



Midlothian

MIDLOTHIAN CONSULTATION

ALIGNING THE SECONDARY SCHOOL DAY

CONSULTATION PAPER

Advancing Opportunities through an Aligned Secondary School Day

1. Details of the proposal

We are consulting on the following proposal which aims to align the start/end time of the school day across all 6 Midlothian secondary schools. Our proposal is that all Midlothian secondary schools would begin classes at 8.40am, (Monday through Friday). In each secondary school classes would finish at 3.25pm, (Monday through Thursday). On a Friday classes in each secondary school would finish at 12.15pm.

This means that the overall length of the pupil/student week for all secondary schools will be the same and organised across 32 x 50 minute periods. The proposal is that the period times of classes will start and end at the same time in each school.

The schools affected are:

- Beeslack Community High School
- Dalkeith High School
- Lasswade High School
- Newbattle Community High School
- Penicuik High School
- St David's RC High School

The proposed timings of the school day are detailed in **Appendix A** of this document. A school by school comparison of the current and proposed school day timings are detailed in **Appendix B**. A comparison of the proposed secondary school day timings and current primary school times are detailed in **Appendix C**.

Please note no changes are proposed for Midlothian primary school day timings.

This proposal will not impact on the number of teachers in our schools given the continuing growth within and across our communities. We expect to retain teacher numbers and maintain our positive position and trend in relation to Midlothian's teacher/pupil ratio.

2. Proposed dates for implementation

The proposal is that all 6 Midlothian secondary schools move their timetables forward and begin the new 2024/25 school year on Monday 3rd June 2024. This means that the proposal to align the school day, outlined in **Section 1** and in **Appendix A**, would begin on Monday 3rd June 2024 for all secondary schools.

3. Educational benefits statement

This section sets out our assessment of the educational benefits that we believe will result from implementation of the proposal. Senior Phase students in all 6 schools could benefit from this proposal as it will,

- facilitate the opportunity for schools to collaborate. By aligning our school day start/finish and period times, we are setting the foundation for future innovative practice in relation to learning, teaching and assessment.
- support the development of our Midlothian Aligned Curriculum Offer (MACO), to support our work in relation to excellence, equity, inclusion and improved outcomes for all Midlothian students.
- facilitate the opportunity for a wider range of school partners, including E-sgoil, Further Education, Higher Education and businesses, to work with students.
- increase the capacity and volume of partnership working across all six schools with Higher Education, Further Education, business and training providers.
- help to embed aspects of progressive digital learning. We know this is an aspect of learning applied in many Further and Higher Education establishments, as well as in many workplaces.
- reduce the physical movement of students between schools to undertake in-person courses in other schools or through our School College Partnership. This will support our Net Zero objectives, should help to reduce school transport and ensure best value.
- reduce the impact of travel and time out of classes for those students undertaking Edinburgh College courses or work placements associated with Foundation Apprenticeship.

Senior Phase students, in our smaller schools, will benefit from the proposal as it will deliver a more equitable curricular offer. An associated MACO offer helps to provide a consistent breadth of opportunity for all Midlothian students. Learning from other local authorities confirms that school day alignment can deliver substantial benefits.

Our proposal aims to ensure a common school week for all Midlothian secondary school students. Currently our 6 secondary schools offer a different length of student week.

Each of the 3 schools, Dalkeith HS, Newbattle CHS and St David's RC HS, who will move to 32 period week, will undergo consultation with their communities on changing the student week by 50 minutes. This process will be led by the Senior Leadership Team in each school.

The proposal has potential benefits for collaborative working between our secondary schools and Saltersgate School. This includes in-reach opportunities for mainstream students to volunteer in Saltersgate, and/or opportunities for staff collaboration and learning.

The proposal will also improve the ability of staff to collaborate across schools, particularly through the equalisation of our 'student week'. With a common finish time on Fridays, our established collegiate day, it will be more practicable for school staff and/or curricular teams to collaborate together, and in conjunction with partners.

4. Supporting evidence or information

As stated, by aligning our school day start/finish and period times, we are setting the foundation for future innovative practice in relation to learning, teaching and assessment. It will facilitate our MACO and allow a broader curricular offer across schools and with partners for S4, S5 and S6 students. Our MACO will help improve pathways for S4 students and as they progress through the Senior Phase.

Our expected improvement in partnership working with Further Education and industry partners, facilitated by an aligned school day and timetable, will support those Senior Phase students who leave before the end of S6 into a positive destination.

An analysis of Higher (H) and Advanced Higher (AH) 2023 courses presented in each school, see **Table A** below shows a significant inequity across Midlothian schools. Our school day alignment, and MACO, aims to address this situation.

Table A (Source: Insight November 2023)						
Nos of H Subjects in Midlothian (2023)	Nos in BCHS	Nos in DHS	Nos in LHS	Nos in NCHS	Nos in PHS	Nos in StDHS
38	21	27	35	26	19	24
Nos of AH Subjects in Midlothian (2023)	Nos in BCHS	Nos in DHS	Nos in LHS	Nos in NCHS	Nos in PHS	Nos in StDHS
24	12	14	20	11	10	6

Currently a progression pathway for students is often only realised through physical travel, or not pursued. Travel between schools can have a negative impact on other aspects of a student's timetable, e.g., time out of other classes to facilitate travel. Our aligned day and use of 'Equipped for Learning' digital approaches should, over time, reduce the impact of this and widen our offer, supporting progression, for students.

Table B, see below, shows an analysis of how Higher and Advanced Higher 2023 courses offered in each school have changed in comparison to 2019.

Table B (Source: Insight November 2023)						
Nos of H Subjects in Midlothian (2023)	Nos in BCHS	Nos in DHS	Nos in LHS	Nos in NCHS	Nos in PHS	Nos in StDHS
38	21	27	35	26	19	24
Change from 2019						
+1	+1	-1	+4	-2	+1	-1
Nos of AH Subjects in Midlothian (2023)	Nos in BCHS	Nos in DHS	Nos in LHS	Nos in NCHS	Nos in PHS	Nos in StDHS
24	12	14	20	11	10	6
Change from 2019						
+3	+1	+2	+5	+4	-3	0

Table B shows relatively little change at Higher in the number of courses offered. Lasswade shows the biggest change which may be related to school roll and associated capacity in larger subject teams.

At Advanced Higher the variance is greater. However, it may be noteworthy that in our three schools with the smallest rolls; Beeslack, Penicuik and St David’s, the ability to sustain or grow an AH offer is most challenging. This may be related to a smaller staff number in these schools.

In addition, data shows that AH courses are often smaller classes and may become difficult to sustain in all schools with competing demands on staff to provide appropriate curriculum pathways and progression for all students. An aligned timetable and the associated MACO should improve our ability to collaborate through a digital offer and widen our AH provision for all students.

This proposal aligns with Midlothian strategic objectives and national publications linked to the Education Reform agenda.

The proposal should support families with children in both primary and secondary schools by narrowing the window of a Friday ‘pick-up’ from schools. This results from bringing the Friday finish time closer to the primary finish time for all secondary schools.

Midlothian students as part of the National Discussion consultation in autumn 2022 cited a desire for schools to offer a wider range of curricular opportunities and virtual engagements through their 1 to 1 devices. Students are recognising the benefits of digital approaches to support their learning. They identified an inequity within our current Midlothian system. This proposal supports our ability to address these issues.

There is a significant body of educational research (*Leading in a Culture of Change, Michael Fullan, 2016*) which confirms that outward looking, collaborative schools, attain higher than schools who stockpile their individual strengths. The aligned secondary school day and Senior Phase timetable is potentially a vehicle for supporting a collaborative approach to improving outcomes for Midlothian young people.

Commonality in terms of timetabling enables schools to work together along with partner agencies and services, to intervene and provide targeted support to meet individual and group's learning needs better. A collaborative approach is in line with the Scottish Government's Empowering Schools policy direction and will have the greatest impact for young people, whilst providing best value. This collaboration also creates opportunities to engage with the world of work, Further Education and Higher Education, from 2-18, and meets the expectations and Key Performance Indicators of Developing Scotland's Young Workforce.

Given the minimal aspect of our proposed changes, see **Appendix B**, partners, including associated primary schools, physically using parts of the school estate are unlikely to be negatively affected.

New students from within the timeframe indicated above should not be negatively affected by this proposal. Each school will make the proposed changes clear during their primary/secondary transition work. In the fullness of time each student will benefit from enhanced curricular opportunities highlighted above.

5. Summary of the consultation process

- The consultation will run from Thursday 1st February 2024 until Friday 8th March 2024.
- This paper is available via Citizen Space, *see below*, and will be distributed widely to relevant partners.
- Each secondary school will distribute this paper to all parents/carers, students and staff on Thursday 1st February 2024.
- Each secondary school will hold an in-person informal drop-in session within the consultation period to support engagement and answer stakeholder questions, *see below*.
- An on-line informal drop-in session will be held within the consultation period to support engagement and answer stakeholder questions.
- All interested parties and members of each school community are encouraged to read the Consultation Paper and respond to the proposals via the Citizen Space link below:

[Citizen Space Click Here](#)

- To ask for a paper copy email: midsecschdaycons@midlothian.gov.uk Returns can be posted back to: Midlothian Council, School Day Consultation, (F.A.O. Neil Craik-Collins), Fairfield House, 8 Lothian Road, Dalkeith, Midlothian, EH22 3AA.

The consultation can also be supplied in braille, large print, audiotape or in your own language although please note the council's website offers reading, speech and translation support when you use the browse aloud headphones icon at the bottom right hand side of the pages. If you need further help please contact: midsecschdaycons@midlothian.gov.uk

Informal drop-in opportunities will take place in each secondary school at the following dates and times, these will be highlighted to all primary schools associated with each secondary school. Head Teachers in each school will publicise these meetings through their established communication channels:

- Beeslack Community High School: **Thursday 22nd February 2024**
- Dalkeith High School: **Monday 19th February 2024**
- Lasswade High School: **Wednesday 21st February 2024**
- Newbattle Community High School: **Wednesday 21st February 2024**
- Penicuik High School: **Tuesday 20th February 2024**
- St David's High School: **Wednesday 28th February 2024**

All of the above opportunities will take place on the stated day between 5.00pm – 7.00pm.

An on-line opportunity to support engagement and answer stakeholder questions will be held on **Tuesday 27th February 2024** between 5.00pm and 7.00pm. To register for this opportunity please email: midsecschdaycons@midlothian.gov.uk Thereafter, you'll be issued a Microsoft Teams invite.

All responses must be received by Friday 8th March 2024.

Appendix A

COMMON SCHOOL DAY AND ALIGNED SENIOR PHASE

Recognising our current context, all Midlothian secondary schools from session 2024/25 propose to base their timetable on a 'pupil/student week' of 32 x 50 minute periods. This results in 7 periods Monday through Thursday and 4 periods each Friday. The proposed school day structure from session 2024/25 in all schools is outlined below.

Midlothian Schools Timetable Pattern for all students									
	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Interval	Period 4	Period 5	Lunch	Period 6	Period 7
	08.40 - 09.30	09.30 - 10.20	10.20 - 11.10	11.10 - 11.25	11.25 - 12.15	12.15 - 13.05	13.05 - 13.45	13.45 - 14.35	14.35 - 15.25
Monday									
Tuesday									
Wednesday									
Thursday									
Friday	Period 1	Period 2	Interval	Period 3	Period 4				
	08.40 - 09.30	09.30 - 10.20	10.20 - 10.35	10.35 - 11.25	11.25 - 12.15				

Some schools, generally due to capacity issues, currently operate a school day structure that accommodates split breaks and lunches for BGEEd (S1/S2/S3) and Senior Phase (S4/S5/S6) students. Our proposal allows schools to retain, or introduce, this option if they view it as appropriate.

A possible school day structure in those schools is outlined below. Please note that in those schools without split break/lunch arrangements all students will follow the above pattern.

Midlothian Schools Timetable					
Pattern for all students in a split break/lunch context					
Time	Monday to Thursday		Time	Friday	
8.40 to 9.30	Period 1		8.40 to 9.30	Period 1	
9.30 to 10.20	Period 2		9.30 to 10.20	Period 2	
10.20 to 11.25	Senior Phase Period 3 10.20 - 11.10	BGE ^d Break 10.20 – 10.35	10.20 to 11.25	BGE ^d Period 3 10.20 – 11.10	Senior Phase Break 10.20 – 10.35
	Senior Phase Break 11.10 - 11.25	BGE ^d Period 3 10.35 – 11.25		BGE ^d Break 11.10 - 11.25	Senior Phase Period 3 10.35 - 11.25
11.25 to 12.15	Period 4		11.25 to 12.15	Period 4	
12.15 to 13.45	Senior Phase Period 5 12.15 – 13.05	BGE ^d Lunch 12.15 – 12.55			
	Senior Phase Lunch 13.05 – 13.45	BGE ^d Period 5 12.55 – 13.45			
13.45 to 14.35	Period 6				
14.35 to 15.25	Period 7				

Appendix B

SCHOOL BY SCHOOL COMPARISON: CURRENT v PROPOSED SCHOOL DAY

The following table compares the current start/end time of the school day for each school with our proposed timings. It shows minimal change in schools; either no change or +/- 10 minutes.

The exception is on a Friday with 3 schools; Dalkeith HS, Newbattle CHS and St David's RC HS having a 40 or 50 minute change. This is a consequence of aiming to ensure all Midlothian secondary schools have the same length of 'student week'.

School	Current Start Time (Mon-Fri)	Current Finish Time (Mon-Thur)	Current Finish Time (Fri)	Proposed Difference in Start Time (Mon-Fri)	Proposed Difference Time (Mon-Thur)	Proposed Difference Time (Fri)
Beeslack CHS	8.30am	3.20pm	12.05pm	10 minutes later	5 minutes later	10 minutes later
Dalkeith HS	8.40am	3.25pm	1.05pm	No change	No change	50 minutes earlier
Lasswade HS	8.30am	3.25pm	12.05pm	10 minutes later	No change	10 minutes later
Newbattle CHS	8.30am	3.25pm	12.55pm	10 minutes later	No change	40 minutes earlier
Penicuik HS	8.40am	3.30pm	12.15pm	No change	5 minutes earlier	No change
St David's RC HS	8.40am	3.25pm	1.05pm	No change	No change	50 minutes earlier

Appendix C

COMPARISON: PROPOSED SECONDARY SCHOOL DAY v CURRENT PRIMARY

Secondary School	Proposed Start Time (Mon-Fri)	Proposed Finish Time (Mon-Thur)	Proposed Finish Time (Fri)
All Secondary Schools	8.40am	3.25pm	12.15pm
Primary School	Current Start Time (Mon-Fri)	Current Finish Time (Mon-Thur)	Current Finish Time (Fri)
Bilston PS	8.45am	3.15pm	12.20pm
Bonnyrigg PS	8.50am	3.15pm	12.20pm
Burnbrae PS	8.50am	3.15pm	12.25pm
Cornbank St James PS *	8.45am to 8.50am	3.10pm to 3.15pm	12.20pm to 12.25pm
Cuiken PS	8.50am	3.15pm	12.25pm
Danderhall PS	8.50am	3.15pm	12.25pm
Gore Glen PS	8.50am	3.15pm	12.15pm
Gorebridge PS	8.50am	3.15pm	12.15pm
Hawthornden PS	8.45am	3.15pm	12.20pm
King's Park PS	8.55am	3.20pm	12.30pm
Lasswade PS	8.50am	3.20pm	12.25pm
Lawfield PS	8.50am	3.20pm	12.05pm
Loanhead PS	8.50am	3.15pm	12.25pm
Mauricewood PS	8.55am	3.20pm	12.30am
Mayfield PS	8.50am	3.20pm	12.05pm
Moorfoot PS	8.50am	3.15pm	12.25pm
Newtongrange PS	8.45am	3.10pm	12.20pm
Paradykes PS	8.45am	3.15pm	12.20pm
Rosewell PS	8.50am	3.15pm	12.25pm
Roslin PS	8.50am	3.15pm	12.25pm
Sacred Heart RC PS	8.50am	3.15pm	12.25pm
St Andrew's RC PS *	8.40am to 8.45am	3.10pm to 3.15pm	11.55am to 12.00pm
St David's RC PS	8.50am	3.15pm	12.25pm
St Luke's RC PS	8.50am	3.20pm	12.30pm
St Mary's RC PS	9.00am	3.30pm	12.15pm
St Matthew's RC PS	8.50am	3.15pm	12.25pm
Stobhill PS	8.50am	3.20pm	12.05pm
Strathesk PS	8.50am	3.15pm	12.25pm
Tynewater PS	8.45am	3.30pm	12.25pm
Woodburn PS *	8.40am to 8.55am	3.10pm to 3.25pm	11.55am to 12.10pm

Key: * Staggered start and finish times by class