



Bishop Rawstorne Parent Forum 2024/25

Tuesday 1st July 2025 3rd Forum of the year

Focus – Open Floor Forum – Parents invited to ask questions before hand.

Forum Cancelled.

Due to lack of response from parents and very limited range of questions being asked the decision was made to not go ahead with this forum. However, parents that did get in touch with questions did get responses from either Mr Duckworth or Mr Wood

Response about how lockdown is practised in school:

School has a lockdown procedure, and we have a new alert system from August 2025. When we do an announced practice, we expect children to quietly move to safe spaces in classrooms. Windows are closed and blinds are drawn. Doors are locked and door windows covered. Staff are designated to lock parts of the school building down and then when the threat is passed a further alert sound occurs announcing the lockdown is over.

We are aware of the anxiety in the local community following the Southport attacks and so we do treat this as a serious part of our safeguarding procedures.

Questions were raised regarding the upcoming change to the school day, beginning in the autumn term, as well as the planned reduction in the number of GCSEs students will sit:

The school day will be extended from its current timings starting in August 2025. This change is necessary to meet the national requirement of providing 1,265 hours of education annually. Following adjustments made to the timetable in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the total number of hours had not returned to the required level. This has now been reviewed and corrected.

The new timetable has been carefully planned to ensure that break and lunch times remain sufficient for students to rest, eat, and socialise. The end of the school day will be slightly later, but extra-curricular clubs and enrichment activities will continue to run, with timings adjusted accordingly to fit the revised schedule.

Changes to the School Day – Rationale and Benefits

Earlier this year, Mr Cowley shared with parents that research shows 50 minutes is the optimal length for focused, effective learning. With this in mind, we are moving from the current structure of 25 one-hour lessons to 30 lessons of 50 minutes each. While the total 'in-lesson' time remains the same, the new structure provides a significant advantage: five additional lessons per week.

This extra capacity enables a more balanced distribution of curriculum time, particularly benefiting subjects such as humanities and options, which were previously more limited. Achieving this redistribution would not have been feasible under the one-hour model, without reducing time for core subjects like English and maths.

While lesson time remains unchanged overall, the slight extension to the school day brings further benefits:

- **Enhanced tutor time:** Morning tutor sessions will be slightly longer, allowing us to deliver PSHE twice a week without impacting subject lessons. These sessions will also include weekly tutor-led group worship and provide students with a consistent point of contact and pastoral support
- **Improved lesson transitions:** Dedicated 3-minute changeover times between lessons ensure that the full 50 minutes of learning is protected. To support this, a new bell system is being introduced to help students adapt to the new timings and transitions smoothly

Break and lunch times will remain at 15 and 25 minutes respectively. These have been carefully reviewed and are considered sufficient for students' needs, without unnecessarily extending the school day.

The end of the day will now be at **3:18pm**. Our neighbouring primary school is fully informed of this change. As with the current arrangements, the site will remain closed to primary school pick-up traffic until our last school bus has departed.

Extra-curricular clubs will continue to run as usual and will begin at 3:18pm under the new schedule.

The updated school day timetable is outlined below. We believe these changes will offer both academic and pastoral benefits, while maintaining a structured and balanced school experience for all students.

Enhancing Our GCSE Curriculum – A Refined Pathway for Success

Earlier this year, Mr Cowley wrote to all Year 8 parents to outline an exciting development in how we deliver our Key Stage 4 curriculum, beginning with our current Year 8 cohort as they enter Year 9 this autumn. These changes are designed to further strengthen the already high standards of achievement at Bishop Rawstone and to ensure that every student is set up for long-term success.

After reviewing our internal data, alongside national research, we have identified a clear opportunity to improve outcomes and student experience by slightly reducing the number of GCSEs most students take. While our students consistently achieve excellent results in core subjects such as English, maths and science, we have seen that taking one fewer GCSE can lead to stronger and more sustainable performance across the full range of subjects.

This adjustment brings several key benefits:

- **More focus, less pressure:** Fewer GCSEs means more time to concentrate on each subject, helping students develop deeper understanding and stronger exam readiness
- **Better overall outcomes:** Schools that enter students for one fewer GCSE, on average, see higher grades across the board – and our own data supports this.

- **A more meaningful options process:** Some students have found it challenging to choose a second option subject they are fully invested in. Removing this pressure allows them to focus on subjects they are passionate about and where they can truly thrive

Starting from autumn term, students will follow one of two clear pathways, ensuring a curriculum that is ambitious, balanced, and personalised. All students will continue to study:

- **Maths**
- **English Language and English Literature**
- **Double Science**
- **Geography or History**
- **Religious Education**

We believe this refined structure will not only strengthen academic performance but also enhance student wellbeing by creating a more manageable and rewarding learning experience. As always, our aim is to provide every student with the best possible preparation for success – both in their exams and beyond.

GCSE Pathways: EBacc and Non-EBacc

As part of our updated Key Stage 4 curriculum, students will follow one of two carefully designed pathways, both of which provide a broad and balanced education, while also allowing for personalisation based on strengths, interests, and aspirations.

EBacc Pathway

This pathway includes students for whom studying a modern foreign language such as German is a strong fit, and who are suited to a slightly broader academic curriculum.

Students on the EBacc pathway will study:

- The 7 core subjects: English language, English literature, maths, double science, geography or history, and religious education
- **German GCSE**
- One **additional enrichment option**

In addition, there is the opportunity for some students to pursue **triple science**, enabling them to achieve 10 GCSEs if they are well-suited to an accelerated science curriculum.

Non-EBacc Pathway

This pathway offers a more streamlined GCSE programme, supporting students in achieving depth and success across a slightly smaller number of subjects, while still providing a rich and engaging curriculum.

Students on this pathway will study:

- The same 7 core subjects
- One **additional enrichment option**

German remains available as an option within this route, for those who wish to continue with a language.

A unique feature of the Non-EBacc pathway is the opportunity to participate in the **Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE)** as part of the Year 10 curriculum. The DofE programme is a highly regarded initiative that helps students develop valuable life skills such as teamwork, independence, and resilience.

Both pathways are designed to ensure students are well-prepared for the next stage of their education and future career choices, with support and challenge tailored to their individual needs.

The new school day will be as follows:

- Arrive at school at normal time
- 8.55 – 9.20 Tutor time – twice a week PSHE, one tutor worship, one-year group worship, one flexible
- 9.23 -10.13 Lesson 1
- 10.16-11.06 Lesson 2
- 11.06-11.21 Break
- 11.24-12.14 Lesson 3
- 12.17-13.07 Lesson 4
- 13.07-13.32 Lunch
- 13.35-14.25 Lesson 5
- 14.28-15.18 Lesson 6

This answers the questions posed.

Notes compiled by Mr Duckworth

