



THE COOPERS' COMPANY  
AND COBORN SCHOOL

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*Love as Brethren*

# **Parental Consultation Document**

## **March 2020**

### **Proposed structure of the School Day/Year from September 2020**

## Context/Rationale:

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For the past 12 months, the School's Leadership Team has been engaged in exploratory work relating to the structure of the school day/year. There have been several factors which have influenced our examination of this issue:

- 1. The need for a significant curriculum review, in light of the government's introduction of statutory PSHE from September 2020. This has been the main driver in our thinking.***

In the summer of 2019, the government published new statutory guidance for PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic) education. For further details on this, please go to: [DFE PSHE new curriculum website](#). This means that schools across the country, are required, by law, to deliver a substantive PSHE programme. Previously PSHE was not a mandatory requirement and unfortunately has been taught in some schools in a deficit way.

The new, improved curriculum focuses predominantly on relationships education, which encompasses sex education, as well as health education. However, a third aspect of PSHE education is also recommended, with a focus on issues such as economic well-being, careers education and the world of work. The statutory guidance places a substantive and new curriculum requirement on all schools, both primary and secondary.

The Secretary of State for Education was clear on the rationale for this change...‘Today's children and young people are growing up in an increasingly complex world and are living their lives seamlessly on and offline. This presents many positive and exciting opportunities but also challenges and risks. In this environment, children and young people need to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way.’

Many of the issues to be covered in the new curriculum are of the utmost importance and, as parents, you will recognise that it is critical we cover the content with appropriate depth, sensitivity and professionalism.

The government has identified 18 core content areas that schools are required to teach and has engaged with a leading national organisation in the delivery of this curriculum. This organisation is known as the PSHE Association. Full information on the curriculum that we will need to deliver can be found on the [PSHE Association website](#).

Examples of the content that need to be covered are:

- Positive Relationships
- Relationship Values
- Forming and maintaining respectful relationships
- Consent

- Bullying, Abuse and Discrimination
- Social Influences
- Self-concept
- Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing
- Healthy lifestyles/Decisions
- Drugs, alcohol and tobacco
- Managing risk and personal safety
- Puberty, sexual health and fertility
- Employment rights and responsibilities
- Financial Choices
- Media Literacy and Digital Resilience

The key question for us is: How does the school develop this critical new statutory curriculum offering without taking current curriculum time away from other subjects? With substantive new content to deliver, we need to find a way to create additional curriculum and teaching time, without impacting on the breadth of the existing curriculum we offer. This can only be achieved by reviewing the structure of the school day as we do not want to affect the existing successful curriculum model. We also know that our current model for delivery of PSHE (via Conference Days) will not enable us to embed these more substantive requirements in a cohesive manner. This was recognised by our democratic student body in a recent 'Student Congress' meeting as they raised a number of excellent points regarding improvements for how to improve PSHE delivery.

During the Spring and Summer of 2019, a staff working party was created to explore different models which would enable us to deliver this new statutory PSHE. The working party simulated numerous models which were discussed at length. The solutions considered ranged from reducing lunchtime, creating longer lessons in the school day and removing existing curriculum time from some subjects. However, analysis of each individual model identified specific drawbacks. We therefore dedicated another four months to further develop the outline model that we are currently proposing. We feel this model is the best way to enable us to meet our statutory PSHE requirements whilst maintaining all the strengths of our current curricular provision, without impacting existing curriculum allocation. We are completing an audit of cross-curricular PSHE delivery to ascertain where the gaps are before finalising the new curriculum.

## ***2. Concerns around student and staff well-being***

Our school motto is 'Love as Brethren' and we continually strive to integrate this ethos into all of our strategic decision making and the learning experiences offered across the school.

We are mindful of the pressures that both students and staff face. We have a commitment to the wellbeing of everyone in our organisation and we feel that this proposal will help us. In

particular, the Autumn Term is the longest in the academic year; as a result, we see significant levels of both staff and student absence which has an impact on the quality of education. There is a national crisis related to teacher retention to which we are not immune. This was referenced in a [DFE Teacher Retention Report in 2019](#), which reported: “Over 20% of new teachers leave the profession within their first 2 years of teaching, and 33% leave within their first 5 years”.

Similarly, the UK education system is facing increasing challenges relating to student wellbeing specifically relating to mental health conditions. Statistics in a [report from the NHS in November 2018](#) show that 1 in 8 (12.8%) children and young people have at least one mental health condition. These numbers are largely driven by an increase in emotional disorders (including anxiety and depression), which for 5-15-year-olds rose from 3.9% in 2004 to 5.8% in 2017.

We are confident that the proposed model will provide both the increase in curriculum time required whilst also safeguarding student and staff wellbeing, particularly in the long autumn term. By providing all students and staff with a two-week break at the mid-point in October, it is hoped that we can positively impact mental wellbeing and physical health.

### ***3. The external environment; many schools in the UK are undertaking reviews***

Schools can make changes to the structure of their school day but have to consult with the wider school family of stakeholders including staff, students and parents. Academy Trust schools are permitted to change the number of school days across the year from the statutory 190 sessions (for Local Authority maintained schools) so long as they are able to justify how they can deliver a quality learning experience and achieve excellent results. It is expected that schools will act reasonably when making such decisions; giving parents notice and considering the impact on students, teachers, and parents.

A House of Commons briefing paper [published in July 2019](#) by Robert Long, summarises the position of school hours and term times and references other statistics. As of July 2014, 8% of Academies had increased the length of the school day and a further 6% planned to do so. 4% of Academies had changed the length of the school term whilst a further 5% planned to do so.

More locally, one Academy has lengthened their school day to 4:30pm and introduced a 2-week October half term whilst another has shortened their lunch break in order to increase lesson times and achieve a two-week October half term.

The [Governance Handbook, March 2019](#) stipulates that Academies set their own school day and term dates and we would like to take advantage of these flexibilities. The statutory provisions on school sessions do not therefore apply to us

#### **4. There are inefficiencies within our current school day structure which need addressing**

The school has not formally or strategically reviewed the structure of the school day for many years and it has remained largely unchanged. There are various inefficiencies within the current school day that this proposal allows us to address. In particular, with the advent of better technology, we know our current afternoon registration time of 10 minutes is not good use of staff or student time. Our proposed model therefore removes 50 minutes a week (5 x 10 minutes allocated to afternoon registration), allowing a slightly earlier school finish on four days of the week. Our democratic student body also raised the inefficiency of the current afternoon registration process.

Technology allows us to capture the statutory afternoon registration mark through standard afternoon lesson attendance.

#### **5. Proposed Model:**

The model currently being considered by the school:

- Increases lesson time/curriculum time for students across the year by over two days
- Ensures we introduce statutory PSHE in a meaningful and structured way
- Considers and removes inefficiencies in our current school day
- Reduces the overall number of student attendance days from 190 days to 185 days
- Maintains the number of staff training (INSET) days at five

What this would mean:

- A slightly earlier finish on four days a week (3:15pm)
- A slightly later finish on one day a week (4:15pm). Based on widespread student and staff consultation the current extended day we are proposing is Wednesday\*
- An additional week of holiday. Currently proposed to be a 2-week October half term
- The removal of the statutory afternoon registration time from the timetable (using afternoon lesson attendance to register students)
- The removal of the current two PSHE conference days from the school calendar
- Students will benefit from keeping a 15-minute mid-morning break and 1-hour lunch time protecting our commitment to extra curriculum provision at lunch time and promotion of physical exercise

(\* There are significant reasons for having selected this day that include feedback from students and staff as well as wider curriculum considerations.)

## What would this look like in the timetable?

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>Morning Registration</b>	8:35am to 9:00am (every day)				
<b>Period 1</b>	9am to 10am (every day)				
<b>Period 2</b>	10am to 11am (every day)				
<b>Break</b>	11am to 11:15am (every day)				
<b>Period 3</b>	11:15am to 12:15pm (every day)				
<b>Period 4</b>	12:15pm to 1:15pm (every day)				
<b>Lunch</b>	1:15pm to 2:15pm (every day)				
<b>Period 5</b>	2:15pm to 3:15pm (every day)				
<b>Period 6</b>			3:15pm to 4:15pm (Wed)		

- The addition of a period 6 lesson on one day per week creates an additional 37 hours of curriculum time across an academic year (please refer to the calculation table below)
- We are proposing that this new curriculum time is allocated equally between the PSHE curriculum and our existing curriculum offer
- The loss of 25 hours of teaching time as a result of an extra half term week is mitigated within this new model as more teaching time is available across the academic year
- Working on our two-week timetable, we would envisage PSHE delivery to take place for one hour, every other week
- We are proposing that PSHE will be delivered, Period 1, rather than in Period 6
- All teaching staff would be involved in the new curriculum model and we are looking at a range of staffing models to ensure the PSHE programme is well taught, in specialist teams. A PSHE Curriculum Coordinator has recently been appointed

**Calculations of time:**

<b>Current</b>	<b>Days</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>Total Hours</b>			
School Year	195			(1 week October half term)		
Inset Days	5					
In school Days	190	5	<b>950 (A)</b>			
<b>Proposed</b>						
School Year	190			(2 week October half term)		
Inset Days	5					
In school Days	185					
5hr Days	148	5	740			
6hr Days	37	6	222			
In school Hours			<b>962 (B)</b>			
<b>Additional teaching hours (C = B-A)</b>			<b>12 (C)</b>			
<b>despite 2 week half term</b>			<b>2.4 days</b>			

*Calculation table*

**6. Invitation to consider and respond:**

When considering this current proposal, we would encourage you to factor in the following:

- The rationale for the proposed curriculum change is compelling; retention of the current curriculum offering as well as including statutory PSHE
- The school has investigated a wide range of other delivery models over a period of 12 months and believe that the proposed model is the most suitable
- The broader benefits to health and wellbeing in being able to offer an additional week in the half term break during the very long autumn term period
- The broader benefits to students and additional value to learning in continuing to offer a full and varied curriculum
- The school has already consulted with staff and students and both groups are in favour of the proposal; staff support was an overwhelming 83%
- We have considered that this proposal may create some logistical concerns for parents, therefore we are inviting you to suggest what provisions/support the school could put in place to alleviate any negative impacts

We have created an online feedback form that we would encourage you to take the time to complete. The feedback form will be available until **9am on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March**. After this date we will assimilate all the questions that have already been asked at the Parental Engagement Meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> March along with the questions and feedback you provide online. We will create a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document that will be shared with you.

The final decision and proposal will be communicated to all parents, staff and students by the end of the Easter holiday break, giving 4 months' notice of any changes.

***Online Feedback Form will ask:***

1. What specific questions or concerns do you have and would like us to address for you?
2. What aspects of the proposal do you like?
3. What would make this proposal even better?
4. Would you be interested in the school offering any activities during one of the October half term weeks?