

Dear parents and carers,

I write to you regarding some changes and continuities that surround the school day that have been approved by the governing body.

Continuing the school day as it currently is without staggered times (8.50am – 3pm)

Depending on restrictions, we hope that from September 2021 the school day will be 8.50am -3pm without staggered times. We have seen a number of benefits for the children and it has been agreed to keep the shorter school day in place over the next academic year but to remove the staggered times (see below). This change will be kept under review.

We made the decision in September 2020 to change the school day and reduce the length of the lunch break. This enabled us to reduce and monitor the mixing of children and staff at lunchtime and playtime as required by COVID Healthy and Safety. Previously, school started at 9am and finished at 3.25pm (for children in Starfish and Dolphins classes) / 3.30pm (for children in Lions and Eagles classes). School will start at 8.50am and finish at 3pm for all children. This is a reduction of the school day by 15-20 minutes. The details of how the school day has been reduced and the benefits can be found below.

Staggered drop off and pickups

From September 2021, we hope that staggered start and end times will stop and the school day will be 8.50am- 3pm for all classes. We used the staggered times to reduce mixing (including of parents and carers), but as we are a small school with lots of siblings and clubs, the practical benefit of the staggered start times is reducing as the COVID restrictions are lifting. The impact of this change will be monitored and kept under review especially in light of the new COVID variant. An updated risk assessment will be shared with parents and carers when we know more about the lifting of any restrictions. We are carefully considering the logistics for drop off and pick up and these will also be subject to any continued restrictions into the Autumn. Further communications will be sent around this.

The school bus

Any updated information will be sent to parents who access this service.

The after-school club

The after-school club will continue to operate from 3-5.30pm. We have experienced reduced numbers since opening and at the present it is not financially viable to operate until 6pm. This will be reviewed in October 21.

Private providers

Currently we have one provider, Debbie Drake, providing a range of clubs throughout the week. Going forward, we hope that we can offer a range of opportunities, so we would like to hear from parents and children about other clubs that they would like to see.

Breakfast club

We are looking to open a breakfast club in September. We hope to operate the breakfast club from 7.30-8.50am. More information will be shared at a later date. We do need a new member of staff to operate this and are currently advertising. If you know of anyone who might be interested in this position, please do let them know. A copy of the advert can be found here <http://www.kirksmeaton.n-yorks.sch.uk/staff/staff-vacancies/>

Thank you for your continued support,

Kindest regards

Mrs Cuddy

Please see the information below that supports the decision made by the governing body regarding the school day. The school day has reduced by 15/20 minutes (Starfish and Dolphins classes/Lions and Eagles classes), please see the information on where the time reductions have been made and the benefits of the changes we have seen with similarly reduced timings since school reopened after each lockdown.

Since March 2020, we have had smaller groups on the playground at any one time and have seen a positive reduction in accidents and incidents. Going forward, we envisage that KS2 classes (Lions and Eagles) will have playtime together and KS1 and EYFS (Starfish and Dolphins) will have playtime together too. We expect this to continue increased health and safety benefits compared with pre-lockdown. This will be reviewed regularly.

Please see the list of benefits we have seen and expect to continue:

Playtimes

- All playtimes are covered by the class teachers or Teaching Assistants i.e. the staff that know the children best. Previously, when other staff were covering lunch times, there was additional time taken when handing over from one adult to another.
- Staff in each class are aware of any incidents/accidents that have taken place over break times and can support each child based on individual needs. This is particularly useful for any children struggling with friendships or play.
- As there are less children moving around and lining up, it takes less time to pack equipment away and settle before lessons start.
- The children are taking less time to calm down after the lunch break and so are ready to learn sooner.
- Children in KS2 now have an afternoon break when it is needed rather than a longer playtime at lunch.
- All classes have their own games and resources, so they have more equipment to use. Where there is only one class using the resources, it takes less time to put things away and no cleaning is required, this allows more time to be spent on playing and getting back to learning is faster.

Eating at lunch

- Children are eating more within the time allocation, this is because they now have a formal end to lunchtime/start to play time so are not rushing their lunches, if a friend has already finished, as they did in the past.
- Children no longer have to wait until other classes have been served to have their lunch, this could take up to 20 minutes pre lockdown, this allows time for children to sit and talk with their friends whilst eating rather than waiting to be served and has created a much calmer environment.

End of the day

- We often found from 2.45pm onwards children start to tire and find the last lesson of the day hard to concentrate. The revised timetable makes the afternoon learning sessions more productive.
- The earlier end time means contractors are able to access the school after the end of the school day to do small maintenance jobs and deliveries are taken within this time, where possible. This reduces disruption and is preferable from a health & safety perspective.

We have set out below a comparison of the pre COVID and September 2021 onwards playtimes and lunchtimes for each class. September 2021 shows the slightly reduced lunchtimes which feed into the shorter day. The staggering of lunch and playtimes between smaller groups has brought efficiencies that are list above.

	Pre COVID	September 2021 onwards
Starfish	15 minutes morning playtime 30 minutes lunch 30 minutes lunch playtime Continuous provision throughout the day.	15 minutes morning playtime 30 minutes lunch 25 minutes lunch playtime Continuous provision throughout the day.
Dolphins	15 minutes morning playtime 30 minutes lunch 20 minutes lunch playtime 10 minutes afternoon playtime.	15 minutes morning playtime 25 minutes lunch 25 minutes lunch playtime 5-10 minutes playtime if required in the afternoon. We have updated the outdoor space so the children have access to outside learning in the afternoons.
Lions	15 minutes morning playtime 30 minutes lunch 20 minutes lunch playtime	15 minutes morning playtime 20 minutes lunch 10 minutes lunch playtime 15 minutes afternoon playtime (at teacher's discretion some or all of this afternoon playtime may be added onto the lunch playtime on any day, if appropriate for the class as a whole)
Eagles	15 minutes morning playtime 30 minutes lunch 20 minutes lunch playtime	20 minutes morning playtime 20-minute lunch 15 minutes lunch playtime 5-10 minutes rest break in the afternoon depending on the work completed.