

To parents/carers of all
students in Years 9-12

30 March 2017

Dear Parent / Carer

Re: Timings of the School Day

We have recently reviewed the timings of our school day and are considering making changes for September 2017. I am writing to you to set out the proposed changes and to ask for any feedback.

Our aim is always to provide the best teaching, learning opportunities and experiences for our students and we believe that after a number of years operating the current pattern of the school day we can do better.

Our school day starts late compared to many schools, we believe that unnecessary time is spent in tutor time that can be more effectively used for students, Thursday arrangements have outlived their usefulness and are an unhelpful complication, and we should adopt a "4-1" split as is common now in most other schools (i.e. four periods before lunch and one period after lunch).

Staff have overwhelmingly expressed support for these changes because of the benefits to learning. The total amount of learning time across the week remains the same.

On the back of this letter are the current timings and the proposed pattern of the school day. The new day would start at 8.45am and finish at 3.05pm. The finish time is particularly important, because in discussion with our close neighbour, Gilbert Inglefield Academy, we wish to stagger finishing times so that students leave at different times to reduce congestion and ensure that younger pupils are not overawed by older students.

The new school day would be uniform across the week, eliminating separate arrangements on Thursdays. I would anticipate that an earlier finish would encourage even greater participation in after-school activities. Arrangements for Early Morning French would continue, starting at 8am as currently. School transport arrangements would be renegotiated to fit better with the school day.

While I appreciate that change is not always popular, it is some years since the timings of the school-day have been altered and I believe that there are sound reasons why the proposal will benefit students and staff.

If you wish to respond to this consultation, please write to school marked for my attention, or email to office@vandyke.cbeds.co.uk. Alternatively, if you would like to discuss this proposal or raise further questions, I will be pleased to meet on Wednesday 19 April at 6pm in the school's theatre.

Feedback received will be considered carefully and I will, in any case, write to you again with the decision as to whether we will proceed with the proposal.

Yours sincerely



Tim Carroll
Headteacher

Draft proposal for September 2017

CURRENT: Mon-Fri except Thurs	PROPOSED: Mon-Fri
09.00 – 9.05 Movement time	08.40 – 8.45 Movement time
09.05 – 9.25 Tutor time/assembly	08.45 - 8.55 tutor time
09.25 – 10.25 P.1	08.55 – 10.05 P.1 (incl assembly for one year group)
10.25 – 11.25 P.2	10.05 – 11.05 P.2
11.25 – 11.45 Break	11.05 – 11.25 Break
11.45 – 11.50 Movement time	11.25 – 11.30 Movement time
11.50 – 12.50 P.3	11.30 – 12.30 P.3
12.50 – 13.25 Lunch	12.30 – 13.30 P.4
13.35 – 13.30 Movement time	13.30 – 14.00 Lunch
13.30 – 14.30 P.4	14.00 – 14.05 Movement time
14.30 – 15.30 P.5	14.05 – 15.05 P.5
Thursday Week A:	
2x 60 min lessons and 3x 50 min lessons	
No tutor time/assembly	
Finish 2.40pm	
Thursday Week B:	
2x 60 min lessons and 4x 50 min lessons	
No tutor time/assembly	
Finish 3.30pm	

Rationale:

Current arrangements are complicated and tutor time is too long. We have a late start and a 3-2 split.

The new timings seek to address these matters producing an earlier start, shorter tutor time and 4-1 split. The new arrangements accommodate assemblies.

Total learning time remains unchanged.