

Paddock Special School Formal Consultation - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

January 2023

Consultation process

- What happens during the consultation period and how will you ensure it is accessible for all?

The consultation process must follow the statutory guidance referenced in the proposal. Over the four-week period we will be consulting with pupils, parents and carers, staff, the governing board, other local schools and trade unions and the wider local community.

We will translate all relevant material into the languages which are spoken by the school community and will pay attention to those parents and carers with additional needs to ensure their voices are heard through this engagement phase.

There will be different forms of engagement, including questionnaires and a face-to-face QA session at which we will have interpreters as required.

- When does the consultation process end and will we be informed of the outcome?

The consultation process ends in 4 weeks from the date it is published (Thursday 5th January 2023), therefore, is due to end on Thursday 2nd February 2023 at midnight. The outcome will be notified to everyone once the decision has been reached by Executive Committee on 7th March 2023.

Finances

- Is this a financially driven proposal?

It is the ambition of this council to ensure that the needs of Wandsworth children with SEND can be met locally, keeping them closer to their families and friends. Due to an increase in the number of children with EHCPs that require special school placements, we can no longer meet their needs in the local school communities and are relying on costly independent placements outside Wandsworth. This is placing significant pressure on council budgets and the impact of this is less funding available to our own schools to support inclusion. This proposal reduces this pressure as it expands our specialist placements reducing reliance on the independent sector.

Educational provision

- Will the new school's profile remain the same e.g. a school for children and young people with Autism?

The school's admission process will remain the same. Paddock school currently admits children and young people with a diagnosis of Autism and/or severe learning difficulties. The purpose of this new build is to provide better accommodation, space and provision to meet the needs of Paddock secondary/Post 16 students, as well as provide additional places. This will result in less students needing to attend schools out of our borough.

Transition planning

- How will the current cohort be successfully transferred to the new site and when?

The new school site is currently estimated for completion in September 2025. We are aware the students in Paddock find change very difficult, so will work very closely with parents/carers and

Paddock staff to ensure appropriate planning is undertaken and the students are supported to manage the change.

For children with a social worker in need of help and protection, their social worker will support their individual transitions taking into account their particular family circumstances.

- What will happen to the Priory Lane site?

It has been confirmed that the Priory Lane site will be retained as a SEND provision. The type and nature of school/student has not yet been determined as further sufficiency work will need to be undertaken to determine Wandsworth's future requirements. As the site will not be vacated until 2025 and further building work will be required, any analysis of need and subsequent decision will not be made at this point.

Impact on the Community

- How will you assess the impact of the school closure on the community?

An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and has been shared as part of this consultation and will be reviewed and updated in line with responses received.

Staff

- What support will be available to staff affected by this proposal?

We will work together with governors and school leaders to support staff as we navigate this process together. We will work with all Wandsworth school leaders to ensure we retain teaching and non-teaching talent in our local school community. We will be guided by staff in relation to their needs when considering the move to a new site and will examine all aspects of this at a later stage in the process should the decision be taken to proceed.

Pupils and families

- What support will be available to pupils and families who will be affected by this proposal?

We are aware that the children and young people of Paddock will need support with regards to a potential transition. Individual needs will be carefully considered alongside those that know the children best and the professional network around them. We will also provide advice and guidance to the families of students moving site. Alongside this work, if considered helpful, the School and Community Psychology Service and the Educational Psychologists linked to the school will be able to provide staff with regular reflective space to facilitate conversations that will allow for the school community to prepare for and manage any challenges that the potential change may bring. The details of this work will be discussed with the school's Senior Leadership Team once a final decision is made.

During this process, we will translate all relevant documents and provide interpreters for the face-to-face QA consultation event for ease of understanding.

Transport

- How will the change to the school location affect my child's transport?

We have commenced an analysis on transport arrangements, routes and distances for those children at Paddock who may be affected by the proposal. We will work closely with the school and parents/carers to mitigate the impact of change for children.