



NFS – Curriculum and Timings of the School Day

Parent Consultation – February 2020

Introduction – Curriculum Changes

As a trust we have been reviewing our current curriculum provision in order to ensure that it is most appropriate for our students. The following areas have been focused on:

- Ensuring the timetable and planning best supports the new knowledge-led curriculum for all students as explained in previous communication
- Having a common timetable structure in all trust secondary schools that is financially affordable
- Ensuring all students receive the full National Curriculum in years 7, 8 and 9

As we have mentioned before, the secondary curriculum is undergoing major changes nationally. Schools are now delivering a 'knowledge-led curriculum' where students are expected to retain and recall a wide range of knowledge in all of their subjects. All schools in the trust have been developing their curriculum provision, that is, reviewing everything that is taught to our students. This is a long term project that will continue over the next few years. Staff planning time will be supported through our INSET days and other development time in school.

Nottingham Free School has always had a longer school day than most. Parent feedback after our timetable change for September 2018 indicated that a number of parents would prefer to have consistent timings of the school day and that some days were still very long. The new curriculum requires students to remember more information and a nine period day is not conducive to high quality learning. These elements, combined with our financial constraints mean that we are proposing a new timetable structure which is in line with the trust model.

A number of years ago approximately 35% of schools nationally had moved to delivering GCSE courses starting in year 9. Schools in the Nova Trust had also adopted this change. The trust have decided that, in line with national guidelines, we will revert to years 7, 8 and 9 following the full National Curriculum and starting their GCSE option subjects in year 10. The guidelines nationally are that all students in years 7, 8 and 9 should follow the full set of National Curriculum subjects in order to give them a broad and balanced curriculum for as long as possible.

All of the above are shown in more detail in the proposals on the following pages. Please do take some time to read this information and complete the reply slip with any comments or questions that you may have. The deadline for replies is Friday 28 February.

Proposal 1 – Change to the School Day Timings

We are proposing a change to the timings of the day to start in **September 2020**.

The proposed new timetable model is shown below. Please see the note about the earlier finish on a Friday.

Lunch A			Lunch B		
Registration	08:30	08:45	Registration	08:30	08:45
Period 1	08:45	09:35	Period 1	08:45	09:35
Period 2	09:35	10:25	Period 2	09:35	10:25
Break	10:25	10:40	Break	10:25	10:40
Period 3	10:40	11:30	Period 3	10:40	11:30
Period 4	11:30	12:20	Period 4	11:30	12:20
Period 5 (Lunch A)	12:20	13:00	Period 5	12:20	13:10
Period 6	13:00	13:50	Period 6 (Lunch B)	13:10	13:50
Period 7	13:50	14:40	Period 7	13:50	14:40
Wider Curriculum / Enrichment /study*	14:40	15:40	Wider Curriculum / Enrichment /study*	14:40	15:40

*Monday – Thursday only. Friday would finish at 14:40

Reception would be open from 8am every day.

This timetable model enables us to maintain the vision and integrity of the school without compromising on standards. All students would continue to experience more teaching time than other schools as well as maintaining the same compulsory study and enrichment lessons.

The table below summarises some key reasons for and advantages of the proposed model.

Point to note	Advantage
Lesson length increased to 50 minutes	Support the delivery of the knowledge-led curriculum
Fewer lesson changes in the day	Provides a more settled environment as less movement around the building
Split lunch remains but is staggered by 10 minutes	The staggered split lunch gives a smoother changeover between the lessons either side of lunch.
Shorter school day	Students better able to meet the increased demands of the new knowledge-led curriculum. It also supports the well-being and work-life balance for students.
Continue with compulsory enrichment & study	These are a core part of our provision and give our students the study and wider employability skills vital for supporting their future success.

Proposal 2 – Change to the School Curriculum Offer

Students would experience the following changes to the curriculum:

Subject	KS3 Total Lessons per Week		
	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
English	5	5	4
Maths	5	4	5
Science	5	6	6
History	2	2	2
Geography	2	2	2
Spanish	3	3	3
Core PE	2	2	2
PSHE/Phil & Eth	1	1	1
Art	1	1	1
Music	1	1	1
Drama	1	1	1
DT	2	2	2
Wider curriculum & enrichment (inc. Comp Sci & instrumental)	2	2	2
Study	2	2	2
Total	34	34	34

Subject	KS4 Total Lessons per Week	
	Year 10	Year 11
English	5	5
Mathematics	5	5
Science	6	6
History / Geography	3	3
Core PE	2	2
Spanish/Option A	3	3
Option B	3	3
Option C	3	3
Wider Curriculum (inc PSHCE & Core Phil)	1	1
Enrichment	1	0
Study	2	3
Total	34	34

Key Stage 5 – taught lessons		
Subject	Number of lessons per week	
	Year 12	Year 13
Option A*	5	5
Option B*	5	5
Option C*	5	5
PSHCE	1	1
EPQ	1	1
Total	17	17

Key Stage 5 – unsupervised lessons		
Subject	Number of lessons per week	
	Year 12	Year 13
Directed work from a subject reading list	3	3
Voluntary work/work experience	2	2
Independent study	15-20	15-20
Total	20-25	20-25

Timeline

January 2020	Consultation process begins with staff and governors.
February 2020	Consultation process continues with parents and students and feedback collected.
March/April 2020	Further information will be published following the consultation feedback.
September 2020	New timetable begins.

Frequently Asked Questions

My child is in year 8 – will they still manage their GCSE options in only two years (years 10 & 11)

All GCSE courses are designed to be delivered in two years: years 10 and 11. Our curriculum planning means that students will study all of the content in year 9 that they need in order to be just as fully prepared for their option subjects. The majority of schools nationally work with this structure and most of those who don't are changing back. Some parents have felt that they would prefer their child to make GCSE option choices when they are a little older and can make a better decision having had more experience of each of the subjects.

Will my child have enough time to study all of their subjects now the number of lessons been reduced?

Not all subjects will have less time than they do now. We have designed the timetable to fully support all subjects and ensure they have enough time to deliver their curriculum.

Our proposal follows the Nova Trust curriculum model already used in many of our schools. They have not seen a drop in results, in fact some have improved.

How does this affect the enrichment and study lessons?

We are keeping our enrichment and study lessons as they are a core and unique part of our school day. They give students the time to develop wider skills needed for further education, training and employment. As part of our curriculum work, we will be reviewing at our enrichment provision for each year group. This is to make sure that all students have an enrichment programme that gives them a broad range of experiences and complements their National Curriculum/options subjects.

Why are computer science and instrumental lessons part of the wider curriculum lesson?

In order to give the time needed to all National Curriculum subjects, we have used some of the wider curriculum time to cover computing. The National Curriculum content can be covered during this time and still prepare students for a computing GCSE option if they choose it.

Our instrumental lessons give all students the opportunity to learn and experience playing an instrument. We believe this is an important opportunity for students that encourages an enjoyment of music. We are very proud to be one of few schools that offer GCSE music and feel it important to continue to support the arts in this way.

Why are PSHE and Core Philosophy & Ethics part of the wider curriculum for years 10 & 11?

These two subjects are an important part of our curriculum and we wish to continue to deliver them on a regular basis. We have used our wider curriculum time in order to support this and not reduce the time for other GCSE curriculum subjects. GCSE Philosophy and Ethics will be an options subject for students to choose. The GCSE short course in Philosophy and Ethics, worth half a GCSE, will be offered as part of the enrichment programme for students to choose. This is a popular option subject at NFS and we wish to continue to support this.

Will the options subjects change for year 9?

Our option subjects will stay as they are. We will still require the majority of students to follow an EBacc route which is where they take the compulsory English, maths and science GCSEs as well as a language (Spanish) and either history or geography. More information about this will be given out for students who are in year 9 starting from next academic year (February 2021).



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Parent Consultation – Reply Slip

Please return to the main office by Friday 28 February.

All comments and questions will be considered as part of the consultation and further information will be provided to parents as a result of this. Please make sure that you have read the frequently asked questions sheet as this may answer some of the questions you already have.

Name of child/children: _____ Tutor group(s): _____

I confirm receipt of the consultation document: _____ (signed)

I have the following observations or questions: