

Dear Parents and Carers,

### **Proposed changes to Session times**

We wanted to write to you all to inform you about a change we would like to introduce at the start of the autumn term in September which involves changes to the academy day. We are committed to providing the highest possible quality of education for our children and believe these changes will help us with our drive to do this.

All teachers are entitled to 10% planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time out of class. In essence this equates to around half a day per week for each and every teacher. Any new teachers to the profession also have an additional 10% professional development time (a further half a day). You will appreciate that our teachers spend much longer than this dedicated half a day in preparing sessions, making resources and marking and assessing work outside of the school hours. It never has been a 'nine to five' job and there are always new changes for teachers and leaders to take on board – because we care and want the very best for our children.

Throughout the day, we cover these PPA sessions in a number of ways. We use additional teachers and support staff, who all know our children very well, so that teachers can be released. We also use outside companies such as the Doncaster Music Service. However, this does mean that classes can be taught by more than one person throughout the week.

To manage PPA more effectively, we have discussed changing the school day at many meetings and over many months and are now in a position to share our proposals with you. This change has been shared with governors and we have also discussed our proposals with staff and the different teaching/ support staff unions. The response from everyone has been both supportive and positive. Everyone can see that we are looking for a creative solution to a problem which is getting increasingly more difficult.

With any significant changes, we would ideally hold consultation meetings for this and perhaps have a trial period during the summer term, but the current situation means we are not able to do this.

Across Brooke and Marshland we are hoping to change the academy day as detailed below.

Monday 8.45 am to **3.15pm**

Tuesday 8.45 am to **3.15pm**

Wednesday 8.45 am to **3.15pm**

Thursday 8.45 am to **1.45pm**

Friday 8.45 am to **3.15pm**

One benefit of these changes would mean that all teachers would have their PPA at the same time, so that they could plan together and also plan subjects more effectively; for example, the teacher who leads science would be available to support any science planning. Closing the academy early would also reduce the amount of cover we need. At present Brooke has 20 teaching staff who require a session of PPA a week (10% of their teaching time) so this equates to 20 sessions of cover a week. Added to this are the extra courses and training we send staff on to ensure they are up to date and can support pupils effectively in the school. There are some days, as a result of training and PPA, that organising cover seems like an impossible task! These new arrangements would mean that the need to cover classes would reduce significantly, meaning greater consistency for the children as the teacher would teach the class full-time.

These changes would also reduce the cost of staffing. We have worked very hard recently to review the curriculum for our children, ensuring it is exciting, relevant and based within the local community. The plans are in place and now we need to commit to resourcing the different subjects. We would also like to invest in improving the building itself and changing the school day, is one way of helping to fund these improvements.

Obviously, these changes will impact on working parents. In order to support this, we will provide clubs from 1:45 to 3:15 on a Thursday afternoon for children of working parents. This will involve a range of activities organised through a signing-up system; there will be further information to follow as we get nearer to the start of the new year. We will also provide nursery provision for those entitled to 30 hours.

We have not taken this decision lightly and a great deal of thought and discussion have taken place. We genuinely do believe this decision will have a positive impact. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with the information so that you can let us know your thoughts. If you do have any comments then these will have to be emailed to [br-admin@vennacadey.org](mailto:br-admin@vennacadey.org) no later than Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June with 'Changes to the School Day' as the subject.

Yours sincerely

Emma Levers  
Head of School

