



## THE BISHOP OF HEREFORD'S BLUECOAT SCHOOL

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MNH/AHW  
30<sup>th</sup> June 2021

Dear Parents & Carers,

Following the recent letter that I wrote to update you on our plans for September, we have received a small amount of feedback. Thank you to those of you who wrote back to us, this feedback is really helpful, and we do appreciate the concerns that change often brings. Although there is a change to the end of the school day, our planning has factored in provision so that there will be no impact or change to the after-school arrangements for parents, which I have explained more about below.

As we look ahead to the next review of easing the COVID restrictions on 19th July and then further to the autumn term, from the experience we have had, and the words of caution from the government about both COVID and Flu precautions in the winter, we are planning to ensure that students continue to get the best learning provision that we can provide. As a result of the pandemic, schools will be planning to live with COVID in the community for the foreseeable future. An important part of this, is providing greater flexibility to provide targeted post COVID catch-up support provision for students where they need it, in line with the government's intentions.

To explain in more detail the provision we are making from September, I have used the points raised in the feedback we have received as a focal point to explain the aspects of our planned provision.

### **What will be the impact on students and families of an earlier finish to the school day?**

Although lessons will finish at 3.00pm, the school by no means will be closed for students or for learning. Extra-curricular clubs which have previously run at lunchtimes were restricted to around twenty minutes, although some may still run in one of the breaks during the day, offering them after school will give a much greater quality of provision in terms of time. We want to encourage as many students as possible to take part in one of our many extra-curricular opportunities, which in turn will support students in engaging in school life and providing a sense of connection following school closures.

For students who are waiting for a bus or to be picked up by their parents, we will be providing a study area in the library until 4.15pm which will be fully staffed so that students can use school resources for homework, or they can read in a safe

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and supervised space. The extra-curricular provision will be updated on the school website for September. The change to finishing time of the school day should not affect the commitments and plans for parents or carers for September as we have made provision in our planning to supervise students.

Although some benefits of an earlier finish were explained in the previous letter to you, these were not the reasons behind the decision making, but benefits which had been described by students through the student council.

**How will a shortened afternoon break affect opportunities for students to socialise, eat, play games or attend extra-curricular clubs?**

There will still be two breaks during the day when students can choose how they organise their time to do these things. We are working with our catering company so that they will offer as similar a choice of foods at both breaks to provide the flexibility to do this. Some clubs may run in one of the breaks, but we will be encouraging students to participate in as many after school clubs and activities as possible so that this important part of learning is developed.

**Will there enough time for students to get and eat their food from the cafeterias in either of the breaks?**

For students buying their food from the school cafeterias, currently all students are buying their food and sat down to eat it in fifteen minutes. Friday is the busiest day in the week for hot food bought from the cafeterias. We are working with the catering company to further reduce queuing and increase the efficiency of service with additional tills for September so that time spent queuing for food is minimal. If students are buying cold food, they may decide to buy it in the earlier break, to eat later in the day.

**Will students be released on time from lessons before a break so that they don't miss any time with their friends?**

All subject teachers will have planned to finish their lessons and released students on the bell at the end of all lessons so that break times are not affected in any way.

**Will the school buses run at earlier times?**

We are currently working with the bus companies to clarify this. If the bus times don't change, students will be able to work in a supervised environment until the bus arrives or until 4.15pm. In addition, there will be staff on duty after school between 3.00 - 3.30pm to supervise students waiting for buses. The provision for students to use the after-school facilities for homework will also be available for the majority of our students who do not use buses to get home.

**How will student's learning be affected by an earlier finishing time?**

The amount of learning time in lessons is unaffected by the finishing time of the school day. As already explained, we are aiming to improve the quality of extra-curricular provision which takes place after school without a time cap on when it needs to finish. This includes all clubs and subject revision classes. We are actively encouraging students to stay for as many extra-curricular activities as possible at

the end of the school day which will enhance learning rather than have any negative effect.

I hope this information helps in reassuring you that we have planned these changes to help students get more from the school day, whilst being mindful of the long-term uncertainties associated with living with COVID as we look to the future.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Martin Henton." The signature is written in a cursive style.

Martin Henton  
Headteacher