the new 30 minute tutor slot each day will allow for more to be achieved in that slot than can be achieved in the current 15 minutes.</i></p>
These changes will affect the provision of music groups.	<i>We are committed to music education and to providing musical ensembles for children to gain experience and enjoyment. We will continue to offer a range of activities, including musical activities, within the new framework.</i>
Students in detention for that day would no longer be informed during their morning registration so would not always know about it.	<i>It is important that pupils understand that a detention is issued as a consequence of their behaviour or conduct, and therefore when a child receives a detention the member of staff makes the pupil aware of the detention and the reason for it. The detention is also written into their planner.</i>
Traffic in the area will be chaos and unfair to residents.	<i>We aim to mitigate any potential increase in traffic volume by primary and secondary pupils leaving from different roads. Although the majority of secondary pupils walk or take a bus home, many parents who wish to collect their child already do so from the various smaller parking areas near to the school.</i>
Not all employers are flexible in relation to childcare.	<i>We understand the difficulties that parents/carers sometimes have in securing appropriate childcare, particularly those who work. We have made provisions for any child who wishes to stay in school, supervised and working until 3.20pm on Wednesdays. This means that the actual change from the current system for children who wish to stay in school is no different to the current year.</i>