Thank you for providing your responses to our questions regarding our proposed timetable changes. In considering anecdotal comments about issues related to the current timetable that supported concerns we had with the day-to-day complexity of it, we spent considerable time seeking feedback from staff to inform the development of a proposal for a new timetable to present to staff, parents/carers and students. The proposed timetable allows flexibility in staffing and resourcing across the school through alignment of break times and 15 lessons across the week for the primary and secondary sectors. It also maintains the broad spectrum of learning opportunities for students and provides less complex solutions for meeting the requirements of the new teaching Enterprise Agreement.

I apologise that the proposed changes to the timetable were provided to you late and the period of consultation through online feedback was short. While the turnaround was short, we appreciate the feedback provided by staff and parents/carers. It provided excellent insight to the concerns of the adults in our community along with the benefits the proposed timetable could provide. This Frequently Asked Questions style document outlines the common themes identified in the parent/carer feedback along with a response that could remove or mitigate a number of the concerns while maintaining the benefits.

**End of the day**

* ***Theme:*** 
  + Finish time at 3:00pm will bring more pressure on parents as they will have to reorganise workload and work hours for school pick up

To alleviate this, which was a very strong theme, we can increase the duration of the break times to accommodate school ending at 3:15. While a reduction in break time was an initial goal of the proposal to reduce the periods of unstructured play for students and better reduce UV exposure, the impact on parents/carers identified through your comments was significant. In response, the school day would end at 3:15 as it does now. The 15 minute ‘buffer’ time for collection of students would remain in place.

Other minor themes this would address were parents having to reduce work hours, spending more money on afterschool care, alignment of FAPS pickup, the reduction in socialising time for students and time for students to play/exercise.

**Reduction in teaching hours (daily)**

* ***Themes:***
  + From a pedagogical point of view, students will have even less time to do an already challenging double curriculum.
  + Meaningful PE & music lessons might be difficult in only 40mins per week for the younger primary students.
  + For primary students, it would seem three periods in a row in the morning is too long without a break.

Daily Teaching Hours

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Area | Current | Proposed | Difference |
| Primary (daily) | 4 hours 40 minutes | 4 hours 45 minutes | +5 minutes/day |
| Secondary (daily) | 4 hours 47 minutes | 4 hours 35 mins | -12 minutes/day |
| Secondary (per line/week) | 3 hours 8 minutes | 2 hours 45 mins | -23 minutes/week |

In primary, specialist learning area lessons would be reduced by 7-8 minutes per week. While specialist skills and knowledge are taught in these areas, consolidation of them also occurs during general primary class time, which would increase by 5 minutes per day. Primary teachers have flexibility in their morning sessions to include breaks for students that can include fruit, movement and brain breaks. These strategies are already part of the repertoire of primary teachers.

In secondary, while learning time per day and per line would be decreased, this would be offset in part by an increase in Interdisciplinary Unit (IDU) time by 30 hours per year, increasing multidisciplinary learning that would provide increased opportunities for students to engage in real world concepts and issues, such as sustainability, in global contexts. IDU as delivered at the school will be redefined with an increased academic focus aligned with the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program (IB MYP).

Considerations for the secondary French learning program to accommodate the reduction in time per line can be made to assist students to manage the work commitments of the bilingual learning program.

A final decision is yet to be made on the best use of the rolling lesson in the timetable, with one option being that it could be the used to provide extra time to minimise disruption to learning programs for the classes that are missed due to Monday public holidays (5 days in 2024).

**Sharing the playground and other facilities (e.g. canteen)**

* ***Theme:*** I am very concerned about mixing high school and primary school children together in a confined space. I’m concerned about exposing young kids to older content (swearing, media, child inappropriate behaviour), bullying and violence. I’m concerned about younger kids feeling intimidated and unsafe at school. I am concerned about the lack of space for kids to be active in the playground or only feeling safe in a small play area.

This was also a major theme with strong concerns raised and reference to a significant incident involving secondary and primary students earlier this year. While the incident was significant, it is the only incident of this magnitude that has happened at the school to my understanding, despite primary and secondary students having 2 hours and 15 minutes of break time in common. During these common times, primary and secondary students have their own designated areas of the playground which are supervised by teachers with additional support from learning support assistants.

For the times when primary and secondary students currently have common break times, a boundary exists in-line with the football posts nearest to the low ropes equipment to separate the primary and secondary students. These separated areas would continue to be in place for all breaks. Teachers actively monitor students during break times and reinforce the boundaries for primary and secondary students. We have planned to install a second artificial turf soccer pitch in the secondary area of the playground in January 2024, removing the reason for secondary students to access any area of the playground designated to primary students. We will also investigate using Montgomery oval as an additional secondary playground area to reduce the number of students on the main oval.

For supervision, teachers are assigned to specific areas/zones within the primary and secondary areas, with secondary having an additional ‘Rover’ (Executive Teacher) to coordinate the teachers on duty in the various areas secondary students use. All teachers wear high visibility vests (for easy identification and location) and carry Walkie Talkies, which are set to a K-10 common channel. Protocols are in place for use of Walkie Talkies to ensure confidentiality and for accessing relevant K-10 assistance if required.

|  |
| --- |
| Areas/Zones primary students are designated are: |
| * Kindergarten students remain in the Kindergarten playground |
| * Years 1-2 play on the quad, at the mud kitchens, the junior equipment and courts adjacent to the Francophonie Hall |
| * Years 3-6 are allowed to use the basketball courts, the Low Ropes, artificial turf and grassed area to the primary/secondary boundary |
| * Students can also access the library during break times |
| * Canteen (to purchase food) |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Areas/Zones secondary students are designated are: | | | |
| * Main Quad | * Library | * Gym | * Oyster Shell |
| * Oval (to the primary/secondary boundary line) | | | |
| * Secondary basketball courts and cricket nets | | | |
| * Canteen (to purchase food and there are a few tables for quiet games/conversations | | | |

* ***Theme:*** How will the canteen function if primary and secondary kids are there at the same time?

In meeting with the canteen convenor, we have identified that the current system in place for ordering primary lunches can continue with the proposed changed configuration of breaks. There would need to be a slightly earlier cutoff time for placing orders. A very small number of primary students access the canteen for over the counter sales and the presence of primary and secondary students in the canteen while purchasing food would be managed through improved service lanes and additional playground supervision.

**Worsened Traffic conditions**

* ***Theme:*** Increased traffic congestion in the mornings, with the alignment of primary and high school drop offs.

In the current timetable, both primary and secondary finish at the same time (3:15). As mentioned in *End of the Day*, this would not change in the revised proposed new timetable.

In the mornings, the 30 minute ‘window’ between 8:30 – 9:00 for dropping students at school would remain, providing a reasonable period for this to occur without additional congestion. Playground supervision begins at 8:30, so students who arrive from this time on are supervised.

While the revised proposed timetable changes don’t provide a solution to the issue with students potentially missing buses, we can attempt to negotiate with Transport Canberra for a change in afternoon bus schedules for 2025 onwards.

**Break times (lunch etc)**

* ***Theme:*** Bringing lunch forward to 11am is far too early.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Primary | Current recess 10:35 – 11:05 lunch 12:50 – 1:40 |
| Proposed lunch 11:00 – 12:00 recess 1:50 – 2:20 |
| Secondary | Current recess M W Fr 11:00 – 11:30 T 11:26 – 11:56 Th 11:26 – 12:00 |
| Current lunch M 1:20 – 2:20 T 1:34 – 2:02 W 1:25 – 2:20 Th 1:00 2:02 F 1:25 – 2:20 |
| Proposed lunch 11:00 – 12:00 recess 1:50 – 2:20 |

The proposed swap of morning tea and lunch is something that a number of schools across the ACT and Australia do, largely to reduce student exposure to UV. The UV exposure reduction associated with our proposed change is negligible, particularly with the primary school cohort. In recent years schools also report improved student behaviour in classes after an early lunch break and improved levels of student concentration and achievement, particularly when eating is scheduled after play. As part of the reversal of lunch and recess, we could implement eating time from 11:45 – 11:55 following a period of play. There is, unfortunately, limited research on this topic, although us undertaking action research on this could be beneficial.

* ***Theme***: I can’t see a need for primary and secondary teachers to collaborate during recess and lunchtimes. This can happen after 3.15 or during stand down (which is not holidays for teachers).

Alignment of half the lessons and both breaks between the primary and secondary areas of the school would allow greater flexibility in human resource use, including teachers collaborating and teaching across both areas of the school and greater flexibility in how learning support assistants can support students.

In addition, improved opportunities for structured peer support and buddy class activities would be possible, including opportunities for secondary student to work with primary students through Service as Action (an element of the IB MYP) and events such as teacher supported lunch time competitions or homework clubs.

**Enterprise Agreement**

The current timetable makes it very difficult for the school to implement the required changes to teacher’s working conditions as outlined in the recently negotiated Enterprise Agreement. We are obliged to implement the requirements and the proposed new timetable makes this task achievable and less complex.

The requirements we need to implement include:

* schools allocating reasonable time for curriculum planning, lesson preparation, assessment and reporting. 10 hours per week is generally required and may fall both within and outside the required hours of attendance that are negotiated for your school
* classroom teachers being provided no less than three hours per week (or an average of 6 hours per fortnight) of release time which must be scheduled during the hours of student attendance (generally 8.30am to 3.30pm) and provided in blocks of:
  + for preschool and primary – 45 minutes or longer (goal 1 hour or more)
  + for high schools and colleges – no less than 1 full school period or greater
* teachers are entitled to access reasonable breaks during the working day free from any directed duties. The minimum break over a school day is 30 minutes within the first 5 hours of work. This is in addition to release time.