

New Siblands Primary
Gillingstool
Thornbury
South Gloucestershire
BS35 2EG
Tel. 01454 553 002



Valuing every child through fostering independence,
inclusion, trust, respect and support

New Siblands Secondary
Easton Hill Road
Thornbury
South Gloucestershire
BS35 2JU
Tel. 01454 553 002

Headteacher: Mr Karl Hemmings

20th February 2024

Dear parents and carers

Consultation: Changing the School Day

Following the low number of responses received during our consultation in October, the Governors have requested that we gather further feedback from parents and carers regarding the proposed changes to the school day before the Board of Trustees make a final decision.

Consultation arrangements

The consultation with parents and carers will begin on 21st February and end at 9am on Monday 11th March. We are keen to hear the views of as many parents and carers as possible, and there will be an opportunity to attend an informal drop in session at New Siblands School, Secondary site, to discuss the proposal with staff and Governors on Saturday 9th March, 10am-12pm.

If you would like to share your views, please complete the online survey, found [here](#). If you do not have access to the online survey, please contact a school office for a paper copy.

In addition to consulting with parents and carers, there will also be consultations with staff and South Gloucestershire LA Transport Services.

The changes, alongside the rational for the change and timescales are set out below:

We believe that these changes could be a significant benefit to all our schools and, with the additional time created by having a slightly shorter school day for pupils, we could improve in the following areas:

- Pupil progress and attainment; we would like to provide ring-fenced time for the class teams to reflect on the school day; what worked well and less well, and to engage in discussion to agree adapted/enhanced strategies for pupils for the following day.
- Preparation of high-quality learning resources for the following day. Special schools require a much higher number of shorter learning activities than their mainstream counterparts to engage learners and break their learning down into smaller milestones. Due to their shorter length, the quantity required is higher which can take a substantial time to create.
- Ensure time is available for class teams to input to monitoring and assessment and ensuring that feedback on progress against curriculum objectives is shared with accuracy across the team.
- Engagement with internal and external specialists and professionals; this will enable staff to discuss any barriers to learning and identify solutions.

A member of



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- High-quality staff training; a slightly earlier finish will enable us to provide mini training sessions, and collaboration and best practice sessions, which will improve classroom practice and, as a result, outcomes for pupils.
- Health and safety training; the slightly shorter school day will allow time for essential online health and safety training. Special schools require more health and safety training than their mainstream counterparts and 'Inset' days alone do not provide sufficient time to complete all the required training.
- Schools will be able to plan, adapt swiftly and with sufficient time to implement changes to pupil behaviour and/or medical plans, with the whole team.

Furthermore, shortening the school day can enhance pupil well-being in the following areas, leading to improved learning outcomes:

- *Fatigue*; the children and young people travel further to school than their mainstream peers, often spending 80 to 180 minutes PER DAY on school transport. Staff and parents/carers report that pupil fatigue, especially towards the end of each term, impacts on comfort, happiness, behaviour and learning, especially when they get home after a long day.
- *Medical*; many of our children have complex, fluctuating, medical needs. Adhering to documented Care Plans is essential for keeping the children safe and well, and ensuring we are compliant with health and safety requirements. These documents can change frequently and it is vital that we have sufficient quality time for staff to review the changes and information and / or procedures.

We are proposing that each school day will begin and end at the times outlined in the tables below, which includes examples of school timetables, though these may vary depending on the needs, focus and activity of the pupils. Currently, the school day starts at 8.55am and ends at 3.30pm.

Time	Culverhill School
8.55am	Registration
9:00 – 10:30	Core subjects
10:30 – 10:45	Break
10:45 – 12:15	Core Subjects
12:15 – 1:15	Lunch – Play Pod & Astro football
1:15 – 2:00	Foundation subjects
2:00 – 3:00	Foundation subjects
3.05pm	Home

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Time	New Siblands School & Two Bridges Academy
8.55am	Registration
9.00 – 10.00	Lesson 1
10.00 – 10.30	Lesson 2/snack
10.30 – 11.00	Break – play fully supervised and supported by class team
11.00 – 12.00	Lesson 3
12.00 – 1.00	Lunchbreak – eating and play fully supervised and supported by class team
1.00 – 2.00	Lesson 4
2.00 – 2.30	Lesson 5 / Afternoon break – fully supervised by class team
2.30 – 3.00	Lesson 6
3.05pm	Home

As part of the process we have benchmarked the school day times with other Special Schools:

School	Start time	End time
Bettridge	8.50	3.10
Exeter House	8.45	2.45
New Fosseway	8.50	3.05
Silverwood	8.50	3.10
The Shrubberies	8.55	2.55
Kingsweston (3 sites)	8.40 & 8.50	3.10
Pathways Learning Centre	8.45	2.45

We will write to you again week commencing 25th March with the outcome of the consultation, and to communicate the decision made by the Trust Board. If approved the changes will come into effect from 1st September 2024.

Best wishes

Karl Hemmings
Head Teacher, New Siblands School

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