

20th May 2022

Dear Families,

Re: Important changes from September 2022: curriculum and school day

I am writing to inform you of some important changes from September 2022. After returning from my maternity leave, it has given me the unique opportunity to look at the school with 'fresh eyes', post-lockdown, to review what we are doing for our students to ensure that they are well-equipped and prepared for a world coming out of a pandemic and life in the 21st century.

Over the last two months since my return, we have been looking at the curriculum model we currently have and the school timings of each day. After looking at 49 different curriculum models for various secondary schools and presenting my ideas to the Governing Body, the Local Authority and to staff, I am now in a position to share with you the changes from September 2022. Please read the following information carefully.

The main changes include:

- Moving to a **60 period/subject lesson a fortnight** timetable instead of 50.
- Having lessons that are **50 minutes in length instead of 60 minutes**.
- Moving Community Learning Lessons (**CLL tutor time**) to the **middle of the day** instead of the beginning of the day.
- Having the **first subject lesson start immediately at the start of the day**.
- Keeping **lunch time to 30 minutes** as it currently is (40 minutes pre-lockdown).
- Keeping the start time **for Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday** the same (gates shut at **8:45am**, lessons start at **8:50am**) but have an earlier start on **Wednesdays** (gates close at **8:35am**, lessons start at **8:40am**) to allow for improved staff training and intervention (more information below).
- **All students to participate in an extra-curricular activity** during period 6 on a Wednesday. Activities/lessons we are looking to offer during this time include the Young Archaeologists' Club, Archery, Fashion Club, Gardening Club and rehearsals for the Christmas Pantomime. Other after-school extra-curricular activities will still be available.
- Incorporating Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (**PSHE**) and Sex and Relationships education (**RSE**) into students' timetables as a **50-minute lesson** per fortnight instead of a Thursday morning CLL session.
- The vast majority of students in **year 10 from September 2023 onwards** (applies to current year 8 and year 7) **to take a language at GCSE**.
- **Religious Education (RE) will have one lesson a fortnight instead of two**. Students will be able to **choose GCSE RE as an option** for year 10 (applies to current year 7 and 8) instead of it being mandatory as it currently is.

- **Increasing the number of Science lessons at KS3** (years 7 to 9) so that students gain a solid grounding before they embark on the GCSEs. The number of lessons will also be in line with the other two core subjects, English and Maths.
- **Training for both teaching staff and support staff 2:40pm to 4:30pm every Wednesday** so that there is dedicated time every week for development and school improvement work. This time will also include time for Teaching Assistants (TAs) and Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs) to be part of any training teachers have and also for them to share knowledge of and planning for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
- To allow for sufficient weekly time for intensive staff training, **the school day will finish at 2:30pm on a Wednesday for students**. There will be **no CLL tutor time on this day**, just 6 subject lessons. The CLL tutor time that has been taken away is the one that we usually dedicate to PSHE which will be a timetabled 50 minute lesson instead from September 2022.
- The end of the **school day will remain at 3:05pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday** due to the 30 minute lunch time (3:15pm pre-covid because of 40 minute lunch time).

The school day **currently** follows these timings:

Session	Time from	Time to
Period 1 CLL	8:50am	9:15am
Period 2	9:15am	10:15am
Period 3	10:15am	11:15am
Break	11:15am	11:35am
Period 4	11:35am	12:35pm
Period 5	12:35pm	1:35pm
Lunch	1:35pm	2:05pm
Period 6	2:05pm	3:05pm

From September 2022, the timings for students will be as follows:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

Session	Time from	Time to
Period 1	8:50am	9:40am
Period 2	9:40am	10:30am
Break	10:30am	10:50am
Period 3	10:50am	11:40am
Period 4	11:40am	12:30pm
Period 5 CLL	12:30pm	12:55pm
Lunch	12:55pm	1:25pm
Period 6	1:25pm	2:15pm
Period 7	2:15pm	3:05pm

Extra-curricular Wednesday (and CPD for staff from 2:40pm onwards)

Session	Time from	Time to
Period 1	8:40am	9:30am
Period 2	9:30am	10:20am
Break	10:20am	10:40am
Period 3	10:40am	11:30am
Period 4	11:30am	12:20pm
Lunch	12:20pm	12:50pm
Period 5	12:50pm	1:40pm
Period 6 - Extra Curricular	1:40pm	2:30pm



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Please see below a question and answer section that I hope you will find useful:

Why are we changing lessons from 60 to 50 minutes?

We believe that the same content in our 60 minute lessons can be taught in 50 minutes. In addition, post-lockdown, students are finding double lessons that are currently 120 minutes very difficult, losing focus as they get halfway through the second part of the lesson. Having double lessons of 100 minutes will be much more focussed and allow students to focus throughout the lesson so that no learning time is lost. We also believe that the distribution of time for each subject will also enable more focus and improve learning.

Why has CLL tutor time been moved to the middle of the day?

CLL tutor time is a very important part of the week as key whole school messages are delivered and our expectations are reiterated. Once a week, it is also the time when assemblies take place and students not attending CLL tutor time and assemblies are missing these key messages as they are late to school.

Will my child have enough time to eat their lunch if lunchtime is 30 minutes? Why are you keeping lunch time to 30 minutes?

We have monitored the current arrangements that were put in during covid restrictions and 30 minutes is sufficient for students to line up, have a hot meal and have some time outside. We looked at behaviour incidents during lunch time and found that these were taking place mainly in the last 10 minutes of the 40 minute lunchtimes as some students could not cope with that amount of unstructured time. We need to reset expectations and standards and the move to 30 minutes has greatly reduced incidents. We will review this next academic year, once all students fully understand the Burton Borough School expectations and those clear boundaries have been embedded.

Why have extra-curricular activities been put into the timetable? Will this affect extra-curricular activities that are on after school?

We have many students who take school buses/public buses to school who are unable to attend after school activities. Our aim is for 100% of our students to be able to receive this entitlement as it helps to develop skills for the future and makes them stand out when they go for interviews in education and in the workplace. After much discussion, it was decided that being able to develop 21st century skills such as problem solving, leadership, creative thinking and teambuilding outside of usual subject lessons was very important and should be accessible to all students. Activities that currently run after school, such as sports and bands will continue to run after school as they do now.

I have children in year 7 and 8 – does that mean they have to take a language at GCSE?

It is our ambition that every single student from year 8 onwards will take a language at GCSE. The Sutton Trust has carried out research that the combination of EBacc subjects, where modern foreign languages is one of them, can help students' performance in English and Maths. The UCL Institute of Education carried out a study that showed students who took all of the EBacc subjects were more likely to stay on in full-time education and had greater opportunities in further education. Our children will also be competing with those in other countries when they enter the job market where quite often, speaking at least two languages is very common. We need our students to be able to compete with their peers. Our ambition is that at least 90% of our students will study the full suite of Ebacc subjects by 2025. More information on the Ebacc can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-baccalaureate-ebacc/english-baccalaureate-ebacc#:~:text=EBacc%20impact,-The%20EBacc%20is&text=Sutton%20Trust%20research%20reveals%20that,%2C%20and%2090%25%20by%202025.>

Will my year 7 or 8 child's option choices be reduced at GCSE because they are taking a language?

No. Students will still be able to choose two options as they do now. One difference is that they will not be taking RE as a GCSE subject, unless they choose to as an option (currently all students take RE as a GCSE on reduced time). The number of GCSEs that they will do will therefore be the same as the



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students we currently have who are already on GCSE courses and the current year 9 group who have already chosen their options for September 2022. For year 7 and 8, more information and an evening event about options and the process will be provided to you when your child is in year 9.

All of the changes mentioned in this letter will be explained to students during assembly time in the week beginning 20th June 2022, in preparation for the new academic year.

Thank you very much in advance for your support with the changes which will enable us to move forward with our school improvement journey post-lockdown.

Yours sincerely,



Krissi Carter
Principal



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