

**King George Avenue  
Ilkeston  
Derbyshire  
DE7 5HS  
0115 9303724**

29<sup>th</sup> February 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

**Consultation – Proposed changes to academic year and uniform**

We hope this letter finds you well. As we continuously strive to make OIEA the best it can be, we would like to canvass opinion regarding the potential changes listed below because your opinion matters to us. Please record your responses using the link at the bottom of this letter.

**Proposed Change 1 – Amending the school term dates to include a 2-week October half term**

The Nuffield foundation (a prominent educational charitable trust with a mission to advance educational opportunity and social wellbeing) have just released a report advising shorter summer holidays and longer half terms to break up the traditional school year. You can access the article using the following link:

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2024/feb/26/school-summer-holidays-half-term-england-calendar-nuffield-foundation-report>

The report says that calls to reduce the length of holidays often centre around potential learning loss over the summer. Some pupils, especially those from financially disadvantaged backgrounds and those with additional learning needs, find it difficult to get back to learning after long summer holidays. Teachers also report more behavioural and wellbeing issues after the summer break.

**The advantages of a two-week October half term are as follows:**

- Improved wellbeing of pupils
- Balancing out of childcare for parents
- Boosting academic results on account of reduced learning loss throughout summer.
- Much needed time off during the longest term of the year (The Autumn term is typically (at least) three weeks longer than Spring and Summer terms)

**What would this look like for the next Academic year? (2024-2025)**

Students would break up for a two-week October half term on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> October instead of Friday 25<sup>th</sup>, returning as planned on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> November.

**To make up the additional time and ensure students didn't have fewer days in school:**

- The Academic year would begin on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> of September instead of the published date of Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> September.
- Students would finish the School Year on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> July 2025 instead of the published date of Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> July 2025.
- Fewer INSET days throughout the year (teachers would use them outside of these dates or have the additional time disaggregated)

### **Proposed Change 2 – Wearing PE kit to school on PE days**

We are considering allowing students to wear their PE kit on the day's they have PE lessons only. The main advantage of doing so is it that it's more efficient. Wearing PE kit to school saves valuable time that would otherwise be spent changing into and out of the school uniform before and after PE classes which currently takes up to 15 minutes.

Students will also have less items to bring to school and won't forget their PE kits which is currently the biggest barrier to participation. Wearing PE kit once or twice a week also prolongs the life of school uniform.

Expectations around the specific sports uniform permitted would be made highly explicit and tightly monitored for compliance. Sanctions for not doing so would be in line with the current uniform policy.

### **Proposed Change 3 – Introduction of longer length pleated skirt**

We are considering introducing a longer length pleated skirt as an option for our students, replacing the current straight skirts that are permitted. The decision to make this adjustment stems from a desire to ensure the consistency, comfort, modesty, and practicality of our students' daily wear. We would explicitly state the design and type of skirt required to ensure all students adhered to the uniform policy and help us to be consistency with our approach. This is difficult to achieve currently due to the ambiguity around what is permitted.

Many students report that the current skirts 'ride up' throughout the day. The longer length pleated skirts provide additional coverage, promoting a sense of modesty while ensuring comfort throughout the day. The new skirts would be carefully selected to improve the overall look of our uniform and ensure all students felt and looked smart.

We have taken into account the feedback received from students expressing a preference for a more versatile and comfortable option. Most students thought it better to change the type of skirt rather than to remove the skirt option altogether.

**The consultation will close on Wednesday 6th March with feedback provided by Friday 15<sup>th</sup> March.**

Please utilise the final section of the survey if you have any questions or concerns regarding these proposals. We appreciate it's impossible to please everyone all of the time but by asking the question, we are more likely to make informed decisions and consider all viewpoints.

Please use the link below to record your responses to the three proposals outlined above.

<https://forms.office.com/e/1Kmjcw7Rfc>

Thank you in advance for engaging in this consultation. Your feedback will help us decide to either adopt, adapt, or reject these proposals. No decisions have been made regarding either proposal as it's important that we first collate the views of all stakeholders.

Best wishes,



Mr S Leach  
Principal