

Mildenhall College Academy

The Hub, Sheldrick Way, Mildenhall, Suffolk. IP28 7JX

Tel: 01638 714645

Email: MCA-reception@ATTrust.org.uk

Principal: Mr J Oxley BSc (Hons) PgDL NPQH



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Dear Parents and Carers,

Re: Consultation Outcome – School Calendar and Academy Day Structure (2026–2027)

Thank you to all parents, carers and stakeholders who took the time to engage with our recent consultation regarding proposed changes to the school calendar and the structure of the day at Mildenhall College Academy. The volume, quality and thoughtfulness of responses clearly demonstrated the strength of partnership between the Academy our feeder schools and the community. We are grateful for the time taken to share views. All feedback received has been carefully reviewed and considered, alongside discussions with staff, transport providers and external partners. We are committed to ensuring that any changes we introduce are well-reasoned, sustainable and, above all, in the best interests of our students. I am therefore writing to share the outcomes of this consultation and to explain the rationale behind the decisions taken.

October Half-Term Holiday 26/27

We consulted on the possibility of extending the October half-term holiday to two weeks from October 2026.

Following careful consideration, we have decided not to implement a two-week October half-term for the 2026–2027 academic year. A significant proportion of respondents raised understandable concerns regarding the potential increase in childcare costs for working families, as well as the impact an additional week of holiday could have on teaching and learning time. These concerns were both credible and compelling, and we felt it would not be appropriate to proceed with this change at this stage.

However, we also recognise that a number of respondents identified potential benefits of a longer October break, particularly in relation to student and staff wellbeing. As a result, we will explore the possibility of redistributing working days across the academic year to enable a more balanced two-week October half-term in the 2027–2028 academic year, ensuring that teaching and learning time is fully protected by paying this time back at other points in the year.

To support this work, an earlier consultation will take place at the start of the next academic year, with a detailed focus on how working days are distributed across the school year. This consultation will this time include all of our local feeder primary schools, whose views we recognise as particularly important in supporting families across the wider community.

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Changes to the Academy Day at Mildenhall College Academy

Our intention has always been to design a school day that is educationally robust, operationally sustainable and supportive of both student and staff wellbeing. Feedback indicated significantly fewer concerns regarding the proposed adaptations to the academy day, with many respondents recognising the educational and practical advantages of the changes outlined below, which will now be implemented.

Adjusted Start and Finish Times

The academy day will begin at 08:55 and finish at 15:40, extending the working day by 15 minutes.

Key benefits:

- *Improved alignment with school transport services, which frequently arrive after 1540, reducing delays and supporting safe and orderly travel home.*
- *Maximisation of lesson time, ensuring students receive a full curriculum allocation*

Introduction of a Five-Period Day

Students will follow a five-period daily timetable, with lessons lasting up to 65 minutes.

Key benefits:

- *Shorter lesson durations support sustained concentration, particularly benefiting students with SEND or attention-related needs.*
- *Increased lesson frequency ensures students experience a broader and more balanced range of subjects each week, strengthening curriculum coverage and retention.*

Optional Wednesday Period 5 – Enrichment and Flexible Finish

On Wednesdays, Period 5 will be optional for students, allowing them either to:

- Leave the academy site at 1440
- Participate in a structured programme of enrichment activities, clubs and supported study.

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Key benefits:

- *A mid-week change of pace supports student wellbeing, helping to break up the week and providing time for independent study and homework completion.*
- *Earlier enrichment opportunities reduce the impact of limited daylight during winter months.*
- *Period 5 on Wednesdays will provide valuable time for staff collaboration and curriculum planning, strengthening the quality, coherence and ambition of our curriculum.*
- *Certain after-school events, including parent and carer evenings, can be scheduled earlier at around 4pm for wellbeing purposes.*

Please note that the Academy is not closing early on Wednesdays. This is a flexible provision, and students who choose to remain on site for selected activities will be supervised and supported throughout. However, we do expect students to be signed up for specific activities so that they can be accounted for.

A Wednesday late bus service will continue, departing earlier (but after 1540) to reflect the revised structure.

Frequently Asked Questions

Will my child be required to leave early on Wednesdays?

Leaving at 1440 on Wednesdays is optional. Students may remain on site to participate in enrichment activities, clubs or supported study. Students must enrol onto an activity so that we can ensure capacity and account for attendance. Coach services and public bus schedules will align to operate around the earlier time of 1440 on a Wednesday with our 'late bus' service leaving after 1540. Our late bus service will continue to operate as it does now with allocated seats that need to be booked in advance.

Is teaching time being reduced?

No. Teaching time is protected. Students will receive the full amount of curriculum time each week, with improved lesson distribution across the timetable.

Why are lesson lengths being shortened?

Feedback from both staff and students indicated that concentration can decline in longer lessons. Shorter, more frequent lessons support engagement, particularly for students with

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SEND or attention needs.

How will transport be managed?

Our transport partners have been fully consulted and are making adjustments to ensure that all services align with the revised academy day timings throughout the week. This includes public and contract bus services.

Will this affect after-school clubs?

Enrichment and clubs will continue and, in some cases, will take place earlier on a Wednesday making them more accessible and reducing challenges associated with Winter daylight hours. Other afterschool clubs and opportunities will take place throughout the week. *Not all clubs and opportunities will take place on a Wednesday.*

Will there be further consultation?

Yes. Further consultation will take place next academic year regarding the potential redistribution of working days for 2027–2028, including engagement with feeder primary schools. The impact of the timetable changes will be reviewed in advance of the following academic year 2027/28.

Once again, thank you for engaging so positively with this consultation. Your views have directly shaped the decisions taken, and we remain firmly committed to working in partnership with families and the wider community to provide the very best educational experience for our students.

Yours sincerely,

James Oxley

Principal

Mildenhall College Academy

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