

12<sup>th</sup> September 2025

Dear parents and carers,

I hope that everyone enjoyed the summer break.

As promised last term, I have been working to address some of the main concerns raised by a few parents and have some adjustments to share with you all, ready for the start of the trial timetable change, in November.

There were two key issues that you asked me to reconsider and extra information that you requested:

1<sup>st</sup> parents wanted an increase in the number of hours pupils are in school in line with the government guidance of 32.5 hours.

2<sup>nd</sup> parents requested further information regarding the afternoon session and attendance codes including clarity on the issue of fixed penalty notices.

3<sup>rd</sup> parents requested a timeline to provide clarity as to how the trial will proceed.

1: In conjunction with school leaders, it has been agreed that all pupils will stay for lunch in school on a Friday and then return to class for registration and a class assembly. Enrichment activities will begin in school from 1pm; at which point, pupils can be collected by parents if they have not requested to stay for the in-school enrichment activities. This extends the formal school week to 31.5 hours. This change ensures pupils time in lessons is in line with other schools nationally, due to Consortium's 45-minute lunch break.

2: Friday afternoon registration will now be a separate session from morning lessons. Parents expressed concern regarding the use of penalty fines and felt that if their child was not in school on a Friday afternoon the 10<sup>th</sup> session was not core curriculum time but still contributed towards the government's 10 session threshold for consideration in issuing a Fixed penalty Notice (FPN). I have consulted with the LA and revisited the relevant guidance and policies.

As a result, I can confirm that separating the two sessions with a lunch break is in line with guidance in creating a separate 2<sup>nd</sup> session. Both schools will have a strong focus on attendance and will work within the guidance to support families to ensure "regular" attendance is a priority. Our aim is that all pupils will have at least 95% attendance which will ensure they have been present for the core curriculum teaching. It is important to remember that the core curriculum is now covered in 9 sessions and so the importance of full attendance is just as valid up until 1pm on a Friday.

Holidays taken in term time are unlikely to be authorised by school leaders (except in exceptional circumstances). It is important to remember to request term time holiday in advance.

Leaders will work with families to keep them informed if their child's attendance is falling and is lower than 95%. It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that children attend regularly and that attendance remains above 95%. Parents can view attendance rates on Arbor at any time, using the APP.

FPN's will be considered where: unauthorised absences meet the threshold of 10 set out in the guidance below, attendance is falling over time, there is an irregular pattern of unauthorised absence and parents do not engage with support from the school (where deemed appropriate) to improve attendance rates and maintain a regular pattern of attendance.

Please read the section below taken from the lengthy guidance document. I hope that this helps parents to feel reassured that leaders will take each case in turn and that there is "no blanket position." We encourage parents to remain conscious of the 95% target and to work with leaders to achieve this. I would like to remind everyone that the Trust and schools do not benefit financially from issuing fines, but everyone benefits from children being in school for the core curriculum teaching time. Please work with us to support attendance. I have attached a link to the full document should anyone wish to read it in greater detail.

Schools should not have a blanket position of issuing or not issuing penalty notices and should make judgements on each individual case to ensure fairness and consistency across the country.

The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

When a school becomes aware that the threshold has been met, they are expected to make the following considerations to decide whether to issue a penalty notice in each individual case:

- Is support appropriate in this case?
  - If yes, schools are expected to continue with the existing support without a penalty notice or issue a notice to Improve if that support is not working or is not being engaged with. A penalty notice can be issued if either has not worked.
  - If no, for example a holiday in term time, a penalty notice should be issued subject to the other conditions below.
- Is a penalty notice the best available tool to improve attendance and change parental behaviour for this particular family or would further support or one of the other legal interventions be more appropriate?
- Is issuing a penalty notice in this case appropriate after considering any obligations under the Equality Act 2010 such as where a pupil has a disability?
- (For local authorities only) Is it in the public interest to issue a penalty notice in this case given the local authority would be responsible for any resulting prosecution for the original offence in cases of non-payment?
  - If the answer to these questions is yes, then a penalty notice should be issued. If not, another tool or legal intervention should be used to improve attendance.



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A simple summary is that the issue of a fine is not compulsory even when 10 unauthorised absences have occurred. Each case will be considered individually; leaders will not encourage unauthorised holiday in term time but will work with families to ensure that attendance remains above 95%.

Fines will however be considered where families show little regard for the importance of attendance and unauthorised absences are regular and result in low attendance and disruption to learning.

I hope that this reassures those parents who felt that the lack of core teaching during the 10<sup>th</sup> session on a Friday afternoon was unfair.

Finally, I attach the timeline that I am working towards (actions relevant to parents are highlighted in blue.) I will share details of data analysis and success criteria for assessing the trial in a separate document later in the term. I hope parents will be reassured to know that the number of pupils on roll remain unchanged at Winterton and have increased at Reedham, since the end of last term.

Leaders are currently finalising their timetables and preparing to send out the Arbor invite for parents to register their child for Friday enrichment activities. Details of these are now in the planning stage and will be shared in due course.

I would like to thank the parents that have both supported and challenged me on the development of the trial. I hope that you feel that your questions have helped to enhance the process.

I look forward to visiting schools in the next few weeks and continuing to support school leaders with their planning.

Kind regards,

Mrs Debbie Thomas  
Director of Primary Education.

Action	Date
Collate number of pupils on roll To provide baseline data	3/9/25
Inform parents re pick up time and attendance codes issue Google form	12/9/25
<a href="#">Time line</a> to be shared with parents	12/9/25
Parent meeting Winterton	24/9/25
Parent meeting Reedham	25/9/25
School leaders to ensure all parental requests for Friday provision have been received	26/09/25
Schools to inform DT of pupil numbers for Friday <del>even</del> and staff availability to cover	29/9/25
Enrichment activities to be organised by school <a href="#">leaders</a>	By 2/10/25
E&L committee meeting	2/10/25
Activities to be shared with parents and pupils	8/10/25
Staff wellbeing survey Autumn 1 Baseline	6-10 Oct
Pupil wellbeing survey Autumn 1 Baseline	6-10 Oct
Parent wellbeing survey Autumn 1 Baseline	6-10 Oct
CEO update and planning meeting	13/10
Full board meeting	23/10
<b>OCTOBER HT</b> 23/10 - 3/11	
Monitoring of enrichment provision Reedham	14/11
Monitoring of enrichment provision Winterton	21/11
Autumn assessment fortnight	24/11-5/12
Calculate Autumn APS	15/12
Staff wellbeing survey Autumn 2	15-19 Dec
Pupil wellbeing survey Autumn 2	15-19 Dec
Parent wellbeing survey Autumn 2	15-19 Dec
CEO update and planning meeting	19/12
collate attendance data	19/12
Track pupil numbers on roll	19/12

Christmas Break	22/12-5/01
collate wellbeing data from Autumn term	5/01/26
Budget report for 4 schools to be prepared	5/01/26
Share data with E&L committee	6/01/26
Parent <a href="#">meeting @ Winterton</a>	20/01
E&L committee meeting - discuss measures from autumn term	22/1/26
1 <sup>st</sup> update paper shared with parents	23/01/26
Parent meeting @ Reedham	27/01/26
Monitoring of enrichment provision Winterton	6/2/26
<b>February HT</b>	
Monitoring of enrichment provision Reedham	27/2/26
Spring assessment fortnight	2/3-13/3
Calculate <a href="#">spring APS</a>	26/3
Staff wellbeing <a href="#">survey - spring 2</a>	23-27/3
Pupil wellbeing <a href="#">survey - spring 2</a>	23-27/3
Parent wellbeing <a href="#">survey - spring 2</a>	23-27/3
CEO update and planning meeting	27/3
collate attendance data	27/3
Track pupil numbers on roll	27/3

Easter Break	
DT analyse survey data	13/4
Budget report for 4 schools to be prepared	15/4
E&L committee discuss measures for spring term	30/4
Full Board	14/5
2 <sup>nd</sup> update paper shared with parents	20/5
1 to 1s with <a href="#">staff Winterton</a>	21/5
1 to 1s with <a href="#">staff Reedham</a>	22/5
<b>May HT</b>	
CEO update and planning meeting	5/6
Track pupil numbers on roll	5/6
Calculate <a href="#">spring APS</a>	
Staff wellbeing <a href="#">survey - summer 2</a>	22/6-26/6
Pupil wellbeing <a href="#">survey - summer 2</a>	22/6-26/6
Parent wellbeing <a href="#">survey - summer 2</a>	22/6-26/6
prepare report for CEO and board	1/7/26
collate attendance data	1/7/26
Budget report for 4 schools to be prepared	2/7/26
CEO end of trial planning meeting	3/7/26
SATs data published	7/7/26
Full Trust board meeting	9/7/26
Trial outcome shared with parents	14/7/26

Start of new school year	
Plan for change	Sept 2026
Parent meeting Reedham	End Sept 2026
Parent meeting Winterton	End Sept 2026
Written update for parents	Oct 2026
<b>OCT HT</b>	
Implementation of post-trial timetable @ Winterton and Reedham	Nov 2026