



## Sixth Form Consultation: Frequently Asked Questions

### **Why are you consulting on closing the Sixth Form?**

There is a statutory process we have to follow in making such a decision. But even if that process wasn't in place we would want to involve all members of the school community in the discussion about this proposal. We want everyone to understand why we believe it's the right way forward for the school.

### **Does this mean there are difficult times ahead for the rest of the school?**

No. Gildredge House is a successful and popular school with more than 1,200 students. We are over-subscribed in every Year Group up to Year 11, such is our popularity. We have made a strong start and have an exciting future.

### **Are there no alternatives to shutting the Sixth Form?**

We have been committed to making our Sixth Form sustainable but it just hasn't been possible. Providing a wide range of high-quality courses is costly and with low student numbers it is not financially viable. Students deserve to be able to choose from a range of courses and we simply cannot provide that range with so few students.

### **So this is all about money? Can't you lobby for more?**

This is not a decision we have taken lightly, but we are not prepared to jeopardise or compromise our investment in the rest of the school. School funding is very much dependent on student numbers and, whatever the rights and wrongs of that, it's a national position.

### **You say the school is popular but why not the Sixth Form? Why have you struggled to attract more students?**

It's not that our Sixth Form is unpopular, it's just that there is a wider range of other opportunities and choices in this area.

### **My child is in the Sixth Form. What happens to them now?**

The simple answer is that there will be no change. Our commitment to them and their continuing studies remains absolute. Under this proposal, the Sixth Form would remain in place for them and would only shut for new admissions from September 2023. That said, we recognise this might be unsettling for some and so will be working hard to support and reassure all students.

### **My child is in Year 11 and about to do GCSE's. How will this affect them?**

It means, unfortunately, that there will not be the option for them to remain at Gildredge House after GCSEs. However, we will fully support each and every one of our Year 11 students so they have information and advice about the wide range of opportunities that do exist for them.

### **Why are you doing this now?**

We believe it is the right time and it is the right next step for Gildredge House. To delay would only risk compromising our ability to properly resource the rest of the school and strengthen it for the future.

### **Why are Sixth Forms more successful in some other areas?**

The areas where Sixth Forms are more successful tend to be in areas where there is not such a wide range of other post-16 options. In this part of East Sussex, there are strong alternatives able to provide a wider range of educational and vocational studies.

### **When will this happen?**

Once the consultation is complete, we will submit the proposal and consultation feedback to the regional educational authorities and the Government. Ultimately, it will be for the Secretary of State for Education to make the decision whether or not to close. If the closure happens, the Sixth Form will shut to new admissions in September 2023 and will close completely once existing students have completed their studies in 2024.

### **Does this mean staff will lose their jobs?**

It is far too early to say what impact this might have on a small number of jobs, nor is there any point speculating. However, what we can say is that if the proposal is agreed we will do everything between now and the full closure to avoid the need for any job losses and to support staff with any concerns. There is a considerable amount of time between now and September 2024 and much is likely to change with staffing movements, changes and opportunities. This we would expect in the normal course of events so it's impossible to say where we will be in 2024.

### **How can you be sure this is the right course of action?**

The Governors and the Trustees are firmly of the belief it is the right course of action. We are duty bound to make decisions in the very best interests of the school. This decision is about building the future of our school and continuing to invest all our available resources into providing the very best learning environments where all our students can continue to thrive and fulfil their potential.

### **How can we have our say?**

You can have your say on the proposed closure of the Sixth Form by completing the Sixth Form Consultation Response Form available on the Gildredge House website at <https://www.gildredgehouse.org.uk/home/admissions/sixth-form-consultation/>

If you would prefer to complete a hard copy version of the Consultation Response Form, these are available at the School Offices for collection. All responses must be received by 14<sup>th</sup> January 2023 at the latest.