

Dear Parents/Carers

Ready to Learn:

We have had an excellent first week of term with the introduction of 'Ready to Learn' at The Castle. The vast majority of students have met the school's revised expectations and their conduct has been exemplary. This has resulted in a demonstrable improvement in the experience for students, both in lessons and at social times. I would like to thank parents for your support in helping us to make this new system work.

Examination Season:

Our Year 11 and 13 students are now approaching the end of their examinations. They have worked very hard and deserve every success. We wish them well for their final exams and a relaxing summer break!

School Day Consultation:

As mentioned in my last letter, we have been reviewing the format of the school day and lunchtime arrangements. We are now in a position to consult you on a proposed change.

The current lunchtime is one hour long, which is longer than in most other schools. We have a relatively small site for the number of students at the school, especially in poor weather when the fields cannot be used and this leads to some difficulties in maintaining appropriate activities and supervision for students once they have finished their lunch.

We are, therefore, proposing a reduction from one hour to 40 minutes, which provides plenty of time for all students to eat their lunch as well as time for relaxation before the afternoon lesson. We envisage that there would continue to be a combination of enrichment activities at lunchtime and after school as at present. Additionally, we propose that lunch will be after Lesson 4 rather than Lesson 3.

The proposed school day would be as follows:

8.40 Registration
9.00 Lesson 1
10.00 Lesson 2
11.00 Break
11.20 Lesson 3
12.20 Lesson 4
1.20 Lunch
2.00 Lesson 5
3.00 End of School Day

Although there are some disadvantages as well as many advantages of a change, we believe that on balance it will result in a more positive experience for students both at lunchtime and in afternoon lessons.

I would be grateful if parents could respond to this consultation, indicating whether you support this revision to the school day and the main reasons why, by emailing head@thecastleschool.org.uk by Friday 23 June. This will enable us to collate all responses before a final decision is taken the following week by the school's governors. If the consultation response is positive, we would like to make the change in September, although this is dependent on negotiation with South Gloucestershire Council regarding changes to bus times.

Leadership Arrangements:

You will be aware that Castle's Headteacher, Peter Smart, is currently on secondment as Principal of Winterbourne International Academy. Following careful consideration, we have agreed to a request from Winterbourne to extend this arrangement to cover the 2017/18 academic year.

I am delighted to announce that Angie Browne will be joining The Castle as Interim Headteacher from September 2017 to August 2018. A brief introduction from Ms Browne follows below:



"Having worked as an English teacher and then Head of English, in a central Bristol school and rural Wiltshire school respectively, I returned to Bristol where I worked as a senior leader for five years. I moved on to take up the post of Executive Deputy Headteacher of a special school federation in South Gloucestershire, where I was then promoted to Headteacher of the 'education other than at school service.' In 2013 I was appointed as founding Principal of Steiner Academy Bristol and established the 4th Steiner Free School in the UK. Having led the school through its formative stages, I am now delighted to be returning to South Gloucestershire and thrilled to be joining the staff and school community at The Castle School".

Ms Browne will work with our school leadership team over the coming weeks to plan for the new academic year, and will attend events in order to meet parents both before and after the summer holiday.

Yours sincerely

William Roberts
Interim Headteacher