

27 March 2017

Dear parent/carer

RE: Adjustment to the school day

I am writing to inform you that after the Easter break we plan to alter the school day slightly. The day would be:

8.30-8.40	- Tutor time
8.40-8.55	- Tutorial Reading time
8.55-9.55	- Period 1
9.55-10.55	- Period 2
10.55 – 11.10	- Breaktime
11.10-12.10	- Period 3
12.10-12.40	- Lunchtime
12.40-1.40	- Period 4
1.40-2.40	- Period 5

As you can see, the three changes are: a ten minute reduction in social time at lunchtime, a five minute reduction in tutorial time and the combining of these to create a fifteen minute 'Tutorial Reading' slot on all teachers' and pupils' timetables.

This is a decision we have been contemplating for two reasons; we feel that the last ten minutes of lunchtime are not as purposeful as they could be and it would bring us into line with most similarly sized schools, where thirty minutes is ample time for students to be served in the canteen and consume their food, whilst also still having the opportunity to socialise.

Furthermore, the 'Tutorial Reading' sessions will support our drive to continue to improve standards of literacy. Every student (and teacher) in the school will read quietly for fifteen minutes. This was partly influenced by government national findings that if secondary students don't excel at school: "it is due mainly to low levels of literacy" and that in exams: "students can't read quickly enough ...and get through the required volume". But more importantly, at Birches Head Academy we believe that it is paramount that students develop into empathetic, tolerant, analytical, broad minded young adults – all skills that they develop through reading.

Students can choose a book from the school library, with the help of Mrs Lawton, or are welcome to bring in their own – the stipulation is that their book is carried with them at all times. For some students, notably those at KS4, materials will often be provided by Subject Leaders that are related to their GCSE studies and that will widen their understanding of key themes and topics. Each year group will have a reading timetable and this will be shared before Easter with students in assembly.

We will also share our expectations in assembly, that students embrace our reading culture and come prepared both with a book and the right mind-set. We also welcome your support in this venture. Please contact me at the school if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

**Ms K Dixon
Headteacher**