



May 2026

## **Consultation on the Future Shape of the School Day at The King Edmund School Sept 2027**

Dear Parents and Carers,

At The King Edmund School, our ambition is clear: to become a truly remarkable school where every student can Dream. Believe. Achieve.

As part of this ambition, **I am writing to share a proposed change to the structure of the school day from September 2027 not this September** and to invite your views as part of a full consultation.

This proposal has been approved in principle by the Governing Board to move to consultation. No final decision has been made, and your feedback will play an important role in shaping what happens next.

The proposal is to move from our current school week of 31 hours 40 minutes to a revised model of 33 hours 20 minutes, including:

- an 8:20am start
- a 3:00pm finish
- five 65-minute lessons
- a 35-minute lunch break
- a clearer and more purposeful structure to the day

### **Why are we considering this change?**

#### ***Meeting DfE expectations***

This change would ensure we meet the Department for Education expectation that all mainstream schools provide a minimum school week of 32.5 hours, including breaks and lunchtime. Our current model is below this expectation (currently 31 hours 40 minutes per week), and this proposal would bring the school fully into line while moving beyond minimum requirements.

It also aligns with the approach taken by many high-performing schools and trusts nationally, where time is used deliberately to support high-quality teaching, deeper learning and stronger outcomes over time.

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## **Raising standards and achievement**

Most importantly, this is about raising standards and ensuring every student achieves their very best. More time, used well, allows for deeper learning, stronger teaching, more practice, and better preparation for GCSEs and beyond.

This change would provide approximately 15.5 additional days of education each year, and around 100 additional days across a student's time from Year 7 to Year 13. This forms part of our wider plan to strengthen the school and secure the very best outcomes for all students.

## **Student wellbeing and readiness to learn**

It is also about creating a better school day. Longer lessons reduce the sense of rushing and allow students more time to understand, practise and improve. A longer lunch break creates a more balanced day, giving students time to eat properly, socialise and reset.

While the day is slightly longer, it is structured more carefully, with improved pacing and a proper lunch break to support student wellbeing.

From September this year, we are already taking a first step by moving from two 25-minute breaks to a 20-minute break and a 30-minute lunch. The proposed model builds on this further by extending lunch to 35 minutes.

The proposal is also informed by research. Studies, including those linked to the University of Oxford, show that teenagers learn more effectively later in the morning due to natural changes in sleep patterns during adolescence. Our current 7:50am start is earlier than most local schools and does not align well with this evidence. An 8:20am start would support students to arrive more awake, focused and ready to learn.

## **Attendance and punctuality**

Attendance and punctuality are important to us, as we know students achieve more when they attend regularly and arrive on time. A recent review suggested that earlier start times can contribute to lateness, and a more realistic start time is one practical step that may support improved punctuality, better morning routines and stronger engagement in learning.

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We also recognise that some of our students travel significant distances to school, and during the winter months may be setting off very early in the morning in the dark for many months to arrive on time. A slightly later start helps ensure that all students are better prepared, more alert and ready to learn at the start of the day.

### **Aligning with local schools**

The proposed day would bring us more in line with all other local Secondary schools, though is still the earliest start time, supporting family routines and making the school day feel more consistent with expectations.

It would also better align with other schools for after-school activities and sports fixtures. Currently, students representing the school can sometimes have to wait for fixtures to begin. A later finish would reduce this waiting time and support fuller participation in enrichment opportunities.

### **Practical considerations**

I recognise that any change to the school day is significant for families. We understand that this may require some adjustment to routines, and we will work closely with parents and carers to ensure arrangements remain practical and manageable.

We have also informed Essex County Council and our Bus provider service who have already confirmed that they can accommodate the new timings of the school day to allow any changes remain accessible for all students. Clubs, enrichment and wider opportunities will continue to be a pivotal part of school life.

While the proposed implementation date is September 2027 to allow for careful planning and full consultation, we will continue to review this in light of any emerging national guidance or local considerations. Should circumstances change, we would consider whether an earlier implementation is appropriate, but only where this can be done in a way that is well-planned, fully consulted on, and in the best interests of our students, staff and families.

No final decision has been made. This consultation is an opportunity for you to share your views and help shape what comes next.

### **Timeline**

- Consultation period: Now to July 21<sup>st</sup> 2026 (last day of term)
- Decision: By Christmas 2026

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- Proposed implementation: **September 2027 (next September, not this)**

This extended lead-in time ensures that any changes can be carefully planned and that families have plenty of time to prepare should the proposal go ahead.

We would very much value your feedback. Please share your views via the link below by 21<sup>st</sup> July.

[Parent Consultation - Changes to the School Day – Fill in form](#)

This proposal is about using time more effectively, raising standards, and giving every student at The King Edmund School the very best chance to succeed.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours faithfully,

Ms Jo Ingate  
Headteacher