

May 2024

Dear families

Changes to the academy day on Thursdays

At Dixons City, we do whatever it takes to ensure that our students are working towards being the best version of themselves and aligning with our core values of determination, integrity, and respect. Since we opened in 1990, we have always been innovative and developed strategies for improvement, which have led to sustained improvement over time. How we deliver Personal Development Studies (PDS) has been identified as a potential area for improvement.

Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education is a school subject through which pupils develop the knowledge, skills and attributes they need to manage their lives, now and in the future. It helps children and young people to stay healthy and safe, while preparing them to make the most of life and work. When taught well, PSHE education also helps pupils to achieve their academic potential. PSHE education is statutory for all schools under the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

At City, most of the PSHE education is covered during PDS and some in science lessons. Currently, the weekly PDS lesson takes place on Thursday afternoon, 1:50-3:00pm, with form tutors. PDS being delivered simultaneously to all students by form tutors has some benefits, but several disadvantages. This lesson lasts for one hour and ten minutes. For many of our students, this lesson takes place straight after Robust Reading, which is also with form tutors. This means that students are sat in the same seat for nearly two hours. We have listened to our students and families, who have told us that this can be very challenging. As all students have PDS at the same time it is also difficult to utilise the theatre and book outside speakers to come into the academy to talk about careers, diet, hygiene and exercise.

Proposed change

From the next academic year, we plan to deliver PDS lessons at different times for different year groups. This will allow for each year group to be in the theatre, where the Head of Year, a member of SLT and the Head of Careers will deliver the sessions. As the PDS sessions will be at different times for different year groups, it will make it a lot easier to also arrange for external speakers to come and talk to our students. In addition to this, our students will not have nearly two hours in form rooms, every Thursday afternoon. Students will still have a fortnightly PDS session in form time, so that there is still opportunity for small group discussion and debate.

As the Thursday lesson after lunch will no longer be PDS but a subject lesson, this will now be the same duration as all the subject lessons, 55 minutes, for timetabling reasons. This means that **the academy day on Thursday will finish at 2:45pm**, just as it does each Friday.

Should the changes be approved, they will take effect from **2 September 2024** for the new academic year. We believe that this change will improve the quality of the PDS delivery and support with the culture of the academy on Thursday afternoons. Your feedback on this proposal is important to us. To listen to the views of our community, we are offering you the opportunity to provide feedback and respond to the proposal. Feedback can be shared by completing the following online form <https://forms.office.com/e/NkQdjPtpzw>. The feedback window will close on Friday 31 May. Following the closure of the feedback window, we will review and consider all responses before finally reaching a decision. This decision will be communicated to all families by the end of week commencing 7 June 2024.

Yours sincerely

Mr R Mohammed

Principal

