



1st March 2017

Dear Parent/Carer

October Half Term Consultation

As part of the school's forward planning for next year we are strongly considering the possibility of increasing the October half term break from one week to two. **In the first instance this would be a one year trial only.**

The first term of the year is always significantly longer than the other two terms and as such is a demanding one, often evidenced by a significant spike in student absence in the half term leading up to Christmas. This lost learning time has a significant and detrimental effect on student progress.

The 2016/17 trial would involve students having an additional week away from school in the week following the current half term break. Therefore, from Monday 20th October to Friday 3rd November 2017 inclusive. This arrangement has already been adopted by several primary and secondary schools in the local authority with the remaining schools either consulting on, or considering the proposal.

If the proposal was adopted, we would ensure that the total learning time for our students remained the same over the course of the academic year by extending the Academy day on Mondays to finish at 3.30pm. Other days would continue to finish at 2.50pm.

We are confident that a two week half term would allow students and staff to be fully refreshed and therefore better focused on their teaching and learning in the lead up to Christmas. We believe this would allow for more effective learning in the build up to mock examinations and end of term assessments. In addition, a two week half term would offer opportunities for us to offer early intervention and/or support during the extended break as appropriate for our students.

In addition, as we know, enabling families to spend more time together can have a very positive impact on children's educational outcomes. The costs of holiday breaks during peak school holidays can be prohibitive. The proposed additional week's holiday in the autumn will provide families with the opportunity to benefit from off peak prices and thus make the possibility of a family holiday more realistic for many.

The 3.30pm finish on a Monday will provide an additional lesson (Period 6) of 40 minutes. It is intended that this lesson will be timetabled in the same way as all other lessons, with each year group being taught either one of the core subjects (English, mathematics or science) or lessons in the options groupings of Humanities and Languages or Arts and Technologies.

In the last half term of the summer term students in Year 11 would have time for revision and preparation for sixth form/progression activities, and students in Year 8 would be afforded Options preparation time. Other year groups will have the opportunity for the time to be used in a variety of different ways including: timetabled enrichment; intervention and support; accelerated reader; student for solutions meetings; music tuition; early start extra-curricular activity; Duke of Edinburgh preparation; extended form tracking; year group assemblies or similar. This would allow us to use this half term to further enrich the broader educational experience every week whilst addressing students' specific educational needs.

I repeat that if this proposal went ahead it would be agreed for only 1 year in the first instance. The impact of the two week break on the educational outcomes of our students would be carefully reviewed and evaluated before any consideration of an extension of the proposal to future years.

If you have any comments regarding this proposal please email my PA, Mrs Spraggon: sspraggon@ormistonpark.org.uk by Friday 22nd March. You will be notified of the final outcome of this consultation following due consideration by the Governors of any matters raised.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Huw Derrick". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small dot at the end.

Huw Derrick
Principal