



## Pensby High School

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Headteacher: Mr K Flanagan

10 February 2017

Dear Parents and carers

### Proposed changes to the school day – consultation

As a school we have seen significant changes to the way we teach our students over a number of years: the federation of the Boys' and Girls' school and then the merger of the two schools. During this time the school has made significant improvements in the attainment and progress of its students. In the recently published league tables it indicates that pupils' attainment is higher than national and that pupils make the progress they should given their starting points. The improvements in the quality of teaching and learning at the school is now beginning to move students' attainment in the right direction, with both boys and girls seeing demonstrable improvements in their outcomes at 16. This is as a result of very hard work by both students and staff, with the considerable support of parents and carers. However, this is an enormous time of change in education, with GCSEs being made more difficult and the expectation that fewer students will receive 'good passes':

- New curriculums at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4
- National Curriculum levels have been phased out and are no longer valid. Instead schools are being asked to devise their own reporting systems
- GCSE A\*-G grades are being replaced with a new grading system using numbers (1-9)

The Department for Education has outlined the change in difficulty for students using the point system below:

NEW POINT SCORE SCALE FOR LEGACY GCSES		
GCSE GRADE	2016 POINTS	2017 POINTS
G	1	1
F	2	1.5
E	3	2
D	4	3
C	5	4
B	6	5.5
A	7	7
A*	8	8.5

They are making it more difficult for students, particularly students who have not for example been able to enter a grammar school, to gain the highest grades.

As a school we have over two examination series moved students' outcomes from what I regard as unacceptably low to outcomes that are now good when compared to national and local schools. However, I believe that our students can and will achieve even more, but this will need teachers to work differently, to plan for learning in new ways and to continually review, and improve their teaching practice – to keep on improving students' outcomes at the same pace, we need to invest even more in the training and development of teachers, so that the quality of learning continues to improve for all students.

We have decided to consult with you about the possibility of a change to the structure of the school day on one day per week, with effect from September 2017. We are proposing that on a Wednesday, the timings of the day are altered so that pupils will finish at 14.20pm. On Wednesdays, lessons will be 10 minutes shorter i.e. 50 minutes rather than 1 hour. Students will leave school at 14.20pm allowing time for staff training which will take place 14.30-16.30pm. There will not be a reduction in the number of lessons, as pupils will still have 25 lessons per week. We would like to stress that the timings for the remaining 4 days of the week will stay the same as this academic year.

### **Proposed School Timings - Wednesday**

<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Form Time</i>	<i>Period 1</i>	<i>Period 2</i>	<i>Break</i>	<i>Period 3</i>	<i>Period 4</i>	<i>Lunch</i>	<i>Period 5</i>	<i>Form Time</i>
	<b>8.40 - 9.00</b>	<b>9.00- 9.50</b>	<b>9.50- 10.40</b>	<b>10.40- 11.00</b>	<b>11.00- 11.50</b>	<b>11.50- 12.40</b>	<b>12.40- 13.20</b>	<b>13.20- 14.10</b>	<b>14.10- 14.20</b>

Student's finishing at 14.20pm on a Wednesday will allow staff a block of dedicated time at the end of the school day to collaborate and develop teaching and learning. Staff will participate in high quality training, which will have a positive impact on students. This is an approach that has been adopted in a number of other schools to good effect.

We have liaised with Merseytravel regarding the school buses and we are still waiting for their confirmation with regards to changes to travel times.

It is important that we hear your views on the proposal. If you wish to comment on the proposed changes to our school day, please send your response in via email to [consultation@psf.wirral.sch.uk](mailto:consultation@psf.wirral.sch.uk). Comments should be received no later than Friday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2017. We have scheduled a consultation evening on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2017 to provide a further opportunity for you to discuss the proposed plans. The consultation evening will take place in the main school hall from 17.00-18.00pm. Attached to this letter is a series of FAQ's which you may find useful.

Once the consultation process is completed, the Governing Body will decide whether the changes to the school day will take place with effect from the start of the September 2017 academic school year. Parents will be notified by letter once a decision has been made.

We believe that these proposed plans are in the best interest of our school and ultimately our pupils. Our pupils' attainment and progress remains our top priority and we are confident that these proposals will have a positive impact on pupil outcomes.

Yours sincerely



**Mr K Flanagan**  
**Headteacher**

## FAQ

### **Why do pupils finish early on a Wednesday?**

The aim of the early finish is to bring about further improvements in teaching and learning through extensive and effective professional development. A high quality training programme for staff will lead to rapid improvements in teaching and learning. Many good and outstanding schools adopt this as a strategy because the pace of change from central Government demands a host of new initiatives to be introduced without allowing for additional professional development time. As stated in the consultation letter, significant improvements in the attainment and progress of our students have taken place over the past two years. We must not be complacent about securing continued improvement. The time gained for staff training will be used for a wide range of staff development and as a result our students will benefit. Staff will be able to:

- Share more of the good and outstanding practice now seen around the school
- Share the good practice for marking and moderation through thorough book trawls
- focus on developing teaching strategies to use in the classroom
- Share resources, lesson plans and ideas between staff

### **What solutions have already been tried to address staff training needs?**

Over the past two years, staff have been given opportunities to develop their practice through working collaboratively on tight pedagogical issues such as questioning and the use of intentions and success criteria. We are now in a position where we want to be able to offer staff the opportunity to focus on their individual training needs.

Our current meeting structure involves whole school training, faculty meetings, pastoral meetings, student intervention sessions (period 6) or parent evenings. Staff do not leave when the school finishes at 3.15pm. Every evening is crammed with activities to either further develop staff or pupils.

### **Who has been involved in the consultation process?**

The consultation process involves all parties who will be affected by the changes. This includes, Wirral LA, the Governing Body, parents/carers, staff and students.

### **Will the buses operate at the end of the school day at 14.20pm or 15.15pm?**

We are currently working with Merseytravel to ensure that we secure transport home for students that need it.

### **Will there be a reduction in the number of lessons and/or learning time?**

There will not be a reduction in the number of lessons. Pupils will have 25 lessons per week. Each lesson on Wednesdays only will be 10 minutes shorter i.e. 50 minutes rather than 1 hour.

### **I am at work; can my child stay in school on a Wednesday afternoon?**

Pupils who unable to leave school at 14.20pm can participate in an extra-curricular activity on a Wednesday afternoon that will run from 14.20- 15.15pm.

### **I have concerns that haven't been addressed so far, how can I tell you formally?**

You can put your comments this in writing via the email address [consultation@psf.wirral.sch.uk](mailto:consultation@psf.wirral.sch.uk). You are most welcome to attend the consultation evening on Friday 17th March to discuss this proposal in person.