



Q & A RELATING TO THE NEW SHAPE OF THE WEEK 2009

In the Q & A below we have tried to address those points that we think will be of most interest to parents and pupils. The list is not exhaustive. Further planning and discussion may lead to adjustments. The Saturday morning programme will almost certainly develop further, and we will involve staff, boarding and day pupils in helping us to shape an attractive and purposeful time.

If there are any other questions that you wish to discuss or if you require further details of the answers given in this document then please email the Director of Admissions & Marketing (admissions@priorpark.co.uk).

GENERAL POINTS

1) **Why the change now?**

- We want to make a change from a position of strength and the Governors believe that Prior Park, judged by many criteria, is in one of the strongest positions in its history. The school roll in September will be the highest ever.
- We wanted to show that this was a decision of the current Headmaster and that it is part of a continuing strategy.
- It takes up to a year to finalise the details. Experience of other schools is that refinement of the arrangements will occur both during that year and beyond.
- The Headmaster and Director of Admissions & Marketing have listened over recent years to a growing number of parents of pupils at all age levels who have found Saturday morning lessons restricting.
- We have much evidence that families wish to have family time at weekends and as a Catholic Christian school we seek to support family life.
- We want to give our boarders a chance to relax and recharge, giving them the opportunity for further study, activities and participating in the extended Sunday activity programme.
- We want to enhance our boarding provision and we will be promoting both weekly boarding and full time boarding.

2) **What consultation was carried out?**

- We are conscious that we wish to provide the best learning environment for pupils. We feel that this is best done within a 5 day week timetable so that both boarding and day pupils have the opportunity to have a different regime at the weekends. The Governors and the Headmaster took the view that we felt secure about the need for this change and in touch with parental opinion in general.
- The Headmaster and the Director of Admissions have been noting views over many years. We know that one of the main reasons that parents have turned down offers of places at all age levels is because of Saturday morning lessons.
- The announcement has met with overwhelming support and already an increasing interest is being shown by prospective parents.

3) What does the new HM think about the changes?

- He has been fully briefed and is wholly in favour.

4) How, when and in what format will the details of the change be presented to parents?

- Parents will have the opportunity to attend various presentation evenings in the Michaelmas Term. Further details to follow.

5) If this makes PPC more popular can you take in more pupils or will you be more selective?

- We want to maintain our broad entry criteria but clearly, if the change proves popular, there may be more competition for the available places.

THE NEW SATURDAY MORNING PROGRAMME

A new post of Assistant Head will be created. This person will have overall responsibility for the organisation of the weekly and weekend co-curricular programme. He/she will be a member of the Senior Management Team.

6) What will the programme be for Saturday morning?

- Boarders will have a later breakfast at 8.30 am with registration at 9.00 am
Session 1 will be private study 9.15-10.45 in Houses or in ICT or Library areas.
- Session 2 probably 11.00 am-12.15 pm will provide opportunity for further study, rehearsal time, recreational sport (for those not involved in fixtures) and other activities such as life skill courses. The time will be well used. Also it is likely that Saturday mornings will provide opportunities for additional Drama and music rehearsals and time for outdoor and other pursuits. Revision sessions may be included at appropriate times of the year.
- The activity session will be optional for the Sixth Form.
- Boarding and day pupils will be given a voice in shaping the Saturday morning programme.
- Some morning fixtures may be played from 11.00 am (approximately 3 or 4 times per term)

7) Will day pupils be expected to come in on Saturdays mornings?

- Day pupils will be most welcome to attend the Saturday morning programme.
- We are considering the question of school buses, but other schools which have gone down this route have found it impractical to run Saturday buses.
- If day pupils wish to join us on Saturday there may accommodation available on a Friday night
- School catering will run as now. Day pupils will not be charged extra for Saturday lunch.

8) Will day Houses be open on Saturday mornings?

- It is envisaged that centralised day pupil registration will take place in the Mansion initially. Day houses will be opened if this becomes necessary.

9) Will any Saturday morning school be compulsory?

- Yes- Open Morning & Speech Day, and for fixtures, of course.

BOARDING PROGRAMME

10) What will be the structure of the weekend for boarders?

- The Saturday morning programme is outlined above
- Saturday evening activities will take place in Houses as now.
- Sunday observance of Mass will take place as now and all day pupils and their families will be most welcome. Senior Chapel and Junior Chapel choirs will take part in Mass as at present.
- An afternoon Sunday activity programme will take place as at present
- One trip per term, a whole day Sunday outing with Mass on Saturday evening

11) What about weekly boarding?

- Weekly boarding should prove attractive. Such pupils will leave school on Friday night and return either Sunday night or Monday morning.
- A new weekly boarding fee will be introduced.
- We hope to retain flexi-boarding if space permits

BANK HOLIDAYS, EXEATS, LENGTH OF YEAR & LENGTH OF DAY

12) What will happen about May Bank Holiday Mondays?

- From 2010 the school will be closed for an exeat on this weekend.

13) What will happen about the May Bank Holiday Monday 2009?

- Sporting fixtures and Duke of Edinburgh Award expeditions, and normal school lessons will continue for 2009.

14) What will happen to the length of term?

- The term may be extended but not by more than a few days each year.

15) Will exeats continue as at present?

- Yes

16) Will the length of the day increase?

- The normal school day will not finish later than 6.00 p.m.

ACADEMIC CURRICULUM

17) What will be the impact on my academic curriculum?

- With very few exceptions, academic time will be increased.
- The changes will have a most beneficial effect on teaching and learning.
- Pupils will have more time for independent learning whilst maintaining the strong, positive teaching that the school provides.
- Saturday morning will allow time for additional revision classes at appropriate times of the year.

PASTORAL TIME

18) Will the quality of pastoral care be diminished?

- No

19) Will year group assemblies continue?

- Yes

20) What impact will there be on PDP?

- The PDP programme will continue as it remains central to our mission.

RELIGIOUS LIFE

21) Will there be any change to Mass times?

- No

22) What about Mass on Sundays?

- Sunday Mass is cherished at Prior Park
- It will continue at the same time as present and will be a central act for the school community, with the expectation that all boarders participate and open to all.
- We hope that the numbers of day pupils and their families will increase.

23) Will Mass be celebrated each day as now?

- Yes, we want numbers at daily Mass to grow

24) Will we expect Senior Chapel choir and Servers to attend each Sunday?

- Yes. There will be no change from the present expectation and we greatly value the contribution of our servers and choir members.

CO-CURRICULAR PROGRAMME

SPORT

25) Will there be an impact on sport?

- We have gone to great lengths to ensure that there will be no detrimental impact on sport. There will actually be more provision for team players and, we hope, enhanced coaching for all.

26) Will there be a reduction in midweek fixtures?

- Junior sports fixture will continue mid-week. A few senior fixtures will take place mid-week for example on exeat weeks.
- A full programme of Saturday afternoon fixtures will continue.

27) Will there be Saturday morning fixtures?

- Yes perhaps 3 or 4 times per term

28) If a pupil has gone home on Friday night and is due to play an away match can he/she go direct to the match with parents?

- There will be some flexibility provided that the arrangements are agreed in advance.

MUSIC & DRAMA

29) Will there be a reduction in the music activities on offer?

- We will maintain the wealth of musical opportunities that the school offers.

30) Will musical activities take place on Saturday mornings?

- It is envisaged that some peripatetic lessons may take place on Saturday mornings, by agreement.

31) Will drama rehearsals take place on Saturday morning?

- The drama department will hold rehearsals at the weekend as at present. Part of Saturday morning is likely to be used for this.

COMBINED CADET FORCE AND DUKE OF EDINBURGH AWARD PROGRAMMES

32) What effect will there be on CCF provision?

- We are working hard to ensure that the existing conflict between CCF and Senior games is removed, so CCF arrangements will be enhanced.
- Saturday morning may provide further opportunities for outdoor activities such as sailing, canoeing etc.

33) What will be the impact on the Duke of Edinburgh Award programme?

- The Duke of Edinburgh Award programme will remain in activity time as present.
- Expeditions which take place over the weekend will have less impact on academic time.

OTHER SATURDAY MORNING EVENTS

34) Will detentions still happen and when will they happen?

- Friday evenings and exceptionally on Saturday mornings.

35) Morrisby Tests

- L5 pupils will be expected to attend one Saturday morning for Morrisby Tests

36) House Events

- Some House events may take place on Saturday mornings.