

7th May 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Curriculum and Timings of the Day Change from September 2020

I am writing to you to advise of the confirmed changes in our curriculum and changes in the timings of our school day from September 2020.

These changes will be in effect when we are able to open fully, which will of course, depend on the government's current guidance to schools. It is possible that we may need to adapt in the shorter term and may not be able to implement all of these changes fully at first. Despite this unprecedented situation the school is still committed to its longer term improvement agenda and these changes will greatly enhance the provision for students at the school.

In terms of the present situation regarding school opening we are expecting an announcement to be made over the weekend. I will then write to you to inform you of how the school will support your child/children once this is confirmed. Please can I assure you that we have worked on multiple contingencies to support your child/children depending upon what the government announce.

The rationale behind the changes in September is to ensure that our curriculum fully meets the needs of our students providing them more opportunities and experiences. The school's statement of curriculum intent is: *Building New Horizons Through Love, Faith and Excellence* and these changes seek to serve that ambition.

These changes have been subject to an extensive consultation at all levels, which has enabled us to adapt these more fully to meet the needs of our community.

The key changes will take effect from September 2020. These changes are:

- Introduction of a split lunch to enable quicker access for students to the canteen. This will split KS3 (Years 7-9) from KS4 (Years 10-11).
- Daily *Drop Everything And Read* sessions to support student vocabulary and oracy. This will include sessions on wellbeing and study skills.
- Greater extra-curricular opportunities through a Period 5 electives session on Wednesdays.
- A 3 year Key Stage 3 (Years 7-9) providing a wider range of subjects and learning opportunities.
- An additional Period 6 session for Key Stage 4 and 5 (Years 10-13) on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday to support them in preparations for their GCSE/A Level/BTEC examinations.

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The longer Key Stage 3 will allow the reintroduction of a wider variety of Art, Music, Design and Technology, PSHE and Computing alongside greater literacy/numeracy work and more extra-curricular opportunities. All subjects will also have more curriculum time to explore a wider range of topics to allow students to broaden their knowledge base. This will now mean that children will make their option choices in Year 9.

The additional sessions on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday for Key Stage 4 students in Year 10 and 11 are designed to provide them with two years of manageable support across three days as opposed to five days of intensive support in Year 11. This will allow students additional time to work with their KS4 options to achieve the best possible results that they can. For Sixth Form students the possibility of using Period 6 to offer additional sessions will enable greater choice for students and a wider range of support, which will enable them to be successful in securing the best university, apprenticeship and work places. It is possible that we may increase this offer of support next year to ensure that students achieve their best possible outcomes and are not limited by the impact of this epidemic.

We will be providing students with 30 minutes dedicated reading time per day, where each form group will read a range of engaging and challenging fiction/non-fiction texts, which will allow students to develop their vocabulary and oracy. It will also enhance their chances of success in examinations at GCSE and beyond. These sessions will also provide a platform to support study skills and well being.

Our extra-curricular afternoon on a Wednesday will allow students to elect to take part in a range of extra-curricular activities from sports, to arts and crafts, Duke of Edinburgh and much more. These elective sessions will cover a wide range of opportunities that will enable the community to develop new interests and develop in areas outside of the normal curriculum.

To facilitate these curriculum changes lesson time will be reduced to 55 minutes per lesson and lunch will be shortened by 5 minutes.

8.55 am	Registration			
9.15 am	Period 1			
10.10 am	Period 2			
11.05 am	Break			
11.25 am	Period 3			
12.20 pm	Period 4			
13.15 pm	KS3 lunch	/	KS4 dear time	
13.50 pm	KS4 lunch	/	KS3 dear time	
14.25 pm	Period 5			
15.20 pm	Period 6 for KS4/5	/	KS3 Extra-Curricular	Mon, Tues, Thursday.
16.15 pm	End of Period 6	/	End of Extra-Curricular	Mon, Tues, Thursday.

As stated earlier this is a time of uncertainty – we may not be able to deliver all of this at first – however, when it is safe to do so we are keen that our children have the best opportunities to be successful and this considerable investment in them will help us achieve that.

Many thanks as always for supporting us.

Yours sincerely

M. McLaughlin

Mark McLaughlin
Headteacher