



Upton Court
GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Monday 3rd June 2019

Dear Parents/Guardians/Carers,

Upton Court Grammar School and Pioneer Educational Trust are committed to providing a first-class education and a rich educational experience for all pupils. To achieve this aim, it is absolutely critical that we recruit and retain the best staff, provide them with access to the best professional development and provide them with the opportunity to collaborate with other professionals. From its inception the Trust has recognised the vital importance of professional development of teaching staff and the direct impact this has on teaching quality, educational experience and outcomes.

In addition, as a school and a Trust, we want to invest in all of our colleagues, not just the teaching force. There is very limited time available during the school year to provide professional development for Teaching Assistants and other educational and non-educational support staff who are invaluable in promoting the learning of our pupils. This will now afford them the opportunity to be developed as professionals and increase their impact on the learning of pupils, including the vulnerable.

In order to achieve these aims, we recently consulted with staff and parents / carers on possible changes to the school day for pupils from September 2019.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your feedback to this consultation. Your views, as with all of our collective endeavours, matter very much to us. Your feedback has been very useful to the Trust Board, the Local Governing Body and the school in deciding how to proceed and we hope that you will see in the information that follows that your feedback has been responded to.

Following much consideration, all three Local Governing Bodies and the Trust Board voted to support the proposal and, therefore, the changes detailed below will come into effect from 1st September 2019 for Upton Court Grammar School:

- Change to the end of the school day for pupils to 3.05 on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday
- Change to the end of the school day for pupils to 1.25 on a Wednesday to enable in-depth Professional Development sessions for all staff.

It was apparent from the feedback that there was a need to further communicate regarding some school structures, for example the academic year. Therefore, we would like to clarify that, despite being an academy, the school allocates the same number of school days as maintained schools. The October half term is not used as INSET days. As the autumn term of the school year is the longest and busiest, we have found that the two-week October half term has a positive impact on reducing both pupil and staff absence. As a Trust, we also ensure that (whilst we have the freedom to act otherwise) we adhere to School Teachers' Pay and Conditions which outlines how schools can direct teachers' time. We hope that you fully appreciate that teachers work significantly beyond their directed time. However, as employers, we are restricted by



Pioneer Educational Trust
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School Teachers' Pay and Conditions to only direct a certain proportion of that.

Your feedback indicated that the biggest challenge would be childcare for working parents. We fully appreciate this and certainly our intention is support families as best we can. As indicated in the initial letter to you, depending on the outcome of this consultation, we would survey parents regarding any extra-curricular provision. We are now in a position to do this and would, therefore, welcome your input in helping shape the after-school provision for Wednesdays at Upton Court Grammar School. The survey can be found here:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=2r5LQU61KkyYrll32nitAtvJiNHliutFif3HpAZ2ORpUNU9PWjk2M1g5STUyUTNFNlpUV1ZPTedTUy4u>

Clearly, we will be unable to accommodate every suggestion. However, we will endeavour to create as comprehensive a provision as possible. The deadline for responses is Monday 17th June.

Some parents also indicated that they would like us to contact other local schools about this change. We will do so in due course.

We want to reassure you that all schools will continue to provide a broad and balanced curriculum. No subject has been removed from the curriculum as a result of this change.

Collectively, the schools within the Trust are committed to providing equal access for all pupils to an outstanding education and, through this change, aim to achieve this within the next one to two years. We do not do what we do for Ofsted or positions in league tables; we do what we do for the pupils in our schools each and every day. We will not compromise on providing a first-class education and seeing each school go from strength to strength.

Thank you, again, for your continued support and for working in partnership with us. As always, we look forward to celebrating your child's successes and achievements as their progress through their education with us.

Yours faithfully,



Mr M. Pritchard
Headteacher

Yours faithfully,



Mr R. Sharma
Chair of Governors