

19 June 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

Changes to the school day at Coombe Dean School, Hele's School and Plymstock School from September 2023

The government released an [Education White Paper in March 2022](#), setting out its vision for education for this decade. The White Paper outlined the government's intention for all schools to have a school week which is at least 32.5 hours in length by September 2023, encouraging an average school week across all schools in England to eradicate the discrepancy of teaching time in schools currently evident. The premise of a minimum entitlement for all is social justice and equality of opportunity; it is unfair that a child who receives 10 minutes per day less of teaching time loses out on around 1 week of schooling a year than their counterparts in other schools. Further details from the Department of Education (DfE) regarding this can be found through the link below:

[Minimum expectation on length of the school week: information note](#)

The information note sets out the requirements for schools and provides guidance on the delivery of the 32.5 hours per week. The DfE requests *'when school leaders are considering how to use additional time in their schools, this should be guided by their priorities for improvement and learning outcomes for pupils. They should ensure they are delivering a broad and balanced curriculum within the school week for all their pupils.'*

At Coombe Dean School and Hele's School, our school week currently falls short of the 32.5 hour intention from the government. At Plymstock School, 32.5 hours a week *is* being currently delivered but this includes movement time at the start of the day, and it is felt that by redistributing time to extend tutor time there is a golden opportunity to act upon recent feedback from the Ofsted inspection in April around further strengthening the personal development programme.

We have worked collaboratively across our schools to develop a school day which aligns all year groups, meets the ambition of the government and addresses our Trust and Schools priorities for improvements and learning outcomes for students. We believe passionately that these changes will be beneficial to our school communities and will have a positive effect on your child's education.

Collectively designing the school day to ensure it meets the required 32.5 hours has been focussed on addressing educational advantage and learning outcomes for students through our individual school and wider Trust priorities for improvement.

- September 2023 is when the common curriculum structure agreed by all WeST Secondary Schools is fully implemented, so extending the day at the same time will support this other systemic change in supporting our staff to meet around curriculum, train together and share best practice.
- Students who follow some of their curriculum at other schools (mostly Post 16) require lesson times that coincide, and suitable travel time between sites so lessons can be accessed on time and they are not disadvantaged through lost learning time.
- The increase in Tutor time from 20 minutes to 30 minutes daily (i.e. 50 minutes per week) can be invested in the following areas:
 - ✓ A Tutor reading programme to support our Trust ambition that every child should read at an age-appropriate level or better and be exposed to a wide range of texts to both support the curriculum and develop a love of reading.

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- ✓ Personal, Social, Health and Economic education, which includes health and wellbeing, Relationships and Sex Education, economic wellbeing and enterprise, and careers.
- ✓ Opportunities for targeted and specific intervention with students requiring catch up support in Maths, English or Reading.
- ✓ Additional time for tutors to spend with students to develop strong, positive relationships to support students to be successful within the school day.

The changes to the structure and timings of the school day will be minimal with students continuing to receive five hour-long lessons per day.

From September 2023, the school week at Coombe Dean School, Hele's School and Plymstock School will be 32 hours and 30 minutes in length, starting at 08:40 each day, with an end time of 15:10, as follows:

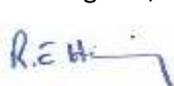
Agreed September 2023 model: Coombe Dean School, Hele's School and Plymstock School
8:40-9:10, Tutor/Registration
9:10-10:10, Period 1
10:10-11:10, Period 2
11:10-11:40, Break 1
11:40-12:40, Period 3
12:40-13:40, Period 4
13:40-14:10, Break 2
14:10-15:10, Period 5
32hrs 30mins per week

Extra-curricular provision and enrichment opportunities and library homework clubs for those students who wish to participate will continue after school, while still ensuring they are able to travel home in daylight hours in the winter months.

In making these changes, we want to ensure that the students at all Westcountry Schools Trust continue to have the best possible opportunities and that we continue the fantastic development of the schools over the last few years, especially following the impact of the pandemic.

We hope that the information here is helpful to explain the changes and the rationale behind this change to the school day. We will be detailing this with the students in each school. The information in this letter has also been sent to local transport companies, schools and the local authority. We will continue to work together so that there is minimal disruption to our young people, families, and staff. Should you have any questions or require additional information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact the relevant school directly.

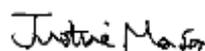
Kind regards,



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