

Children's Services

POLICY AND PRACTICE FOR CHANGING THE TIMES OF THE SCHOOL DAY

PUBLICATION SCHEDULE NUMBER:	(CSF4287)
PUBLICATION DATE:	OCTOBER 2011 ISSUE NO: 3
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TEAM:	ADMISSIONS & TRANSPORT
REVIEW DATE:	DEPENDENT ON STATUTORY CHANGES
TARGET AUDIENCE:	ALL SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIES- HEADS AND GOVERNORS
PUBLISHED BY:	CHILDREN'S SERVICES

CHANGING SCHOOL SESSION TIMES

The information below came into effect from September 2011 when the previous 'Changing of School Session Times (England) Regulations 1999' were rescinded. This Policy is an indication of good practice and must be followed by all Community schools, and is recommended as an example of good practice for Foundation and VA schools. These schools are all subject to the 'Scheme for Financing Schools'.

Academies must seek their own legal advice on this matter, but we would highlight that they also need to be aware of any increased costs, caused by changes to their transport arrangements.

HERTFORDSHIRE POLICY FOR CHANGING SCHOOL SESSION TIMES

Whilst Central Government no longer requires schools to follow a bureaucratic process to alter the school day, there is still an expectation that schools will have regard to the views of parents, pupils and staff and will manage change responsibly. In order to ensure this, the following guidance should be followed by governing bodies of schools who are considering changes to either the length, or timing of the school day.

The process should be started so that there is an acceptable length of time to conduct a consultation, and also give consideration to any increased costs, for which all schools and academies will be directly responsible.

If the changes involve just the lunchtime period, they can be implemented within a short time frame, as there is no longer a requirement to give parents a notice period.

However, schools should consider what is a reasonable timeframe for change, as some parents may need to alter their home arrangements.

In order to start the process to change the timings of the start and/or finish of the school day it is recommended that the governing body should complete the following actions:

- Consult with Children's Services, the Headteacher and all those people employed by the school. The first contact with Children's Services should take place as early as possible.
- This will enable Children's Services to provide advice and support. The initial contact should be made with the Admissions and Transport team on 01992 555909, or by e mail to transfer.admissions@hertfordshire.gov.uk

- Prepare a draft consultation paper which outlines the proposed changes and an implementation date. Normally this will require a meeting to be arranged where parents can voice any concerns, although schools may wish to consider alternative ways of gauging parental opinions on the proposals. The paper should give a time and date for a consultation meeting, if appropriate and it should also be available in the relevant languages to reflect the ethnic mix of the community.
- Consider any possible implications for other local schools.
- Please be aware that we strongly advise schools to consult regarding any changes, so that the legal requirement to consider the duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act is satisfied, and any impact the changes might have is considered and recorded.
- A copy of this paper should be sent to the Central Admissions team electronically or by post to: The Process Team, Admissions and Transport, County Hall (CHR 102), Pegs Lane, Hertford, SG13 8DF who will co-ordinate the response on behalf of Children's Services.
- This response could involve two areas:
 - Comments from the School Effectiveness Adviser regarding the educational implications of the proposed changes.
 - Comments from the Transport and Road Safety Team regarding transport implications¹.

It is very important to note that if the proposed changes have any implications for transport as arranged by Children's Services the governing body will be directly responsible for any resulting additional expenditure².

We will endeavour to respond within three weeks. This is so that, if as the Local Authority we wish to include an annex in the consultation document, any further text can be added to the consultation paper before it is circulated. However please be aware that with larger schools where they maybe a complex set of transport arrangements, the implications may require a longer period of time to explore.

- Finalise the consultation document to include any annex which the Local Authority wishes to include.
- Send the final consultation document to The Process Team in Admissions and Transport.

¹ See further detail in Appendix 3.

² See 'The Scheme for Financing Schools', Section 6 – 'The Charging of School Budget Shares' – paragraph 6.2.10.

- If appropriate convene a meeting as part of the consultation process. At this meeting the proposals will need to be considered and all consultees views and comments noted.
- Parents and consultees should receive a copy of the consultation document with at least two weeks notice of the date and time of the meeting. A copy should also be available at the school for viewing during the two weeks preceding the meeting.
- After the meeting, consider the comments and views expressed by parents, and also any further implications, financial or otherwise.

A decision should be taken as to whether in the light of the consultation you wish to proceed with the proposals, or if they need modification.

We would ask the governing body to be mindful of any particular concerns expressed by parents concerning arrangements, and also to be aware of the impact any decision could have on staff and pupils at the school.

Notify in writing Children's Services (attention of The Process Team, Admissions and Transport), the Headteacher and all staff and pupils on the roll of the school of the new arrangements for the school session times, giving a reasonable notice period for the changes to be implemented.

APPENDIX 1

- A. The Education (School Day and School Year) (England Regulations 1999 as amended set out the requirement for schools to meet for 380 half day sessions in any school year. (i.e. 190 days) Each day must be divided into two sessions separated by a break. (i.e. lunchtime)
- B. Previously the Government has indicated that the below numbers of hours per week are provided at the relevant stages of education:

KS1 – 21 hours

KS2 – 23 ½ hours

KS3 – 24 hours

KS4 (Yr10) – 24 hours

KS4 (Yr11) – 25 hours

APPENDIX 2

Please be aware of the following requirements if you are considering the issue of PPA (Planning, Preparation and Assessment).

Governors should note that the contractual requirement is that PPA time must be allocated during the timetabled week (i.e. 'during those parts of the school timetable in which pupils are taught the core and foundation subjects or religious education'.)

Some schools have rescheduled the minimum teaching hours so that the final session of the school week finishes, for example, 1.30pm or 2.00pm on Friday, in order to provide teachers with non-contact time. This does not meet the contractual requirement to provide PPA time from within the timetabled week.

APPENDIX 3

The Transport and Road Safety Team need to fully assess the proposals and the resultant implications for the transport costs.

Governors need to consider the period which bus operators are statutorily required to meet in registering and de-registering services with the Traffic Commissioner. The minimum time for this is 56 days, but to allow time for planning and the necessary investigation and administration to be conducted by the Transport and Road Safety Team, we will require schools and academies to give a notice period of any proposed changes to timings of 70 days.

Whilst this requirement may not apply to all the services running into schools and academies i.e. taxis or where schools procure their own school transport arrangements in accordance with the new school transport strategy, all of the transport is inter-worked with local bus network planning and provision to best meet travel demands, interchange requirements, and best ensure that there are no gaps in cost effective service provision.