



16th December 2024

Dear Parents and Carers

Gathering your views on a possible change to the academic calendar

At Pyramid Schools Trust we regularly review our practices and seek ways to improve the experience of all stakeholders. We also value receiving the views of our community before making important decisions. I am, therefore, writing to you today to ask for your thoughts on a possible change to the academic year.

You may be aware that many schools and multi-academy trusts across the country have changed the way the school year is structured in order to allow staff, pupils and families to benefit from a two-week half term break in the autumn term. We are considering a similar change for PST schools.

It is important to note that no decision has been made yet. This is a genuine consultation and we will only make a decision after considering the views of parents, staff, pupils and other members of our community. Any change would not reduce the amount of teaching students would receive; it would simply re-distribute the teaching days and term dates.

Proposal

We are consulting with stakeholders to gain your views around breaking up the very long autumn term by including a two-week half term holiday. In order to achieve this, we would reallocate three existing staff training days to twilight sessions across the year and finish the summer term slightly later.

We are proposing for the 2025/26 academic year that the first half of autumn term would start on Tuesday 2nd September 2025 and conclude on Friday 17th October 2025 returning to school on Monday 3rd November 2025. This allows the term to be split equally into two seven-week half terms.

Benefits

Staff and student wellbeing are very important to us and we witness first-hand, every year, the toll the long autumn term takes on the school community. Inevitably this results in a significant increase in staff and pupil sickness absence. It is crucial that our students have their regular teachers in front of them for as many lessons as possible. Evidence from schools that have already adopted this approach is overwhelmingly positive; for example, Unity Trust, Suffolk, which has 31 primary and secondary schools across East Anglia, reported staff absence reduced by 50% and pupil absence by 25% when they moved to a two-week half term break. This can only be of benefit to pupils' learning.

A further possible benefit to families and staff is the option to use the extended break for a family holiday, taking advantage of lower prices not usually available in the usual school holiday period.

Pyramid Schools Trust

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You will undoubtedly have seen in the national press the challenges around the recruitment and retention of school staff. Currently, we are very fortunate to be staffed with an expert workforce across Pyramid Schools Trust and we are committed to maintaining this position by prioritising staff wellbeing. It is felt this proposal would have a positive impact on the wellbeing and health of both staff and pupils.

In order to facilitate this extra week in October we would do the following:

Disaggregate the training days below into twilight staff training sessions:

- Tuesday 2nd September 2025
- Friday 28th November 2025
- Monday 20th July 2026

This would mean we retain staff training days on 1st September 2025 and 13th April 2026.

In order to retain the requisite number of teaching days we would extend the summer term slightly, ending on Tuesday 21st July 2026. This time of year has been chosen specifically as the weather and day length make the extension of this half term more bearable for all.

You can share your views on this proposal by clicking [here](#) and completing the response form. The consultation will run until Friday 10th January 2025. We will inform you of our decision by Friday 17th January 2025.

Yours sincerely



Steve Kelly - Chief Executive Officer