

Dear Parents & Carers,

Back in March, I wrote to you to launch our consultation into changing the school week and day length from September 2024. The consultation lasted for a period of six weeks, during which we have listened to all members of the community.

Parent & Carer Perspectives:

Only 7 responses were received from the parent/carer section of our school community. These are summarised below:

Respondent 1	This individual noted that they were happy with the proposed changes, although were concerned about traffic in the mornings.
Respondent 2	This respondent highlighted that the current Thursday early finish was convenient for parents that have children in both The Abbey and QE Grammar because both schools have a similar arrangement.
Respondent 3	This parent raised concerns that their child's train does not arrive until 8.25, leaving them little time to get in for an 8.40 start. In response, we highlighted earlier trains are available and a breakfast club is available at school.
Respondent 4	This individual supported the earlier finishing time for training, but raised wider concerns about the structure of the school day (e.g. timing of breaks). The Headteacher addressed these concerns.
Respondent 5	This parent raised concerns about the traffic early in the morning and the challenges for parents with children in multiple schools, that all need dropping off.
Respondent 6	This parent pointed out challenges with bus timings from Graveney, which would mean a rush to get to school in time. In response, we highlighted an earlier bus is available and a breakfast club is available at school.
Respondent 7	This respondent said 'Brilliant. Go ahead with the new schedule. Makes more sense'.

Student Perspectives:

After gathering insights from our students, it is clear that there is a strong preference for concluding the school week earlier on Fridays rather than Thursdays. This adjustment would afford them a more substantial weekend.

Regarding additional after-school support, particularly for Year 11 students, opinions were mixed. While some expressed reservations, all acknowledged the importance of such interventions in helping them to achieve their full potential in their upcoming GCSE examinations.

Input from Transport Providers

Kent County Council reached out to transport companies, encountering no objections to the proposed changes. In parallel, our school engaged with several transport firms. While the majority showed willingness to accommodate the adjustments, Chalkwell, the bus company serving Sittingbourne, expressed concerns. While they confirmed no issue with morning schedules, accommodating a late finish for Key Stage 4 students on Fridays or altering the bus timings posed challenges for them.

Other Consultees

We received no responses from other consultees.

Outcome

Given how few strong opinions there were about the proposed changes we have decided that we will proceed with the plan that we consulted on. We will offer the opportunity for children to remain in school on a Friday afternoon until 3.30pm should they need to wait for a later bus or a later train. This will be in a supervised room, likely to be the school library, but still to be finalised. If parents wish for their child to take up this offer, we ask that they contact us before the summer holiday, so that we can plan for adequate staffing from Term 1 of the next school year.

The New School Week from September 2024:

	Current Arrangements (all days except Thursday)	Current Arrangements (Thursday)	From September 2024	
			New Arrangements (all days except Friday)	New Arrangements (Friday)
Morning Line-Up	8:45 – 8.50	8:45 – 8.50	8:40 – 8.45	8:40 – 8.45
Tutor time / PSHE	8:50 – 9.30	8:50 – 9.30	8:45 – 9.30	8.45 – 9.00
Period 1	9:30 – 10.30	9:30 – 10.30	9:30 – 10.30	9:00 – 10.00
Period 2	10:30 – 11:30	10:30 – 11:30	10:30 – 11:30	10.00 – 11.00
Period 3a (Lunch 1)	11:30 – 12:30	11:30 – 12:30	11:30 – 12:30	11:00 – 12.00
Period 3b (Lunch 2)	12:30 – 13:30	12:30 – 13:30	12:30 – 13:30	12:00 – 13:00
Period 4	13:30 – 14:30	13:30 – 14:30	13:30 – 14:30	13:00 – 14:00
Period 5	14:30 – 15:30		14:30 – 15:30	
Year 11 Intervention	15:30 – 16:30		15:30 – 16:30	
Finish time	15:30	14:30	15:30 (Yrs 7 to 10) 16:30 (Yr 11)	14:00

Note that from September we will also be working on the assumption that the length of a typical Year 11 day extends until 16:30 every day except Friday, unless otherwise stated. This time will be used for targeted tuition in specific subjects where children need additional support, to achieve their best. There may be some days' for specific students in Year 11, where they will be released early, but this will be dependent on them being on track to achieve their target grades.

We will publish all of the above in a summarised form before we break-up for the summer holidays and remind the whole community, as we return at the start of next year.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Rowland Speller
Headteacher