

## Equality Impact Statement - Meadowfield School

**Proposal being assessed:** In order to ensure that staff have the knowledge and skill they need to meet pupil needs, it is proposed that Meadowfield pupils will be dismissed at 1:30p.m. on Friday from September 2022 to allow time for staff professional development.

1	Aims	<p>The aim 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 weekly training sessions on Friday afternoons. This would ensure that we can continue to give equity and equality to our curriculum offer to all pupils.</p> <p>The needs of our pupils are so increasingly complex, and the training requirements so wide, that the additional training time is essential in order that we can maintain our high standards and ensure pupils are safe.</p> <p>This additional training provision will help with retention of staff, particularly in a time when recruiting personnel is a challenge in all sectors of employment.</p> <p>Through analysis of our training needs versus the standard allocated time, plus a risk assessment on staff training, we know that we do not have near the sufficient time for staff development. We therefore 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 a huge impact on safeguarding, pupil safety and the quality of the educational provision. Additional staff training days cannot be added without adding additional days to the school calendar. We have also considered altering the hours of staff in order to give time for training, however this proved to be financially prohibitive (for example, to increase the hours of Teaching Assistants by 30 minutes per day would cost approximately £300,000).</p> <p><i>Note: Teaching Assistants and administration staff are not paid during the school holidays and therefore training cannot be scheduled during the holidays.</i></p>
2	Involvement and consultation completed in relation to this proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation letter (please see attached) was shared with staff, parents, carers, governors, KCC and transport providers. The consultation period ran from 5<sup>th</sup> May 2022 to 27<sup>th</sup> May 2022.</li> <li>• The proposal was discussed at Governing Body meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2022.</li> <li>• A Governor sub group reviewed all of the consultation responses at a meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2022.</li> <li>• The Executive Principal surveyed all KSENT schools re: practice in line with this proposal</li> <li>• The Executive Principal referenced the DfE document '<i>Minimum expectation on the length of the school week: information note</i>'</li> </ul>
3	Who will be affected by this proposed change?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All of the <u>staff</u> of Meadowfield School: under the proposal, they will have increased, vital opportunities for training so that they can meet the needs of all pupils with severe, profound and complex needs</li> <li>• <u>Parents and carers</u>: under the proposal, parents and carers may need to alter arrangements for childcare on Friday afternoons</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Pupils</u>: under the proposal, pupil time in school will be reduced on Fridays from September 2022</li> </ul>
4	What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the impact of this proposed change?	<p>This change would run on a pilot basis from September Term 1 to March end of Term 4 (Autumn 2022 – Spring 2023). A review of the pilot would be carried out during Term 4. Governors and Senior Leaders would then consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staff surveys re: the impact of the pilot</li> <li>• pupil voice</li> <li>• feedback from parents/carers</li> <li>• impact on pupil progress data</li> <li>• recruitment and retention data</li> </ul>

Protected Characteristic Group	Is there a potential for positive or negative impact?	Examples of any evidence/data used	Action to address negative impact
Disability	Both	<p>Negative impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• difficulty for parents in terms of finance and childcare</li> <li>• time in school for pupils reduced</li> </ul> <p>Positive impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• equality for all pupils will be secure as a robust training programme will ensure that all pupils can be included in all relevant learning activities</li> <li>• more consistency for all pupils, particularly those with ASD, as staff will not need to be covered to attend training</li> </ul>	<p>The dismissal time has been adjusted from 1:00 p.m. (as per original proposal in 2019) to 1:30 p.m.</p> <p>Three months' notice is being given to parents and carers so that they can plan accordingly should governors proceed.</p>
Gender reassignment	No known negative impact		
Marriage or civil partnership	No known negative impact		
Pregnancy/maternity	No known negative impact		
Race	No known negative impact		
Religion or belief	No known negative impact		
Sexual orientation	No known negative impact		
Sex (gender)	No known negative impact		

Age	No known negative impact		
Other (Carer responsibilities)	Both	<p>Negative impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Covered in Disability group</li> </ul> <p>Positive Impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff trained without impacting on their caring responsibilities ie. Childcare/family responsibilities</li> </ul>	As Disability

Evaluation		
Question	Explanation	
Is it possible that the proposed change could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	<p>5.7% of parents and carers responded to the consultation with concerns which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>difficulties with rearranging work hours</li> <li>childcare arrangements</li> <li>financial implications</li> <li>loss of education time for their child</li> </ul> <p>Overall 14.6% of parents/carers responded with a 'No'.</p>	
Final Decision	Explanation	
1. No barriers identified, therefore we will proceed with the proposal.		
2. The proposal will stop because the data show bias toward one or more groups.		
3. The proposal will be adapted or changed so that the bias is eliminated.		
4. Barriers and impact identified, however having considered a range of alternative options carefully, there appears to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the aim of the proposal. Therefore, Meadowfield Governors will proceed with caution and will review in the Spring of 2023.	X	<p>The dismissal time has been adjusted from 1:00p.m. (as per original proposal in 2019) to 1:30p.m.</p> <p>Three months' notice is being given to parents and carers so that they can plan accordingly should governors proceed.</p> <p>This change would run on a pilot basis from September Term 1 to March end of Term 4 (Autumn 2022 – Spring 2023). A review of the pilot would be carried out during Term 4.</p>

		<p>Governors and Senior Leaders would then consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• staff surveys re: the impact of the pilot</li> <li>• pupil voice</li> <li>• feedback from parents/carers</li> <li>• impact on pupil progress data</li> <li>• recruitment and retention data</li> </ul>
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<b>Additional Considerations</b>	
<p>Two major factors that have significantly affected Meadowfield School are explored below. They both have had a major impact on recruitment and retention and therefore training needs.</p>	
<p>The Great Resignation</p>	<p><b>Definition:</b> <i>The Great Resignation is a phenomenon, occurring internationally, that describes record numbers of people leaving their jobs as a result of the Covid pandemic.</i></p> <p>The Great Resignation describes the unprecedented rise in the number of workers resigning from the jobs following the COVID pandemic. This has involved in people re-evaluating their lives and changing their views of work following the pandemic and: retiring early, wanting a fresh start or a career change in a new job, wishing to work remotely and/or flexibly, pursuing long term goals.</p> <p>Meadowfield wishes to mitigate these factors as much as possible by providing robust and regular training opportunities would help to ensure that staff are consistently able to fulfil their role to a high standard and that they feel valued as employees.</p>
<p>Pressure to Expand</p>	<p>Meadowfield school has expanded significantly over the past 10 years (an increase of 88% in the number of pupils on roll) and we continue to expand. There is continuous requests from the local authority to take more and more pupils and we are seeing pupils with increasingly complex needs. Therefore, there is a continuously growing range of responsibilities placed on Teaching Assistants to meet a range of medical, educational, mental health and behavioural support needs.</p> <p>In addition, staff will soon begin working in satellite provision where they will not be able to rely on a wider specialist team for support, therefore training for these members of staff is even more vital.</p>

## **COPY OF CONSULTATION LETTER**

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.

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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.

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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.