



Wednesday, 20 May 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

Important changes at Backwell School from September 2026

I am writing to inform you of two important changes that will come into effect from September 2026. These changes have been carefully planned to ensure that Backwell School continues to provide an excellent, broad education, while enhancing our site to further improve the daily experience of our students.

Every decision has been guided by our core priorities: pupil wellbeing, staff wellbeing, high-quality teaching and learning, and ensuring that our school remains a calm, purposeful and inclusive environment for all students.

Below is an overview of the two changes, along with the reasons for them and the benefits we expect.

Change 1: A New School Day Structure – Moving from 6 Lessons to 5 Lessons

From September, the school will move from 6 lessons per day (50 minutes each) to 5 lessons per day (60 minutes each) within a 50-period fortnight.

Why we are making this change

A reduced number of lessons each day—combined with longer, more focused learning time—will allow:

- Improved learning and behaviour, particularly later in the day
- Fewer transitions, meaning less movement around the site and a calmer environment
- Reduced student and staff fatigue, as removing a potential sixth transition in the day lessens cognitive load and disruption
- More time for deeper learning, practical work and extended writing within lessons

The taught curriculum has also been updated because of the change in structure so that:

- Key Stage 3 students will receive a dedicated Personal Development lesson, ensuring statutory content is delivered in a high-quality, purposeful way
- Key Stage 5 students will receive an extra 40 minutes of teacher taught time per fortnight
- No subject will see a reduction of more than 20 minutes of taught time in a fortnight. Much of this time will be offset due to the longer lesson length resulting in a reduction of lost learning time during a lesson changeover

Change 2: Improved Dining Facilities and Separate Social Times for KS3 and KS4/5

Alongside the timetable change, we are improving break and lunchtime arrangements for all students.

What is changing

The current Lower School dining room is being redesigned into a whole-school dining centre with:

- Indoor seating for approximately 450 students
- A canopy covered outdoor area for an additional 250 students that will be adjacent to the Dining Centre

- A new modern kitchen with the capability to serve an increased number of students in the Dining Centre
- A grab and go container ‘café’ that will serve students in the outside space
- Improved queuing systems for students
- A modern, high-quality dining space feel that is fully fit for purpose

Why this is important

These changes will:

- Improve student wellbeing by reducing overcrowding of our dining spaces
- Ensure students have sufficient space to eat comfortably and spend social time positively. This includes during periods of poor weather where we currently have insufficient capacity for students at social time
- Increase the efficiency of how we serve meals at social time allowing more students to be served during these times
- Create a more attractive, central social area that strengthens our school community both before, during and after school

At present, our indoor seating capacity is significantly below what is needed for our student numbers and the quality of the dining space available for our school community is simply not of the quality I expect for our school. This investment ensures that Backwell’s facilities meet the needs of the school for many years to come.

The two changes will mean that the school day will change – see below. To be clear, the hours of the school day will not change, with one exception, that all students will finish school at 15:10.

Our new school day from September 2026

KS3	KS4 & KS5
Tutorial 8:45 - 9:10	Tutorial 8:45 - 9:10
Period 1 09:15 - 10:10	Period 1 09:15 - 10:10
Break 10:10 - 10:30	Period 2 10:15 - 11:10
Period 2 10:35 - 11:30	
Period 3 11:35 - 12:30	Break 11:10 - 11:30
Lunch 12:30 - 13:10	Period 4 12:35 - 13:30
Period 4 13:15 - 14:10	Lunch 13:30 - 14:10
Period 5 14:15 - 15:10	Period 5 14:15 - 15:10

5-minute movement break to allow students to move to their next lesson

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What This Means for Your Child

Taken together, these changes will:

1. Improve the quality of learning throughout the day
2. Reduce congestion and overcrowding during social times thus improving the social time experience of our students
3. Enhance our site and facilities, providing modern day school dining and social spaces
4. Ensure that Backwell remains a high-performing school offering a broad and balanced curriculum.
- 5.

In short, our school site will feel calmer, the day will run more smoothly, and students will benefit from improved facilities and learning conditions.

Thank you, as always, for your ongoing support.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Will Penny', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Will Penny
Headteacher