

16th March 2026

Dear Parent/ Carer,

In preparation for the move to the Harris Federation Trust from 1st September, Harris Academy Benfleet intends to introduce changes to the school timetable. These changes are two-fold; firstly, a change to the October half-term, creating a two-week break instead of the current one-week holiday. The school is seeking views from parents/carers, staff, students, and wider stakeholders on this proposed change to the October half-term holiday, increasing it from one week to two weeks.

Secondly, a small adjustment to the length of the school day, to accommodate this change and to redistribute the learning time for the extended Autumn half term.

In addition, as part of the preparations for onboarding to the Harris Federation from 1st September the school will be allocating an additional INSET day on Monday 6th July 2026.

The consultation aims to inform decision-making and gather feedback before any final determination is made.

1. Summary of the Proposals

The proposal is to extend the October half-term break to two weeks and adjust term dates and the school day elsewhere in the academic year to maintain statutory learning requirements, ensuring no learning time is lost as a result of the extended October break.

The school day includes lunch times and other breaks as well as teaching time and any enrichment activities that all pupils are expected to attend. It does not include optional before or after school provision.

Headteacher: Sarah Cox, BA (Hons)

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2. Changes to the school day from the 2026/2027

The proposal would result in the school day amended from 1st September 2026 with all lessons 65 minutes. Students will continue to have 5 minutes movement time between lessons. Students are expected to be on site from 8:25am each day to ensure they are ready promptly for their tutor period/assembly at 8:30am

Tutor period/Assembly	8:30am
Period 1	8:50am
Period 2	10.00am
Break	11:05am
Period 3	11:25am
Period 4	12:35pm
Lunchtime	1:40pm
Period 5	2:10pm
End of School Day	3:15pm

Proposed Term Date Changes for 2026/2027 academic year

Term	Start	Half term	End
Autumn 2026	Thursday 3 rd September 2026	Monday 19 th October to Friday 30 th October 2026 (2 weeks)	Monday 21 st December 2026
Spring 2027	Monday 4 th January 2027	Monday 15 th February to Friday 19 th February 2027 (1 week)	Thursday 26 th March 2027
Summer 2027	Monday 12 th April 2027	Monday 31 st May to Friday 4 th June 2027 (1 week)	Friday 23 rd July 2027

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The proposed INSET days for next academic year are 3rd and 4th September 2026, 9th October 2026, 12th February 2027 and 23rd July 2027.

3. Rationale for the Proposed Changes

As well as alignment with Harris Federation academies on the length of the school day, there are clear benefits to increasing the amount of time students spend learning and to a two-week half term. These include improved wellbeing of staff and students, reduced mid-term illness, and better learning continuity.

4. Potential Implications

There are minimum implications for changing the timings of the school day, so impact on staff, students and families will be limited.

However, with regard to the introduction of a two-week October half term, there will be some impact in the first year of this change. Possible implications include childcare considerations, staffing arrangements, coordination with transport providers, and curriculum planning adjustments. Experienced Harris Federation leaders will support the academy on managing the implications of a two-week half-term, drawing on the embedded practice in its 55 academies.

Where parents can evidence existing holiday bookings that are unamendable and will be affected by the change (e.g., if other term dates for the 2026/2027 change to accommodate the introduction of the two-week half term), the academy will give consideration to these being authorised absences.

5. Consultation Questions

1. Do you support the proposal to extend the October half-term to two weeks?
2. Do you agree that the school should amend the timing of the school day to facilitate this change thus ensuring that student learning hours are not lost?

6. Timeline

The consultation will open at 8am on Monday 16th March 2026 and close at 3pm on Friday 27th March 2026.

All consultation responses will be reviewed by myself, the governing body, trustees, and representatives from the Harris Federation.

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A final decision will be communicated to parents and staff and published on the school's website by Friday 24th April 2026. If approved, the changes will take effect from 1st September 2026.

7. How to Respond

Responses may be provided via the MS Forms survey: [Consultation on Proposed Change to the October Half-Term Holiday and School Day](#)

If a paper form is required, please contact the school directly via: info@theappletonschool.org

Yours sincerely,



Ms S Cox
Headteacher

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