

5<sup>th</sup> May 2022

Dear Parents/Carers and Stakeholders

### Re: Consultation

Meadowfield is a school to be proud of and we owe this to our dedicated and highly skilled staff team who work hard to provide a top-quality provision for all of our pupils. We continually strive to improve as well as meet new challenges, changes and ever-increasing demands. It is vital that our staff continually receive the necessary professional development so that our knowledge and expertise in the area of special educational needs is first class.

You will be aware that schools are allocated five days per year for staff training. These days provide an opportunity for all school staff to undertake core and statutory training as well as be updated with new developments in education. Examples of this type of training include:

- First Aid
- Safeguarding
- GDPR
- Prevent
- Moving and Handling
- Fire Warden Training
- Behavioural Support
- Safer Recruitment
- as well as reviews of key school systems and policies

However, special schools routinely struggle with the amount of training they need to deliver. This is an issue currently being addressed across the country with many special schools trying to identify ways that they can increase training opportunities for staff. We are not alone in seeking a solution, as this is a nationally recognized issue and is not specific to special schools just in Kent.

Continued/....

At schools like Meadowfield School, we are also required to deliver training relevant to the health, wellbeing, therapy and communication needs of our pupils including training which covers:

- Asthma
- Epilepsy
- Buccal Administration
- Nebulizer Administration
- Suctioning
- Chest Physio
- EpiPen Use
- Colostomy Care
- Oxygen Administration
- Gastrostomy Care
- Medication Administration
- Diabetes
- Incontinence
- A range of therapeutic approaches
- Lifeguard/Hydro
- Eating and drinking
- Sign Language

Through continuing analysis of our training needs versus the standard time allocated, plus a risk assessment on staff training, the Governing Body and Leadership Team of Meadowfield know that we do not currently have sufficient time for staff development. We have tried to identify ways of delivering training including online courses and training delivered during the school day. Unfortunately, these approaches do not provide adequate training time, primarily due to the fact that withdrawing staff from classes has an enormous impact on safeguarding, pupil safety, wellbeing and the quality of the educational provision.

We have also considered altering the hours of staff in order to give time for training, however this proved to be financially prohibitive.

In order to ensure that staff have the training they need to meet pupil needs, the Governing Body and Leadership Team propose that Meadowfield pupils are dismissed at 1:30p.m. on Friday afternoons from September 2022. This proposal would apply to the main site on Swanstree Avenue, the 6<sup>th</sup> Form at Ufton Lane and any satellite provision.

This is a similar approach which several other Kent special schools have adopted, which has proved to be successful in meeting all necessary training needs for school staff without affecting pupil needs. Kent special schools who take a similar approach include: Elms, Foreland, Goldwyn, Bower Grove, Valence and Snowfield. Most of these schools have had this practice in place for many years and have all seen a beneficial effect.

The idea behind the proposal is to provide staff with training opportunities which would ensure we can deliver all statutory, medical, therapeutic and education related training across our 5 allocated days along with the weekly training sessions on Friday afternoons.

Continued...

The needs of our pupils are so increasingly complex, and the training requirements are so wide and ever growing, that additional training time is essential in order that we can maintain our high standards and ensure pupils are safe.

This consultation will include KCC and transport providers.

**The consultation period will be open from 5<sup>th</sup> May 2022 to 27<sup>th</sup> May 2022.**

We welcome the views from all stakeholders. To share your views with us, please:

- Submit your response form to the school office
- Email your response form to the school office: [office@meadowfield.kent.sch.uk](mailto:office@meadowfield.kent.sch.uk)

Lastly, I would like to provide clarification about school hours:

- School hours are 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
- We have a six hour day for pupils
- Under the proposal, there will be 28.5 school hours per week for every pupil plus home learning opportunities are available on SeeSaw
- You may be aware that the Department for Education has published their expectation that schools increase their hours to 32.5 from September 2023. This expectation does not apply to *'specialist settings (special schools and alternative provision) due to the varying needs of their pupil cohorts and the particular operational challenges they may face'* (Department for Education, Minimum expectation on length of the school week: information note, 2022)
- School hours refers to the time pupils are in school each day, from the official start of the school day to the official end (home time).

Please ensure all responses to this consultation are received by **3:00pm on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2022**.

The Governing Body and Leadership Group are sure that you will support us as we continue to ensure that all Meadowfield staff have the necessary skill and expertise to meet the individual needs of each of our pupils.

Yours faithfully



Jill M. Palmer  
Executive Principal  
Meadowfield School



Roberta Kane  
Chair of Governors  
Meadowfield School

Attachment - Consultation Response Form



## Meadowfield Consultation Response Form

Please complete this response form **no later than 3:00pm on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2022** and return it by:

- Handing your completed form into the office at Meadowfield school.
- Emailing: [office@meadowfield.kent.sch.uk](mailto:office@meadowfield.kent.sch.uk)

**Do you agree with the proposals to change the school finish time?**

Yes

No

Undecided

**Which of the following best describes you?**

Parent/Carer

Member of staff

Governor

Pupil

Other (please state).....

### *Additional information*

- The Governing Body of Meadowfield are the 'controller' under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and ensure that any personal information is processed fairly and lawfully. We will only share your responses for the purpose of validation, which will enable a fair and just consultation.