

27 February 2025

Dear Parent/Carer,

The schools across RAISE Education Trust recognise that their greatest asset is the staff that teach our young people day in, day out. As with many of the public services, schools nationally are facing recruitment challenges for both teaching and support staff. Our Trust is no different and is therefore looking to find creative ways to both retain and recruit the very best staff for all our schools.

In addition, over the last three years we have also become increasingly aware of the increase in school absence for both young people and staff over November in particular which has caused increasing disruption to learning for all our community.

Therefore, I am writing to inform you of a proposal currently under consideration by the Trust Board and staff across the Trust, that would introduce significant changes to the school calendar and potentially the school day from September 2025.

The most notable change being considered is an extension of the October half-term break from one week to two weeks. This would result in a half-term running from Monday, 27 October to Friday, 7 November 2025. In order to accommodate this change and ensure no teaching time is lost to this additional week's holiday, we are consulting with staff around two potential changes to the school week.

For Deer Park School and Wildern School

Option 1

- Add a Period 6 to one day in a week (Monday) and finish at 16.00
- The remaining four days finish at 15.00 as normal

Option 2

- First bell to start day 08.25 - Register taken at 08.30
- Lessons change from 60 minutes to 55 minutes throughout the day
- Add a Period 6 to four days in a week (Monday - Thursday) and therefore school finishes at 15.30
- On a Friday school finishes for young people at 13.10
- On Friday, once young people leave, staff complete all meetings and professional development

The reason for this proposed change is to support the mental and physical well-being of both young people and staff. Research and data on staff and young people absence and behaviour suggest that a two-week break could:

- **Improve recruitment and retention** of staff by demonstrating our commitment to their well-being and providing time away from the classroom for planning and professional development.
- **Improve mental and physical well-being** for staff, reducing burnout and enhancing focus.

- **Improve staff work-life balance**, leading to better teacher retention and job satisfaction, ensuring all our colleagues are in best positioned to support our young people.

We understand that this change may raise concerns around childcare arrangements and some potential disruption to learning. We are actively considering these issues, investigating how other schools and Trusts have implemented these changes already and seeking ways to mitigate any negative impacts.

We value your feedback and would like to hear your thoughts on this proposal. We have created a [Google Form](#) to gather your responses and we welcome any additional comments or concerns you may have.

Additionally for next September only, our schools across the Trust will start the term on Monday 1 September as opposed to Hampshire schools return date of Wednesday 3 September. The additional two days gained will then be added to the Half Term holiday in February which will run from Thursday 12 February to Friday 20 February 2026. A full list of holidays and INSET days will be published by each school next half term.

We will keep you informed of the progress of this consultation and the final decision, which will be made by the Trust Board on the 31 March 2025.

You will find a link [here](#) to some FAQs about this proposal.

Thank you for your continued support and engagement.

Kind regards,



Mr S Mann
CEO
RAISE Education Trust



Mrs C Oakley
Headteacher
Wildern School