

03 May 2019

Continuing Professional Development for Staff – Proposal for Regular Early Closures

Dear parent/carer,

As a school we are committed to ensuring that we provide the best teaching and learning opportunities for your children and as such we have been working with our teaching staff and governors to look at ways in which we can further enhance teaching practice.

Research shows that teaching practice is more likely to improve across a school if teachers regularly have the opportunity to engage in and share best practice and are frequently reminded and challenged to implement this practice in the classroom. One such piece of research, the *Developing Great Teaching* report from Cordingley et al, noted that “professional development opportunities that are carefully designed and have a strong focus on pupil outcomes have a significant impact on student achievement.”

In order to create regular opportunities for our staff to engage in this kind of continuing professional development (CPD), we need to ensure that we can hold the right development sessions at the right time for maximum impact. Colleagues have told us that they would value more CPD, which they can then discuss in departmental meetings allowing them to embed strategies learnt within their curriculum area.

In particular, we would like to create more opportunities for staff to meet within the first term. In the past, this has been restricted by the number of other school events taking place during this time, and it is widely felt that meetings at this early stage have a really positive impact on the development of teaching and learning throughout the rest of the year.

To achieve this, next year we propose to close 50 minutes early one day every fortnight to create regular CPD opportunities for staff.

This would involve reducing each lesson by 10 minutes on one day a fortnight to free up 50 minutes after school for CPD. This is a model that has proved successful in other schools and is preferred to, say, losing a lesson from one subject within the curriculum every fortnight.

Under this model, students would **leave school at 2.20pm once a fortnight** and our current proposal is that the best day would be the **Wednesday of every second week (B Week)**, as the highest proportion of part-time staff are in school on that day. For those students wishing to study after school, the Library would be open until 4.30pm. CPD sessions or departmental meetings would begin at 2.30pm on these days and last for two hours; or one hour if other school events are scheduled on the same day.

Following consultation with staff and governors, we feel that this proposal will have minimal impact on students' learning, but will have a huge positive impact on the development of teaching practice throughout the academic year.

If you do have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best wishes

Gemma Greenhalgh

Head of School