

9th July 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

Proposed changes to the academy day- FAQ Responses

I hope you and your family are keeping safe and well.

Thank you to all the families who have taken the time to respond to us and share questions and queries on our proposal.

The majority of questions focussed around three areas:

1. Removal of break and lunch timings
2. Childcare challenges on a Wednesday afternoon
3. The potential of lost learning time due to the pandemic

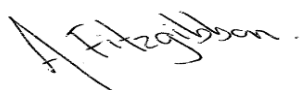
I have collated a FAQ Response sheet below which will give you clear answers to all the questions asked.

As we all know, change can often be a worry as it is something new that we have not yet experienced. We fully understand this, but want to assure you that this approach has been carefully thought out with the best interests of students and staff at its heart. It is important that I clarify that the new timings do not lead to lost learning time for the students, we have just reordered the structure to make it more productive and efficient for our community.

After reading the FAQ responses, if you feel you need any further clarity on any of the points raised, please contact Miss Marshall on the following email address:

nmarshall@ormistonhorizonacademy.co.uk

Yours sincerely



Mr A Fitzgibbon
Principal

Timing of the Day Proposal

Parent/Carer FAQ Response

Q1. Why has break time been removed?

As you are aware, when planning for the 2020-2021 academic year and taking into account Covid restrictions, we brought this into place in September 2020. It has become clear that we no longer have the space or capacity around the academy to have more than two-year groups on break or lunch together at any time. This would mean that break would need to be split into three slots, similar to the lunchtime model. This would have a significant impact on the timings of the day and also put restrictions on the timetable and broad curriculum offer that is currently in place. This is not a decision we have taken lightly, but do feel that it is best one for our academy.

Q2. When will my son/daughter be able to use the toilet if there is no break time?

All students are encouraged to use the toilet when transitioning between lessons and at lunch time. If a student needs to use the toilet during a lesson time, this is done with the teachers' permission. We will continue to remind students that lesson time is learning time and we want to keep any disruption to learning to a minimum.

We will consider increasing the time that students have to transition from one lesson to another to ensure there is ample time for them to use the toilets if necessary.

Q3. Lunch time is too early for my son/daughter.

We fully realise each individual is different and with 1060 students and 130 staff in the building, it is very difficult to have the right lunchtime for each individual. From our experience this year, we have found that the majority of students and staff have adapted well after initially finding it different. We will work closely with any student who may be impacted by a specific medical need.

Q4. Has learning time been reduced due to the staff CPD slot on a Wednesday?

I can confirm that this is not the case. The learning hours that are in place under the proposal have not been reduced and will not have a negative impact on learning; if this was the case we would not even consider the changes. The quality of education and safety of our students underpins all our decisions. The new, proposed model will help us to continue to drive standards both in and out of the classroom. There will continue to be 25 x 1-hour lessons per week, as there has been in previous years. We have also introduced 30 minutes reading time, four days a week to increase our literacy focus and support students with key vocabulary.

Q5. The CPD slot on a Wednesday makes is very difficult for childcare.

We are aware that this may cause some organisational challenges to some families, hence, why we are giving all stakeholders a significant period of time to address any barriers that this may cause.

We understand each family is different and have their unique challenges, however, as an academy, our goal is to provide a high-quality education to each student and the proposed model allows us to improve our current offer.

We will consider externally run enrichment sessions on a Wednesday afternoon to support families who may have some childcare challenges. This is likely to be led by external companies and would be a paid for service.

Q6. Has the academy taken in to account how an early lunchtime might impact on a students' concentration in the afternoon?

Yes, this is something we have monitored and tracked carefully throughout this academic year. We have also done some extra research into metacognition and what we can do to support student learning throughout the day. We have also conducted student voice to ensure a sample of different students' feedback to us on their learning experience and they have given us feedback on what we can do better to support their learning.

Q7. Can extra learning time for students be created due to the impact of the pandemic?

This is something that we will continue to carefully monitor over the coming years. Just increasing the amount of time that students spend in school is unlikely to have a positive impact on retention, knowledge and memory. We also need to consider the physical and emotional wellbeing of both our staff and students. As an academy, we have tracking systems that allow us to identify early if a student is struggling to access and understand the curriculum in a specific subject. Using the resources that we have available, we intend to put the correct support in place to address the needs of each student.

We are also rebuilding the curriculum in each subject area, to ensure the knowledge that may have been lost during the lockdown period is revisited at key points throughout the next academic year.

Q8. How are the academy using the catch-up funding that the government have promised?

We are still waiting on the final funding formula from the government for next academic year, however, we intend on taking a step approach:

1. address underachievement in English and Literacy
2. address underachievement in Mathematics
3. address underachievement in Science
4. increase our support offer on mental health and wellbeing

As mentioned in the answer to Question 7, we have strong tracking and intervention systems in place across to academy to support students in specific subjects or more widely across the curriculum.

This academic year, we appointed Learning Coaches in all core subjects; once the funding is confirmed, we intend to implement a similar model next year.

Q9. What CPD will be in place for staff that cannot be delivered on INSET Days?

Continuous development is very important in education. The goalposts are constantly changing and new, developmental research is being produced on a daily basis. We are an outward looking school and want to be at the forefront of educational change.

It is important that all staff are given sufficient time to improve their practice, reflect on their curriculum and learn and embed new pedagogy to support student learning. Having this dedicated time on a weekly basis will have significant and rapid impact on the quality of education on offer across the academy.

A number of INSET days, spread out across the academic year does not give staff the platform they need to develop their everyday practice and keep on top of the ever-changing educational environment.

Q10. Will lockers be introduced in September to support students with carrying jackets and bags?

Yes. The plan is to reintroduce lockers from September. They have been out of action this year for Covid purposes. We will monitor our local situation carefully over the coming months, however, we feel we should be able to reintroduce these without compromising our health and safety measures.

We will continue to remind students that visits to lockers are done at the appropriate time so that this does not have an impact on learning.

Q11. On the proposed model, is it only Y7 who have a split lesson over lunchtime or is it all year groups?

It is only Y7 that have a split lesson over lunchtime.