



TRUE LEARNING
PARTNERSHIP



Poynton High School and Performing Arts College

Head Teacher: Mr M Dean

Friday, 07 July 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that you are well. I wanted to update you on some changes we are making to the timings within the school day and also to the management of parents evenings next year.

Parents Evenings

Thank you for the feedback on parents evening appointments over the year. We value these evenings as an opportunity to discuss your child's progress with you and have reviewed both parental and staff feedback over the year. Next year we will continue with online parents evenings in Years 9-13 but will have face to face evenings with Years 7 and 8. We are also making some changes to how appointments are made to further improve the system. There is no consensus from parents on what works best for parents evenings but we believe these changes will work well to retain the benefits of the new systems as well as meeting the needs of parents with younger students.

Why are Year 7 and 8 face to face?

Parental feedback for those year groups indicated a greater preference for face to face than in the other year groups. This would better support the transition from primary school as well, as parents are used to much greater personal contact when dropping children off at the school gates at primary school.

What else can support the transition of Year 7 students?

We will continue with the early 'Meet the Tutors' Evening which is held in the first half term and has been a success. This gives parents a chance to come into school and meet form tutors and the year team. In addition, next year we will add in a Progress Review Day in the second half term during the school day. This will give parents, should they wish, an additional chance to meet with the tutor and there will also be appointments available with the SEND team, year team and our Emotional Health and Wellbeing Lead. In the second half of the year we will have our parents evening in school where you will meet your child's subject teachers.

Why are the other parents evenings staying online?

Many parents prefer the online evenings as they are convenient and allow parents to fit appointments around other demands. This is more evident from parents in Years 9 and above. When we first moved to online appointments parents in all year groups were positive about the change and we want to keep these benefits.

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What other improvements are we putting in place for next year?

We do not want to go back to the old system which involved students taking a piece of paper around their teachers to make appointments, as that was often not successful! We will retain the online booking system with all year groups but are making some changes to ensure that all parents have a better spread of appointments. We are also changing the release time of the appointments so it is more convenient for all parents.

We will continue to review the way we plan parents evenings to ensure that the process works really well and we welcome your feedback.

Timings Within the School Day 2023-24

We are not changing the start or finish times of the school day next year and will retain the slightly longer day that we introduced in September 2022. As promised last year we have reviewed this based on parent feedback during the year and feedback from staff and students.

We have moved **form time back to the morning** – last year we made the change to form time being later in the day. This has worked well in many ways but the consensus from parents, students and staff is that a morning form time is preferable. From September form will again be at 8.45am. This is an important part of the day for the delivery of PSHCE and messages and will ensure a good start to the day, especially for the Year 7 students who particularly value starting each day with their form tutor.

We will **retain movement time between lessons** – this was very popular with students and parents when we reintroduced it and we will retain that movement time. One parent commented that it made the move between lessons less pressured and it also makes it much easier for us as teachers to ensure a crisp start to lessons and a full hour's lesson each time.

We will return to **one lesson after lunch** – this was the strong wish of both staff and students. Fewer parents have expressed a view on it but when they did they were generally positive.

What do students think of the change?

This term we talked to a lot of students, across all years, about the proposed change. The majority of students expressed a preference for the model we are adopting. When I met the student leadership group for example all but one preferred that model and generally this was the case with other discussions that took place, although inevitably not all students agree with each other. It was clear, however, that students overwhelmingly want the movement time, one lesson in the afternoon and the morning form time. A smaller number of students would prefer a slightly earlier lunch but on balance agreed that the other advantages outweighed the potential disadvantage of a slightly later lunchtime.

What about lunchtime?

As I mentioned above this was the only area where there was not general agreement in discussion with students. We have always had a later lunch than primary schools; for many years it was at 1.20pm and for most of this year it was at 1.15pm. We moved it to an earlier time in May to ensure that lunch did not clash with the GCSE and A level exams and the strong feeling of students, supported by lower take up of food in the canteen, was that it was too close to break. A common response from students was that the earlier lunch in the school day during exams did not match the later lunchtime they were used to at the weekend.

We recognise that it will be slightly more challenging for those moving from primary school, where they are used to an earlier lunch than is typical in secondary schools. We will allow the Year 7s to go slightly earlier to the canteen for the first few weeks to support this transition to high school. All students can buy food in the canteen before school and at breaktime or eat in the canteen bringing food from home if they prefer.

Why don't we move the start time of the day earlier?

A few parents and teachers did express a preference for an earlier start to the day. This was not generally popular with students, especially those who travel on buses and would need to spend a greater part of their journey travelling in the dark in the winter, and so we will not change the start time from 8.45am. This is the start time we have had since 2015 and it has worked well.

The new timings within the school day are below.

I look forward to sharing updates before we finish for the summer on the exciting events in the last two weeks, including Play in a Week, Awards Evenings and the whole-school sponsored walk. If you have not yet completed the consent for the walk on Evolve please do so so that we can complete the arrangements.

Best wishes,



Matthew Dean
Headteacher

Timings within the school day 2023-24

Time	
8.45am-9.00am	Form time
9.00am – 9.05am	5 mins movement time
9.05am – 10.05am	Lesson 1
10.05am-10.10am	5 mins movement time
10.10am-11.10am	Lesson 2
11.10am-11.30am	Break
11.30am -12.30pm	Lesson 3
12.30pm -12.35pm	5 mins movement time
12.35pm – 1.35pm	Lesson 4
1.35pm – 2.15pm	Lunch
2.15pm - 3.15pm	Lesson 5