

Dear Parents and Carers,

**I am writing to you with a proposal to formalise the two-week October half term for the academic year 2025 – 2026 onwards.**

As you will be aware, this academic year we have trialled a two-week October half term. Ahead of this trial we wrote to all parents as part of our consultation process. We explained that there are currently significant recruitment and retention challenges for both teaching and support staff in the education sector and therefore it is imperative that we do all we can to retain our current, excellent staff and recruit the very best staff when vacancies arise.

Before the trial, we looked at the way some trusts and schools organise the school year differently, and as a result made an adjustment to our term dates in the autumn term 2024. Our aim was to support recruitment of the very best staff and potentially reduce absence rates in the autumn term. Good health and wellbeing of staff and students is essential to the education of our pupils. The long autumn term, and emerging viruses at that time of year, seem to combine to create higher than usual absence rates, particularly in November.

Following the trial last term, we noted that both staff and student absence had decreased compared to the Autumn Term in 2023. Staff reported that the additional 5 days made a significant positive impact on their wellbeing and energy levels across the term. In appointing staff and detailing the benefits in joining our school they have remarked that this unique selling point has made in some cases our school the more favourable offer compared to other job opportunities. The 2 week October half term is also being considered by schools across the town as they too can see the positive impact it can have on good health and wellbeing of their staff and students.

In order to accommodate this change, we added 10 minutes to each day to make up the time so that the school day now begins at 8:30am.

We had considered adding an extra lesson one day a week but felt that spreading the time out rather than putting fifty minutes a week into a late lesson is preferable as we are keen to ensure that a range of intervention and extracurricular activities run each day after school and adding an additional after school lesson may limit these opportunities.

### Consultation

Before making this change permanent, we are reaching out to parents for feedback and would welcome your thoughts.

- Are there any comments you would like considered?
- Do you agree with formalising this change to the school calendar?

Please respond using this online form by 7th February using this [online google survey](#)

Once the consultation is complete, we expect to confirm the dates for the next school year by 14<sup>th</sup> February.

Yours sincerely,



Karen Hand  
Headteacher