



# GURU NANAK SIKH ACADEMY LTD

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Principal: Mr R. S. Sandhu

10<sup>th</sup> March 2017

Dear Parent / Carer

Over the last few years we have been following the Hillingdon agreed term dates for Schools. Annually this has caused problems with parents wishing to take their children out of school during term time around half term and the winter break.

We believe that it is time we reviewed our term times and set in motion a change that benefits our students and supports parents and staff to better serve the needs of our children. The Trustees of the GNSA Strategic Board along with the Local Governing Bodies of all three schools are consulting regarding possible changes to our academic year from 2017-18.

In summary, we are proposing as follows:

- 1) **To introduce a two-week half term break during the autumn term rather than the one week break currently in place.**
- 2) **To increase the Christmas winter break to two full weeks.**

The rationale and reasons for this change are set out below with the proposed term dates for 2017-18. We ask all our parents to read the information carefully and respond on the attached slip by Friday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017. For those with more questions and concerns, we are holding an open meeting to discuss these proposals further on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> March at 4:30 - 5:00pm in our Multi-Purpose Room.

A number of schools nationally have adapted to this timetable and have found it has benefitted students, parents and staff. We acknowledge that the autumn term is long and tiring for students and staff and believe that taking steps to address these concerns will be in the interest of their physical and emotional well-being. We believe that the two-week half term and full two-week winter break will enable students to be more refreshed and ready to learn to make progress into the second and third term more effectively. The new proposal also allows families to take holiday at a time when costs are lower and cheaper than at other traditional times. This would support our 'zero holiday absence during term time' as at present we are inundated with requests around the autumn half term and winter break. We believe that this proposal will answer these concerns. The schools who have introduced a two week half-term and a full 2 week winter break have reported the following;

- Reduced instances of student absence and holiday requests.
- Reduced instances of staff sickness and absence.
- Increased focus and progress by students in the autumn term.
- Remove 4 of the 5 staff training days to switch a weekly 2 hour set training, staff support and staff development – to better serve student needs.

## Background

Local councils set academic year dates for all maintained schools within the Borough. Academies set their own term dates and times for the academic year.

### Proposed 2017-18 term dates – total days = 188

Autumn Term – 70 days. September 4<sup>th</sup>-December 22<sup>nd</sup> (half term October 23<sup>rd</sup> – November 3<sup>rd</sup>)

Spring term – 54 days. January 8<sup>th</sup> – March 29<sup>th</sup> (half term February 12<sup>th</sup> -16<sup>th</sup>)

Summer Term – 64 days. April 16<sup>th</sup> – July 20<sup>th</sup> (half term May 28<sup>th</sup> June 1<sup>st</sup>)

	Hillingdon & GNSA (current) 2016-17	GNSA & Nanaksar proposed) 2017-18	Hillingdon 2017-18
Number of taught school days	187	188	190
Number of Inset staff training days	5	1*	5
Number of INSET staff training and support hours	25	74*	25

\*The proposal is that staff will move to weekly 2 hour training rather than 5 set inset days.

**Proposed Term dates – Possible Questions & Answers**

**Will there be a reduction in school teaching days?**

Compared to the 2016/17 Academic Calendar we will teach an additional day.

**Why are teachers losing 4 of their 5 in-service training days?**

The 5 inset days provide approximately 25 hours of training at 5 points in the Academic Year. The proposal changes to weekly staff training days that give an additional 50 hours+ of training and support to staff. We also appreciated that the in-service training days were not conducive to child-care arrangements and setting days together makes requesting holiday times from employers more conducive.

**What if we have already booked our 2017-18 family holidays and it now falls within school term time?**

All and any pre-booked holidays will be approved under special considerations. The date stamp of when this was booked would need to show a date prior to the publication of this letter.

**What if I have other questions and want to speak to someone about this proposal?**

If you have further concerns and questions, we ask that you come to attend an informal proposed 2017-18 calendar information evening on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> March at 4:30pm in the Secondary Multi Purpose Hall.

Yours faithfully



R. S Sandhu - Executive Principal

**Proposed Term Dates for Academic Year 2017-18 – Reply Slip**

Name of Child/ren: .....

Please indicate number of children in each school:

GNSA Secondary: ..... GNSA Primary: ..... Nanaksar Primary: .....

Are you in favour of the proposed changes to the 2017-18 academic year?  YES  NO

Please indicate if you wish to attend the meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2017:  YES  NO

Number of people attending meeting: .....

Parent / Carer Signature: ..... Print Name: .....

**Please return ONE reply slip per family by Friday 31<sup>st</sup> March at the latest.**