

10 May 2024

Dear Families

I hope that this letter finds you and your families safe and well. Life in school is going from strength to strength with our students being utterly brilliant and inspirational in equal measure. I wanted to say thank you for all your work in supporting us with encouraging your children to have the highest of standards in attendance, punctuality, and behaviour. At time of writing, we continue to have the best attendance rates that we have ever had; 0.6% above national rates, 0.8% above North-West rates and 1.6% above schools similar in demographic to ours. Alongside this, we have seen a 69% drop in behaviour incidents in like-for-like year-on-year comparisons and we have over 410 applications for next year's Year 7 cohort, making us one of the most oversubscribed schools in Tameside. Currently Year 11 are sitting their final GCSE exams and their predicted data is showing that they are on track to achieve the best results GAA has ever had on record.

As we seek to build on our successes we must look to forward to the next academic year and as part of our whole school improvement strategies we are looking to introduce such things as:

- A new **House System**: every student and member of staff will be in a House (names to be determined by our students). Students will compete for their House, represent their House, and ultimately aim to become House leaders. This strategy is to further enhance our students' identity within school. Giving them more opportunities to be a part of our GREAT family, more opportunities to represent their school and more leadership opportunities.
- **Reg & Read**: we will be introducing daily reading time at the end of lunch. This is where our students will have daily 15-minute guided reading with their form tutor. We have trialled this since September as part of morning registration and the impact it has had on our students' reading and literacy skills has been fantastic. With all students in all year groups making on average 16-months reading age progress over the last 12-months, this is singularly the most important factor for their future GCSE success. Daily reading will form part of our already very successful whole school strategy, place reading and literacy at the heart of everything we do.
- Fully re-designed **SEND structures**: it is important that we continue to ensure that our staffing and provision structures for our students with special educational needs is effective. As part of this, we will be launching new programmes and staffing support for all students with specific learning needs through our "Emotional Health and Wellbeing Framework" and our "Re-regulation" and "Settled Space" provisions. More details will come out later in the summer term.

As part of these developments, I would like to consult with you over our **proposed changes to the finish time of the school day**. At present, our students complete 31 hours and 15 minutes of learning time in school each week. We do not feel that this is enough, and it is also out of sync with government non-statutory guidelines from September onwards, which suggest all schools should complete a minimum of 32.5 hours each week. The table below demonstrates the proposed change:

Proposed Timing of New School Day

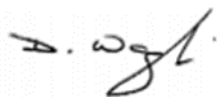
<u>Current</u>		<u>Proposed</u>	
Morning Mood	8.32am arrival	Morning Mood	8.32am arrival
Form	8.35am – 9.00am	Form	8.35am – 8.50am
Period 1	9.00am – 10.00am	Period 1	8.50am – 9.50am
Period 2	10.00am – 11.00am	Period 2	9.50am – 10.50am
Break	11.00am – 11.20am	Break	10.50am – 11.10am
Period 3	11.20am – 12.20pm	Period 3	11.10am – 12.10pm
Period 4	12.20pm – 1.20pm	Period 4	12.10pm – 1.10pm
Lunch	1.20pm – 1.55pm	Lunch	1.10pm – 1.45pm
		Reg & Read	1.45pm – 2.05pm
Period 5	1.55pm – 2.50pm	Period 5	2.05pm – 3.05pm
Daily Total	6 hours 15 mins	Daily Total	6 hours 30 mins
Weekly Total	31 hours 15 mins	Weekly Total	32 hours 30 mins

In summary, this would not change the start of the day, however it would move the end of the day from 2.50pm currently, to 3.05pm. This will not have any implications in terms of school buses as we have consulted on their ability to accommodate this change. It will also not affect any of our local schools as we will still finish at different times.

If you have any concerns at all about this change, please email admin@gaa.org.uk marked “School Day Consultation” and I will respond to all contacts individually. Please send your comments in by Friday 31st May 2024 and I will respond to all contact by Friday 7th June 2024.

Thank you for your continued support as our school continues to serve you and our community. I will write again after May Half Term with a fuller update on our wider plans for 2024-25.

Yours faithfully



Mr David Waugh
Principal