



# Nethergate Academy

Executive Principal: Mrs T Ydlibi

Swansdowne Drive, Clifton, Nottingham NG11 8HX

Telephone: 0115 9152959

Email: [admin@nethergateacademy.org](mailto:admin@nethergateacademy.org)

Website: [www.nethergateacademy.org](http://www.nethergateacademy.org)

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Dear Parents and Carers

Thank you very much for your engagement in the consultation process to change the length of the school day at Nethergate.

We have carefully considered the responses from pupils, parents, carers and staff in the decision-making process and in particular, the concerns raised by parents at the meeting held on Monday.

At a meeting with members of our Academy Advisory Council (including two parent representatives), a decision has been agreed to pilot the proposed changes in the spring and summer terms 2020. From January 2020, pupils will attend school between 9.00am and 3.00pm. If your child is transported by the local authority, they will be brought to school for 9.00am and will leave school at 3.00pm. Pick up and drop off times are likely to change as a result.

There is overwhelming support for the proposal to change the school day to 9.00am until 3.00pm. Some of the feedback received includes;

- Changes are based on sound educational reasons to maximise outcomes for pupils;
- Removal of a formal timetabled afternoon break and a move to a flexible break ensures continuity of learning and efficient use of time. It allows teachers to respond to individual pupils' needs more flexibly and provide, for example, movement breaks at appropriate times;
- The increasingly complex needs of pupils can be better met because of a more flexible approach to the timetable;
- There will be no need to have bells for lesson change times. This will be managed by individual teachers for their group. This is particularly significant for those children who have sensory needs who find the bell very dysregulating.
- The shorter school day will reduce anxiety, limit stress and reduce meltdowns for some children.
- Travelling time at the end of the day should be reduced as there is less traffic on the roads at 3.00pm. This will reduce stress and anxiety for children.
- Additional planning time created and time for staff to attend training and to liaise with each other and other professionals will improve provision and outcomes for pupils.
- The length of the school day is still in excess of the recommended DfE guidelines for most pupils.

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Some parents, both in writing and in the meeting, raised some concerns and potential problems which were mostly resolved.

| CONCERN   | SOLUTION/RESPONSE   |
|---|---|
| Lack of afternoon break would be a problem  | There is no plan to remove afternoon break but to make it more flexible and up to the teacher to decide when it best suits their group/individuals' needs. They will build in a break at a time that ensures continuity of learning and for individual needs to be met more effectively.  |
| Lunch time will be too short  | Pupils will still have the same amount of time to eat their lunch if they wish. Waiting time to go out and play, which can be a problem for some, will be reduced.  |
| Farnborough Academy also leave at 3.00pm and their pupils might pick on ours                              | For those pupils who are independent travellers and use public transport or walk to school, they will be able to leave either earlier or later. This has always been the arrangement and individuals will be able to arrange the best time for them to leave so that they feel safe. In the morning, as we will be starting later, it will improve their journey to school as Farnborough pupils will already be in school. |
| Working parents and carers would have difficulty with childcare arrangements, dropping off and picking up | The school will offer a breakfast club from 8.30 each morning and after school provision from 3.00pm until 4.00pm. If children stay to after school provision they will need collecting from school by 4.00pm.  |

If this decision creates any unanticipated issues for you, please contact us so that we can try to find a solution.



*Tracey Ydlibi*  
*Executive Principal*  
*Nethergate Academy &*  
*Medeshamstede Academy*

*Tel: 0115 9152959 (Nethergate)*  
*Tel: 01733 821403 (Medeshamstede)*