



HAILEY HALL SCHOOL

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26th May 2023

Re: Change to the length of the School Day

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to inform you of changes to the length of the school day here at Hailey Hall School, from September 2023.

We have recognised from analysis of our data that many of our pupils really do struggle to manage themselves and their behaviour in the afternoons. This is something we have been aware of in the past and as a result, a few years ago we changed the structure of the day to have more lessons in the morning to ensure focused learning time was optimized during this time and early afternoon, while leaving enrichment clubs in the late afternoon. This change was extremely positive and addressed many of our concerns, however this did impact the time we had morning break and lunch pushing these later in the day, which has created its own challenges with pupils not being able to have lunch until nearly 2pm.

Endeavouring to find solutions to address this issue and working with other SEMH schools in Hertfordshire and other counties, I discovered there was quite a difference in the length of the school day across the different schools. Investigating further and benchmarking the length of our school day and the number of hours pupils are at school every week, I was surprised to see that compared to every other SEMH school in Hertfordshire, Hailey Hall pupils are at school the longest, with our pupils being here for 33 hours and 15 mins per week. The next highest SEMH school had a week length of 32 hours, while another was 28 hours 30 minutes per week. It is worth noting that these times do not include transport time, which for some of our pupils can be over an hour each way.

I strongly feel that the journey time to and from school for some of our pupils puts them at an unfair disadvantage when compared to their peers in mainstream schools and so, I want to minimize this disparity. In addition, we have recognized that the needs of our pupils over the last few years have become more complex and trying to meet these needs is extremely challenging due to the length of our school day, especially when factoring in transport time.

Consulting with the Department for Education, they expect schools to deliver a minimum week length of 32.5 hours per week, however this expectation does not apply to specialist settings such as ours (special schools and alternative provision), due to the varying needs of our pupils and transport challenges, as mentioned above and hence why other SEMH schools in Hertfordshire offer less than this.

To ensure our pupils are given the best opportunities to have their needs met and to ensure they are not disadvantaged compared to pupils in similar and mainstream schools, the school day will be reduced in length from September 2023. The changes are outlined below:

Current times of school days and total length of week

Monday	8:45am – 3:30pm
Tuesday	8:45am – 3:30pm
Wednesday	8:45am – 3:30pm
Thursday	8:45am – 3:30pm
Friday	8:45am – 3:00pm

Total hours per week 33 hours 15 minutes

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Patron: Billy Wingrove

'Hailey Hall School is committed to safeguarding'



New times of school days and total length of week, from September 2023

Monday 8:45am – 2:45pm
Tuesday 8:45am – 2:45pm
Wednesday 8:45am – 2:45pm
Thursday 8:45am – 2:45pm
Friday 8:45am – 2:45pm
Total hours per week 30 hours

Despite this change, I am still committed to ensuring that the number of lessons per week is not impacted. To achieve this, the length of each lesson will be reduced by 5 minutes, which again is an advantage for our pupils as it is becoming apparent that slightly shorter lessons are best suited to the needs of our pupils. This change will however create an additional lesson, which will be dedicated to further supporting pupils with their literacy and numeracy, which are a key focus for the school.

In summary, I strongly believe that these changes will be hugely beneficial to the school community and will have a positive effect on your child's education. The advantages to your child will be:

- Ensuring they are not disadvantaged compared to pupils in similar schools and mainstream schools
- Better opportunities for individual needs to be met, as outlined in EHCPs
- Ability to access snacks at break time and lunch, earlier in the day
- No loss in the number of lessons per week
- No loss in enrichment sessions
- An additional lesson in the week to focus on literacy and numeracy

The information in this letter has also been sent to Hertfordshire and Essex SEND services as well as their transport services. We will make sure to work together so that there is minimal disruption during this transition.

I have tried to ensure these changes have as little impact on you as possible and I can confirm there are no changes to the mornings, as I am aware this can be a particularly challenging time to the day to make changes to routines.

I still do appreciate that these changes may affect you in the afternoon in terms of childcare or working arrangements, however I am sure when considering the great benefits this change will bring to your child, you will agree this is a positive change. If, however, you would like to discuss any of this further or in more detail, please do feel free to contact me at school and I will do all I can to support you and your family.

Kind regards,



Mr Paul Delamaine
Headteacher

cc: Members
Trustees
Hertfordshire and Essex SEND Service
Hertfordshire and Essex Transport Service