

Dear Parents/Carers and Students of Great Barr Academy

### Parent and Student Consultation

Firstly, we hope you are all staying well and managing to negotiate your way through these very challenging times. Thank you so much to you all for supporting the learning of our students from home and engaging with our staff as required.

Since September, we have been reviewing the way we work at Great Barr Academy. We have run significant consultation with staff and talked to lots of students and parents about the things you like best about our school and the things you think we could change. One thing has been very clear: the absolute commitment of everyone to ensure Great Barr is an outstanding school for our staff and students and a beacon of excellence for our local community.

As a result, we are writing to you now to seek your views on some of the changes that we propose making as of September 2020. Over the coming weeks, we will be contacting you again as we review our school policies as we are keen to hear your views. Please be assured that any proposed changes are absolutely made with the best interests of our students and the school's success at heart.

We understand that the world is focused on other things at the moment, we are indeed in unprecedented and very challenging times. At times like these though, it is vital that we look to the future with hope and expectation of great things to come. We hope the contents of our letter show our commitment to our school and also give you a sense of excitement and pride in what we can achieve together.

On the attached pages you will find information regarding:

Change to the school structure: Campus / Upper School / Lower School and Leadership Roles  
Proposal to the times and structure of the school day

We encourage parents/carers and students to send your views on the changes either via email to either [Feedback@GreatBarr.Bham.sch.uk](mailto:Feedback@GreatBarr.Bham.sch.uk) (for parents and/or students) or through post to the main school by Friday 29<sup>th</sup> May. We appreciate your support with this and look forward to hearing your views.

On another note, we are currently reviewing other aspects of the school and this includes our school uniform. We are very aware of the financial pressures on families and do not intend to place additional burdens upon you at this time, any changes that we make will be affordable and subsidised by the school. As soon as we are in a position to seek your views on this we will of course contact you. In the meantime, we advise parents NOT to purchase any items of uniform, to be sure that items are correct for September. Once again, to reassure you, we are aware of the cost of uniform and that families may not be intending to replace some items at this time, we will take this into account before any decisions are made.

Yours sincerely



Mrs Kerry Inscker  
Executive Principal



Mr Andrew Williams  
Acting Headteacher

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## **Change to the school structure: Campus / Upper School / Lower School and Leadership Roles**

One of the issues raised by staff, students and parents is how difficult it can be to manage such a large number of students all using the same site. The difference in academic needs, pastoral support, social time requirements, numbers and size of our students ranges massively from Year 7 through to Year 13. Therefore, we will be changing how we manage our school from September 2020. The school will be separated as follows:

**CAMPUS:** this area covers the whole school areas currently in place

**UPPER SCHOOL:** this will be designated staff, teaching and social spaces specifically for our Key Stage 4 and Sixth Form students only (ie Year 10, Year 11, Year 12 and Year 13).

**LOWER SCHOOL:** this will be designated staff, teaching and social spaces specifically for our Key Stage 3 students only (ie Year 7, Year 8 and Year 9).

Our Campus will be separated into Lower School and Upper School areas, students from each school will have separate classrooms and social spaces, they will also take lunch and breaks at different times. We will have teams of specialist staff in place who are dedicated to a specific school and who are experts in supporting the needs of students of a specific age group. This way, our younger students are free to be children and our older students are able to socialise in a more mature way. Our corridors and other spaces will be less crowded, the school will feel less busy. Staff will receive more specific training on how to get the very best out of and how to support the age groups that they are working with. We will make the environment for each of the new schools more specialised to reflect the needs of the age group of students.

With this new approach in mind, we are delighted to announce the following appointments to the leadership of the school:

### **Campus Principal: Mr Alberto Otero**

Mr Otero joins us from his post as Headteacher at Colton Hills Community School in Wolverhampton, where he rapidly improved the school to be judged "Good" by Ofsted and led the school to achieve strong results which are above national average. He joins us from 01/09/20.

### **Campus Vice Principal and Headteacher Lower School: Mr Andrew Williams**

You will all know Mr Williams from his many years of service to Great Barr Academy as Deputy Headteacher and, this year, Acting Headteacher, when he has led our school to achieve a positive Ofsted outcome in November 2019.

### **Headteacher Upper School: Mr Christopher Czepukojc**

Mr Czepukojc joins us from his position of Deputy Headteacher at Alderbrook School in Solihull, another Ofsted Good School with strong outcomes for students. He joined Great Barr Academy after the Easter break this year.

### **Deputy Headteacher Lower School: Mrs Joanne Finlay and Deputy Headteacher Upper School: Mrs Joanna Garvey**

You will know Mrs Finlay and Mrs Garvey from the excellent work they already do for your children at Great Barr Academy in their leadership of Safeguarding (Mrs Finlay) and Sixth Form (Mrs Garvey). Both are very strong leaders who we are delighted to have been promoted to their new roles.

We believe that our new school structure will ensure all of our students have the excellent education they deserve which leads to them all making strong progress. It will also allow us to support their development into young adults in a much more focused way and provide outstanding opportunities to nurture, support and challenge them to be their very best.

The students will still have access to our fantastic teaching staff and remain with many of the staff that they have grown up knowing, however, we hope the physical separation of the two schools will make them feel even happier and safer at school as they are given the space they need, more suited to their age group.

**Proposal to the times and structure of the school day (NB this is subject to change following feedback)**

Last year we moved to a one-week timetable which has been very successful. For the next academic year, we would like to build on this change by broadening our curriculum offer to students. Therefore, we intend to move to a 6-period day as outlined below, with a 28-period week. This means that we are able to expand the time for some subjects and introduce new ones, for example Personal, Social & Health Education and Enrichment.

**Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday**

Lower School	8.45 – 9.15 (30 mins)	9.15-10.10	10.10-11.05	11.05-11.45	11.45-12.40	12.40 – 1.35	1.35 - 1.50	1.50-2.45	2.45-3.30
	Edge time	P1	P2	Lunch Break	P3	P4	Break	P5	P6

**Key Features:**

- Extended Edge Time in the morning, creating for Lower School Students a more nurturing, family-feel to the start of the day to welcome them to school and prepare them for the day ahead.
- The 8:45am start and 3:30pm finish means that Lower School students arrive and leave school slightly earlier than older students which will reduce congestion at the end of the day and ease transport options.
- By bringing the lunch session to earlier in the day, we think children’s concentration will be aided as they will not be eating at a time when they are becoming tired and therefore have a post-lunch lull. In addition, many children have to leave home very early to get to school across the city, so an earlier lunch is a better eating pattern for them.
- The day is split into three equal sessions with a 40-minute lunch break and 15-minute afternoon break

Upper School	8.55 – 9.15 (20 Mins)	9.15-10.10	10.10-11.05	11.10-12.05	12.05-12.40	12.40-1.35	1.35 - 2.30	2.30-2.45	2.45-3.40
	Edge time	P1	P2	P3	Lunch Break	P4	P5	Break	P6

**Key Features:**

- The Upper School students will arrive and leave slightly later time to ease congestion as stated above.
- Edge/Form Time is shorter as we want a sharp business-like start to the day for our older students.
- There is a long pre-lunch session for Upper School as this is when they are more alert and have better concentration, due to the relatively early lunch time we do not feel a morning full break is needed but have built in 5 minutes changeover time between P2 and P3 to allow students and staff to have a quick toilet break.

**Wednesday** the times of the day from 01/09/20 will be as follows:

Lower School	8.45 – 9.15 (30 mins)	9.15-10.10	10.10-11.05	11.05-11.45	11.45-12.40	12.40 – 1.35	1:45-3:45
	Edge time	P1	P2	Lunch Break	P3	P4	
Upper School	8.55 – 9.15 (20 Mins)	9.15-10.10	10.10-11.05	11.10-12.05	12.05-12.40	12.40-1.35	1:45-3:45
	Edge time	P1	P2	P3	Lunch Break	P4	Staff Meetings and CPD

**Key Features:**

- We believe that the earlier finish on a Wednesday, mid-week, will support student stamina: they will be less tired on Thursday and Friday as they have had a mid-week respite.

- Currently, Parents Evening take place 6pm-8:30pm and many parents report that this can be a difficult time to attend mid-week due to family commitments, indeed many parents who have younger children in primary schools are not able to come out in the evenings. Moving forward, we propose that parent events would be on a Wednesday, start at 2pm and finish around 6pm giving more opportunity for parents to come before/after the end of the primary day or on their way home from work rather than having to come out later which we hope will attract more parents to attend.