



16 November 2018

For the attention of all parents and carers of pupils at Abraham Moss High School (3 to 16)

Proposal from September 2019

Close the school at 12:15 every Friday for Secondary Phase pupils.

Close the school at 12:30 every Friday for Primary Phase pupils.

Abraham Moss Community School (3 to 16) is now in the strongest position it has ever been in since the school opened in 1973. We are oversubscribed in every year group from Nursery in the primary phase through to Year 11 in the secondary phase. All year groups across the all-through school have a waiting list of families wishing to place their children in our school.

Outcomes including attainment and progress at every key stage of education across both phases continue to improve; all members of staff are dedicated and determined to continue building on the significantly improved standard of education pupils at our school are afforded.

We are committed to remaining a school that serves the needs of the local community. Our Ofsted inspection report reflects the excellent work stakeholders including governors, staff, pupils, parents and community partners have done over the last three years to make our school good with outstanding features.

Looking to the future we must remain mindful of those factors that could negatively impact on our school and specifically our pupils, their families and our staff. If we do not continue to evolve and adapt to the many demands and challenges placed on us as a school community our pupils, their families and our staff will suffer and we will not be able to sustain what we have all fought so hard to achieve.

Going forward I want to protect/maintain the home, work life-balance of my pupils as well as staff because this is essential to our future success and well-being. At Abraham Moss we pride ourselves on listening to our pupils, parents and staff.

Our Pupil Voice Leadership Team (PVLТ) requested that the school consider closing early each Friday for a variety of reasons; the vast majority of pupils wish to prepare for and attend Jumu'ah (Friday Prayer), whilst other pupils simply expressed their desire to enjoy their childhood and be at home with their families. The governing body and senior leaders have considered this request and have agreed to proceed with consultation. Recognising and respecting pupils, parents and staff rights to take part in Jumu'ah and enabling them to fulfil their religious observations is important to school leaders. Protecting the rights of children, in particular their right to a childhood, to thrive and be healthy is not only of great importance to school leaders, it is a statutory duty.

The United Nations (UN) have enshrined the rights of the child in law. Article 14 protects a child's "right to think and believe what they choose and also to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Governments must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents to guide their child as they grow up." At Abraham Moss we will not discriminate against any pupil who wishes to practise their religion.

Pupils have a right to a happy childhood and leisure time is an important part in a child's social and emotional development. The social, emotional and mental health of pupils is of paramount importance to me; a child who suffers will not perform academically to their full potential.

Please read the attached hyperlinks to assure you that what is being proposed is entirely legal. The local education authority has also been consulted and they know that what we are proposing as a school is not illegal. A number of other local schools close early each Friday and we are now in a position where we wish to do the same for our pupils, parents and community.

Each bullet point below provides a link to a website where you can view the relevant guidance and legislation relating to school attendance.

- [The Education Act 2002 – section 32](#)
- [The Education Act 1996 – section 551\(1\)](#)
- [The Education \(School Day and School Year\) \(England\) Regulations 1999](#)
- [The Changing of School Sessions Times \(England\) \(Revocation\) Regulations 2011](#)

There are additional reasons that have influenced school leaders at Abraham Moss in considering the proposal put forward by the PVLТ. During my first assembly in the Primary Phase in September I asked pupils if there were any issues worrying them, a significant number of pupils put their hands up and stated that they were worried about exams and failing their SATs. When children aged as young as 7 express at the start of the academic year that they are worried about “failing exams” I think as school leaders, parents and stakeholders we have to ask ourselves what is the purpose of education.

A number of schools are considering closing their schools each Friday afternoon in order to improve the SEMH of children and staff

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2018/apr/27/school-may-cut-hours-to-stop-teacher-burnout>

I am sure parents will be interested to know that over 75% of mental health problems start before the early 20s and referrals to CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) are most common in the age range 11 to 15. There were 90,000 referrals to CAMHS in 2015 and the Children’s Commissioner’s Lightning Review (May 2016) found that 1 in 250 children were referred to CAMHS. Worryingly 28% (67,200 children) were not allocated a service and one CAMHS reported that 78% of referrals were

turned away. To read more regarding SEMH (Social Emotional & Mental Health) of children follow

<https://www.pearson.com/uk/educators/special-educational-needs-disability/send-blog/2016/08/setting-the-national-picture-for-pupils-with-social-emotional-and-mental-health-needs.html>

Poorest and brightest girls more likely to be depressed <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/may/18/poorest-brightest-girls-uk-depressed-study-teenagers-mental-health>

Government advice regarding statutory duty re working hours <https://www.gov.uk/maximum-weekly-working-hours>

3-Year Key Stage 4 Curriculum

Moving to a 2-year Key Stage 3 and a 3-year Key Stage 4 model will give more curriculum time to complete the new GCSE programmes of study which are greater in terms of depth and breadth of study required. Pupils are no longer tested at the end of Year 9 and we know from feedback from parents that GCSE study and success is of paramount importance to pupils and their parents. School leaders at Abraham Moss will ensure that pupils have sufficient GCSE curriculum time to study for the more demanding revised GCSEs.

Consultation Feedback

If you would like to provide feedback on this proposal **please complete the attached questionnaire and return to reception in either the primary phase or the secondary phase of the school no later than Friday, 14 December 2018**. When you complete the questionnaire please make sure you write the name of all your children who attend Abraham Moss along with the year they are currently studying in.

To re-iterate, I am making this proposal because I firmly believe that the proposal will improve the welfare and the academic performance of our pupils and I also expect that this will have a positive impact on staff performance as well..

Yours sincerely,

Gill Houghton
Headteacher