

## Kimberley School. Feedback on changes to the school day and online parents' evenings.

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2022

On the 10<sup>th</sup> May I [wrote to parents and carers seeking feedback](#) on these two issues. At the same time I also sought feedback from staff. In order to encourage as many parents as possible to respond, reminders were sent by email on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> May. The questionnaire was closed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> May. The purpose of this letter is to set out a summary of the feedback received and the actions we will take moving forward.

### Summary of responses and decisions

Part 1. Extending the School Day to 3:15pm from September 2022.

Staff and parents were overwhelmingly in support of the proposal. Over 95% of staff and 89% of parents were in support of the change. Indeed, only 6% of parents disagreed with the proposal. ***In the light of this feedback we will go ahead with the proposed change and the timings of the school day from September 2022 will be:***

8:45 am – 9:00 am	Morning Registration/Assembly
9:00 am – 9:05 pm	Movement Time
9:05am – 10:05 am	Period 1
10:05 am – 10:10 am	Movement Time
10:10 am – 11:10 am	Period 2
11:10 am – 11:25 am	Morning Break
11:25 am – 11:30	Movement Time
11:30 am – 12:30 pm	Period 3
12:30 pm – 1:10 pm	Lunch
1:10pm – 2:10pm	Period 4
2:10pm – 2:15pm	Movement Time
2:15pm – 3:15pm	Period 5

However, we do fully understand that this will cause some inconvenience to families which is why we are giving as much notice as possible of the change. At the end of this letter I have set out in Appendix 1 the full details of the consultation and have also responded to some of the concerns raised. I am confident that this change is a positive change for the school and it will improve the quality of education in two lessons each day.

Part 2. Online meetings for Parents' Evenings from September 2022.

Again the majority of staff and parents were in support of the proposal to continue with online meetings for Parents' Evenings next year. 92% of staff supported the proposal and 72% of parents agreed with the proposal. The feedback did demonstrate that 23% of parents would prefer us to revert to face to face meetings. Many parents who had attended previous face to face parents' evenings significantly preferred the flexibility, efficiency and confidentiality of the online system. Many reported that the feedback they received on line was more purposeful and focussed than previously.

Parents who opposed the proposal very much focussed on the lack of personal interaction with staff and the feeling that they have of not being involved in school. This is understandable and we do acknowledge that there have been limited or no opportunities for parents to come into school during the pandemic. This is regrettable but has also been unavoidable. I do understand that many parents who were not able to attend in school events during transition from primary school will feel removed from the school and it is important that we address this.

***In the context of the feedback from staff and parents we have decided to continue with online parents' evenings from September 2022.*** This is because of the majority support from both parents and staff for this proposal.

However, we do recognise the very genuine issues that have been raised during this consultation and as a result we will take these actions:

- We will better explain to parents how they can access technical support for the evenings
- We will be clear to staff that if the technology does not work then they should ring parents

- We will remind all parents that they can contact teachers after parents' evenings if they feel that they needed more time than the allotted five minutes.
- Year 7 parents have an opportunity to have a one to one meet with tutors during the Autumn Term. This will take place in school and will be face to face. As parents only have one meeting on this evening we can organise this so that the meeting is confidential. We think this is an important opportunity for new Year 7 parents to meet tutors face to face at the start of a child's time at Kimberley.
- With the exception of this Year 7 tutor meeting, all other one to one parents' evenings will be online.
- All other parent events will revert to face to face and in school. This will include: Year 6 induction events, Year 9 Options Evening, Year 10 Success at GCSE evening, Year 11 Sixth Form Open Evening and Year 11 Accelerating Progress Evening, and Year 12 and 13 information evenings.
- In the Autumn Term we will hold an open morning and open afternoon and will invite parents into school to have a tour of the school so that they can understand how the school operates throughout the day. I am hoping that this will give parents who have joined the school since the start of the pandemic the opportunity to see the school in operation. I will contact parents in advance to set out how this will work.

Thank you to those of you who gave the time to feedback on this complex issue. At the end of this letter I have set out in Appendix 2 the full details of the consultation and have also responded to some of the concerns raised

I will, of course, contact you to remind you of these changes later in the year and will also update the school website to ensure that you have accurate access to the information you need.

Andrew George

25<sup>th</sup> May 2022

### **Appendix 1. Proposal to extend the school day to 3:15 pm by introducing movement time at the start of period 1 and period 3.**

Staff consultation.

1. All staff were given the opportunity to feedback on this proposal
2. Staff were told that if they supported the proposal then they did not have to respond.
3. 23 staff responded. 22 staff with the proposal. Only 1 disagreed with the proposal
4. Reasons staff gave in support of the proposal included:
  - a. Makes complete sense. It is currently physically impossible for students to arrive on time to periods 1 and 3.
  - b. It removes excuses for lateness at the start of periods and 1 and 3
  - c. It does not impact on teacher workload
  - d. It means that period 1 and period 3 will now be a full teaching hour
  - e. Should improve punctuality to lessons and should minimise disruption at the start of these lessons
  - f. A calmer start to periods 1 and 3 can only be a positive step
  - g. The changeover time will give me time to prep for the lesson – giving out books/resources etc.
  - h. It will provide time to line up classes and have a more settled start
5. Reasons given for disagreeing with the proposal
  - a. It would be better to add the ten minutes to lunchtime. *Response. In the original consultation we set out that we had considered this but had discounted it because we did not see how it would improve the quality of education. Indeed, given the challenge of supervising 1400 students during lunchtime we are concerned that extending lunchtime could actually be of detriment to lessons in the afternoon.*
  - b. Could we start the day earlier and still finish at 3:05? *Again we did consider this option and discounted it. Two years ago the school gates closed at 8:50 am and now they close at 8:40 am. We have already moved the start of the day back 10 minutes and this has impacted on some families and staff childcare arrangements. Because of this we are reluctant to change the timing of the start of the day again.*

Parent Consultation

6. 248 parents responded to this part of the consultation. All age groups of students were represented
7. 6% disagreed with the proposal.

8. 89% agreed with the proposal.
9. 5% neither agreed or disagreed.
10. Parents who agreed were not asked why they agreed.
11. Of the parents who disagreed the main reasons cited were:
  - a. I agree with the idea of extending the school day but you haven't asked about starting the day 10 minutes earlier. *Response – please see response to 5b*
  - b. The ratio of 25 hrs of lessons in a 32.5 hour week seems low. *Response – taking into account tutor time there are actually 26.25hrs of lessons. Tutor time is a part of the day and students do follow a curriculum in this time. Most schools will follow a timetable of 5 hours of subject lessons a week.*
  - c. This will cause problems because of the timings of the bus that my child catches/This will mean that older siblings will not be able to collect younger siblings from primary schools. *Response – there 4 responses out of 287 that referred to this inconvenience. It is an inevitable consequence of the government's policy that this will cause some inconvenience for some families and this will be the case if we change either the start or end of the school day; this is why we are giving families as much notice as possible. The response in 5b sets out why we are not proposing to start the school day any earlier.*
  - d. Adding movement time is not adding lesson time. *Response – this issue was raised by 3 parents. Currently, it is impossible for students to move from one area of the school to another and arrive on time for periods 1 and 3. Even when walking at a brisk pace, it can take more up to 5 minutes to walk from one end of the site to another. Students use movement time sensibly at other times of the school day and we are confident that they will do so for periods 1 and 3. This change will increase lesson time for periods 1 and 3 and will, therefore, improve the quality of education.*

## **Appendix 2: Proposal to continue to use online meetings for parents' evenings from September 2022**

Staff Consultation. Staff were overwhelmingly supportive of the proposal with the main reasons focussing on the equity of the length of appointments across all parents and confidentially. Staff across the school report that the online meetings have had significant impact on their work/life balance.

12. 74 staff responded to the consultation.
13. 92% agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal. 66% strongly agreed
14. 5% disagreed with the proposal. 1% strongly disagreed
15. 3% neither agreed or disagreed.
16. Staff gave many reasons why they support this proposal. Many staff commented on how the confidentiality of the online meetings had improved the quality of feedback they felt able to give. The reasons they gave included:
  - a. They had had positive feedback from the majority of parents
  - b. No-one goes over the allotted time. When this happens in face to face meetings it impacts on other teachers and parents
  - c. Key points can be shared within the available time.
  - d. It means that meetings are more focussed
  - e. It gives flexibility for staff with young children to work from home if needed
  - f. It is confidential. In face to face parents' evenings other parents and students can overheard what is being said
  - g. The confidentiality means that I feel like I can have a more honest and detailed conversation with parents
  - h. I do miss having a more personal interaction but the meetings are far easier to manage online and I am able to have more confidential conversations than I was previously
  - i. The strict timings mean that I can make comments much more purposeful
  - j. The online meetings have removed a lot of stress from my job as I can be more flexible in terms of childcare
  - k. Evenings finish on time and I do not face a long journey home, battling traffic in school before I leave. I am definitely less tired the following day
  - l. I can still share students work in the online meetings
  - m. Environmental impact must be significant with less cars travelling to school that evening
  - n. There is no queue-jumping and other parents do not miss out because some take much longer

- o. There is higher attendance because some parents can now fit these meetings in around their work commitments
  - p. If more time is needed I can arrange to phone the parent at a different time.
  - q. I can make better use of the time between appointments. This is not the case in the hall.
  - r. It is easier to prepare notes for online meetings because they are less unpredictable
17. Reasons staff gave for disagreeing with the proposal
- a. There are sometimes problems with the technology. *Response – our IT technicians are available before throughout the evening and can be contacted for support. We will review the information sent to parents before the evening so that they know who they can contact if they need support.*
  - b. It is my view that feedback does not have the desired impact unless it is delivered face to face.
  - c. Examples of work can be shown in face to face meetings. *Response – in both the parental and staff feedback there are examples of how staff are able to show students work in online meetings.*
  - d. Both systems have their merit – it's a shame the logistics won't allow us to offer both.

Parent Consultation. The overall feedback from parents was in favour of this proposal. However, in this instance there were a sizeable number of parents who did not agree

18. 267 parents responded to this consultation.

19. 72% agreed with the proposal. Indeed 48% strongly agreed with the proposal

20. 23% of parents disagreed. With 6% neither agreeing or disagreeing.

21. Reasons given for agreeing with the proposal:

- a. Many parents talked about how much easier it was to fit this around work commitments
- b. Many parents felt that this had helped them with childcare arrangements for younger siblings
- c. Many parents agreed that other parent events (Year 9 options evening, Year 10 Success at GCSE evening, Sixth Form Open Evenings, Year 6 Induction Evenings should be held face to face)
- d. Several parents felt that their child was more likely to attend online meetings with them
- e. Many parents commented that previously they had missed appointments because their meetings or other meetings had over-ran and that this was not the case with the online system
- f. Many commented on the environmental impact and the impact on the neighbourhood
- g. Many parents commented on how much they preferred the confidentiality of online meetings. Previously they had been concerned that other parents or students would overhear what was being said.
- h. Some parents had felt that face to face meetings had been chaotic as people moved from one teacher to another
- i. Some reported that they used to lose the whole evening to parents' evening and that this is now not the case
- j. There is no inconvenience of having to try and find a parking space
- k. My experience has been that online feels more focussed as well as more efficient
- l. The whole evening is a lot less stressful
- m. Online meeting allow us to get the information we need about our daughter quickly, conveniently and privately
- n. The online system allows us to see more teachers in a shorter amount of time
- o. Many parents commented that if they felt the five minutes was too short then they knew that they could always contact the teacher by phone or by email
- p. Traditional parents' evenings were always a nightmare. Please keep the system. This was a very common response from parents with older students.

22. Reasons given for disagreeing with the proposal

- a. A small number of parents reported that there are sometimes technological problems. *Response- we have been using the system now for two years and the times when the technology have failed are very few and far between. We have IT technicians on site throughout the evening and we always ask teachers to phone or email parents if something goes wrong. See also response to 17a*
- b. There were a number of parents who felt that it was harder to build a relationship and rapport with individual teachers online. *Response – I do understand this but I also contrast this with a larger number*

*of parents who feel that the feedback they are getting online is more focussed than previously. Given the number of teachers a student will have every year in secondary school it will never be possible for parents to build personal relationships with all of them. However, if there is an issue with a particular lesson that the teacher and parents need to discuss then this can and happen outside the online meeting on parents' evening and can be initiated by either the teacher or parent.*

- c. *Some parents said that they feel uninvolved in school and this had contributed. Response – we do understand this has happened during the pandemic but, as I set out in my letter, there will be more opportunities for parents to attend school for other events in the future*
- d. *Some parents commented on the length of the meetings. Response – this was the same issue when we had face to face meetings. If more time is needed then this should be arranged outside of the parents' evening. Please see response to 22b*
- e. *There is no reason to prevent parents coming into school for parents' evening. Response – we are not suggesting that there is. The purpose of this consultation was to understand what parents and staff would prefer for next year.*
- f. *It is better if we can see the classrooms that our children work in. Response – even in face to face parents' evenings there was no opportunity for parents to go into all the classrooms with the majority of appointments being held in the school halls.*