



Friesland School

Letter to all families from;

Draycott Primary School, Firfield Primary School, Cloudside Primary School, Grange Primary School, Longmoor Primary School, Parklands Infant and Nursery School, Ladycross Infants School, Harrington Junior School and Friesland Secondary School

Consultation on the Proposed Changes to the Christmas Holiday Dates for 2017 – 2018

Friday 5th May 2017

Dear Parents and Carers

Following the consultation with all stakeholders; staff, Governors, parents and carers, the local cluster of primary schools and secondary schools involved have met this week to discuss the views received regarding the proposals.

The cluster believed strongly that it was important for any decision to be agreed across all schools as we share many families; whether between Infant and Junior schools, Infant and Primary schools or Primary and Junior schools with local Secondary Schools. The holiday dates published by the Local Authority are for guidelines only and schools can consult on changes if felt appropriate, providing the number of holiday days remain the same. As families will know, the cluster decided to look at possibly changing the Christmas dates 2017 - 2018 due to the very long period leading up to Christmas and a very small window after the festive season before returning to school.

The reasons for this consideration were as follows;

- The original dates meant that there would be two weeks; one before and one after the holidays which consisted of part weeks. This was felt to be very disjointed in relation to the blocks of work children are taught as these are planned in full weeks.
- The original dates also meant that children would be expected to return to school on the 2nd January 2018. After the Christmas holiday this year, children returned to school on the 3rd January and whilst some schools planned an INSET for this day, meaning children returned on the 4th January, some schools still saw an attendance dip as families were on holiday and visiting relatives and friends and so did not return to school until the following week.
- Whilst the original holiday dates fit more with Derby City, these are not in line with Nottingham and Nottinghamshire and so caused difficulties for some families.
- In addition, the original dates did not give families time to visit family and friends over New Year as the children would be expected back at school on the 2nd January.

In discussing the responses and comments received, the following conclusions have been drawn;

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Headteacher: Mr P Monk BA(Hons), MA, NPQH





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- Governing Bodies of each of the cluster of consulting schools were in agreement with the proposed changes for the reasons detailed.
- All but 3 members of staff across the schools were in agreement with the proposed changes for the reasons detailed.

The response to the consultation from Friesland parents was much higher than from the other school who consulted. We received 80 parental responses: 69 were in favour of changing the Christmas holiday pattern; 11 were against the change. Across the other nine schools the huge majority of parents/carers were in favour of the change.

Therefore, the local cluster of schools has made the decision to change the original published dates to the Christmas holiday for 2017 – 2018. Schools will finish for the term for children and staff on Friday 22nd December 2017 and reopen on Monday 8th January 2018. Schools will make their own arrangements for staff training to account for Friday 5th January 2018. This will also include Wilsthorpe Secondary School who will be informing their families of the changes in a separate letter.

As Headteachers, we understand that families may have already booked holidays and so we have agreed that these will be honoured in the week leading up the end of term where individual schools have been notified of these in advance.

We understand that a small minority of parents will not be in support of these changes and it is important to note that these also affect a number of staff with children and child care arrangements. It is however strongly believed that these changes have been considered and agreed with the best interests of the families and children that we serve. We also hope that as this decision has been made with almost 8 months' notice, that families will be able to accommodate the changes.

As a cluster of schools we would like to thank the families who have taken part in the consultation and very much believe that these changes will be of benefit to children and their families.

Yours sincerely

Mr P Monk – Headteacher at Friesland

(The same letter is being sent out today by Headteachers of all of the schools listed at the top of this letter)

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