

Chichester Free School
Nurture • Challenge • Inspire



Sixth Form Consultation

From Tuesday 15 October to Monday 25 November:

Consultation on the proposed phased closure of
Chichester Free School Sixth Form

The proposed phased closure of Chichester Free School Sixth Form

The Trustees and Governors are seeking your views on a proposal to close the Sixth Form at Chichester Free School. The proposal is that **no new pupils would be admitted to our Sixth Form in September 2020**. Those pupils already in the Sixth Form would complete their courses. The Sixth Form would fully close in July 2021 when the current pupils in Year 12 complete their courses. This proposal would therefore change the age range of the School from 4-18, to 4-16. As part of the transition process, every current Year 11 student would be supported in securing the most appropriate post-16 learning pathway for September 2020. For our current Year 11 students, we have secured an arrangement with the Headteachers and Principals in the Western Area of Secondary Providers to **guarantee** every Year 11 student, who achieves the entry requirements in the summer 2020 GCSE exams, a place of their choice at either Bishop Luffa School, Chichester College, Chichester High School, Felpham Community College, Midhurst Rother College, The Regis School or St Philip Howard Catholic School. In addition, all current Year 11 students are entitled, as they always have been, to apply for a place at another post-16 provision of their choice.

Why we are proposing the phased closure of the Sixth Form

A school or college Sixth Form has to be large enough to be viable and sustainable in order to be able to provide a wide enough range of high-quality courses. Educational experts advise that Sixth Forms with fewer than 200 students struggle to be viable, particularly in light of the more recent changes that have squeezed funding.

Chichester Free School opened in September 2013 and in this time has flourished and grown to over 1,000 students. The School moved to its permanent home in 2018 at the former Carmelite Convent on the Hunston Road which has been restored and made into a state-of-the-art teaching and learning facility. The school is increasing in popularity and is over-subscribed in all year groups. We predict this will also be the case in 2020. We believe that the School's focus should be on continuing to improve the quality of education in Years 7 to 11 as well as developing our all through approach from Primary to Secondary. Sixth Form intake has been significantly lower than anticipated; projections going forward strongly suggest that we will not achieve the needed intake in the foreseeable future. There is a wealth of high quality alternative Sixth Form provision within Chichester and in the immediate surrounding area, which will fully cater for the needs of our pupils post 16 should our Sixth Form close.

If we were to keep the Sixth Form and found other ways to balance the books, we would be doing so by taking out funding and educational resources that were intended for our Primary and Secondary phase pupils. We do not believe that would be fair or proper.

Other options to reduce the cost of the Sixth Form, such as further reducing the range of subjects offered would reduce the attractiveness of the Sixth Form to prospective students and ultimately, we feel we would arrive at exactly the same point, but having spent more money delaying the inevitable.

We understand that this proposal will come as a shock to our loyal parent body, many of whom have been with us since we launched in 2013. However, the Governors and Trustees of Chichester Free School believe that this is the only way to sustain the current robust finances and safeguard the future and success of the whole school.

Timeline for proposed closure (if approved)

Action	Proposed Timeline
Consultation period commences	Tuesday 15 October 2019 1500
Consultation period closes	Monday 25 November 2019 1600
Consultation outcome shared with the Education Skills & Funding Agency and the Regional Schools Commissioner	December 2019
Approval of the Secretary of State	July 2020 (if approved)
Implementation	September 2020

Consultation Process

Any proposal from schools or academies wishing to close a Sixth Form provision must be approved by the Secretary of State for Education. The Department for Education requires any consultation to close a Sixth Form to be published at least four months prior to the planned closure, and that the consultation period must last for a period of at least four school weeks.

The Chichester Free School Governing Body, Trustees and Principal therefore invite comments from all stakeholders on the proposal set out in this paper. All views expressed during this consultation will be reported to, and considered by, the Governing Body after the consultation period has ended and will, on request, be published to parties who explicitly request this information.

Get involved

This consultation will run from Tuesday 15 October 2019 until Monday 25 November 2019, during which time you are invited to respond to this proposal. Please use the accompanying consultation form to respond and outline your views. It is important that this form is used if you wish to get involved with the consultation.

Consultation List

The list below identifies the extent of the consultation, and therefore those who are invited to respond.

- Students currently on roll at Chichester Free School
- Parents and carers of students on roll at Chichester Free School
- Staff at Chichester Free School
- Parents in the local area
- West Sussex Council Director of Inclusion and Learning Services
- Primary, secondary, special schools and Sixth Form/FE colleges in the area
- Each Local Authority which maintains an EHCP or statement of SEN in respect of a child attending the School