

24 January 2014

Dear Parents,

I am writing to consult with you about a possible change to the timing of the school day with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014.

**What is the proposal?**

We are proposing to change the time of the end of the school day. The proposed change is detailed below:

<b>Day of the week</b>	<b>Current end-time</b>	<b>Proposed end-time (from September 2014)</b>
<b>Monday</b>	3:15pm	2:20pm
<b>Tuesday</b>	3:15pm	3:20pm
<b>Wednesday</b>	3:15pm	3:20pm
<b>Thursday</b>	3:15pm	3:20pm
<b>Friday</b>	3:15pm	3:20pm

The school day would start at the same time as now.

**Why do you want to do this?**

At St Margaret's, we are committed to ensuring that all our members of staff perform at the highest possible levels – so that your son or daughter receives the best possible teaching, and the highest possible standard of education. In order to ensure that we do this, we need to continue to invest in the professional development of every member of our staff; yet as things stand, in the busy-ness of a school week, it isn't always possible to set aside time for professional development. By closing the school to pupils slightly earlier on a Monday, we will be able to put in place a weekly two-hour 'slot' where we can implement a full programme of professional development for everyone who works here.

A few schools, such as Cramlington Learning Village in the north-east, and St James' Church of England High School in Bolton, have already implemented a programme of this nature. Both of these schools are currently judged by Ofsted to be 'outstanding'.

**Won't there be less teaching time if this proposal is adopted?**

No. We will adjust the timings of breaks, lunch-times and lessons within the school day to ensure that the amount of teaching time in the week, and (subject to consultation with staff) the number of lessons too, is the same in September 2014 as it was in September 2013. We

are currently piloting running afternoon school without an afternoon registration period, for example (afternoon registration is done in lessons, rather than in a dedicated 5-minute slot at 1:25pm), and if the pilot is successful it will enable us ‘balance the books’ and ensure that neither the total amount of teaching time, nor the number of lessons per week, is diminished under this proposal. If the pilot is not successful, we will look at a different way of fulfilling our commitment to maintain the number of teaching hours in each week.

**Will pupils be able to stay in school after 2:20pm on Mondays?**

If there is sufficient demand, we may be able to open a classroom (or possibly two classrooms) where up to 50 pupils may complete homework between, say, 2:20pm and 3:20pm. Pupils would not be taught during this time, but they would be supervised and have some access to computers. If more than 50 pupils expressed an interest in staying behind, we would prioritise pupils with relevant additional needs first, and younger pupils after that. We would not intend to charge for this provision. Should the proposed changes be agreed, we will write to you with more details about these arrangements.

**What are the next stages in this consultation?**

If you have any comments about these changes, please let me know by the start next half-term – *ie* 8:30am on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> February. You can respond by writing to me at school, or by e-mailing [admin@stmargaretsacademy.com](mailto:admin@stmargaretsacademy.com) (please include the phrase “Consultation Response: For Mr Brierley” in the subject-line of your e-mail). Alternatively I would be more than willing to meet with you if you would like to discuss the proposal in more detail.

The matter will then be discussed at the Full Governors’ meeting on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> March, and once a decision has been made I will write to you to let you know the outcome.



Stephen Brierley  
Principal