



ECONOMY AND SKILLS: EDUCATION

NOTICE OF PROPOSAL (Summary Version)

The following schools are directly affected by the Proposal Document to which this notice relates:

Willowbank School

St Joseph's Academy

St Andrew's Primary School

This document has been issued by East Ayrshire Council for proposal in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010, as amended.

NOTICE OF PROPOSAL

1. This document is a summarised version of the Proposal Document which has been issued in relation to a consultation exercise on the option to consider the relocation and establishment of the secondary element (S1-S6) of Willowbank School as a separate school in a specifically designed area on St Joseph's Campus. The proposal will affect the following schools:
 - Willowbank School
 - St Joseph's Academy
 - St Andrew's primary School

BACKGROUND

2. Cabinet on 22 January 2020, considered a report to undertake statutory consultation on a proposal to expand the current level of Specialist Provision across East Ayrshire.
3. Section 15 of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 states that the education of all children should be provided in mainstream schools, unless certain, specified, exceptions apply. The intention behind the duty within the act is to establish the right of all children and young people to be educated alongside their peers in mainstream schools unless there are good reasons for not doing so.
4. There is no doubt that the presumption of mainstream education, outlined in the Act, benefits *all children*. The inclusion of children and young people with additional support needs, when properly prepared, well-supported and having taken place in mainstream schools, creates opportunities to reduce prejudice, understand others and promote a positive ethos. Such inclusion helps schools to develop an ethos which benefits all children and young people in both a local and wider societal context. It also helps meet the wishes of many parents and carers that their children should be educated alongside their peers.
5. The presumption of mainstreaming ensures that children and young people have equitable access to a quality education which meets their needs and helps them achieve their full potential.
6. East Ayrshire has the following **standalone specialist provisions**:
 - Hillside School
 - Park School
 - Willowbank School
7. Hillside School and Willowbank School support children and young people with severe and complex needs. Park School supports children and young

people with moderate learning difficulties within a campus setting. East Ayrshire is moving towards a more inclusive campus model in education to better ensure that all our children and young people achieve their full potential.

8. Barony Campus supports children and young people across the spectrum of additional support needs offering one of the most inclusive campus experiences within East Ayrshire. This campus has been designed with this inclusive philosophy and incorporates a primary and a secondary mainstream school along with Hillside School and two Supported Learning Centres within its campus.
9. The Scottish Government has made extensive policy and legislative changes over the last two decades to enable children and young people with additional support needs to thrive as part of their class, their school and their wider community. This approach strives to make sure that all of our children and young people feel included and can participate and achieve to their full potential.
10. An inclusive approach affords all children and young people the opportunity to be a part of a community, boosting their emotional wellbeing and aiding the development of social skills. Scotland's inclusive approach celebrates diversity and allows all children and young people to develop an understanding and acceptance of difference, contributing to the development of an increasingly inclusive, empathetic and more just society.
11. As this is a transformational review of the Specialist Provision, appropriate measures will be taken to detail the views of all stakeholders and this is set out in the Proposal Document.
12. A full version of the Proposal Document can be found on the Council's website at:

<https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/CouncilAndGovernment/Consultations/School-consultations.aspx>

PROPOSAL

13. The Proposal Document seeks comment on the relocation of the secondary element (S1-S6) of Willowbank School to a specifically designed and adapted area within St Joseph's Campus from the third term of Academic Session 2021/22, namely in January 2022. This would see Willowbank School being established as an additional school on the Campus together with St Andrew's Primary School and Early Childhood Centre, and St Joseph's Academy.

14. It is envisaged that the consultation with key stakeholders will assist with the design and direction of the initial proposal and ensure that children and young people are supported within an environment that meets their assessed needs.
15. The consultation will provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to present their views on :
 - The relocation and establishment of the secondary element (S1-S6) of Willowbank School as a separate school in a specifically designed area on St Joseph's Campus (Appendices 1, 2 & 3)

HOW CAN YOU RESPOND TO THIS CONSULTATION

Attending Public Meetings

16. Due to COVID-19 and the reduction of footfall across our educational establishments consideration needs to be given to the format of Public Meetings. The Scottish Government has issued guidance to assist local authorities in their preparation and planning while COVID-19 restrictions are in place.
17. A relevant Risk Assessment (Appendix 4) and Safety Procedures (Appendix 5) outline and support the view that given the current public health restrictions, the most sensible way to proceed is via a virtual meeting (video conference) with Parent Council Chairs physically present with appropriate Senior Officers from the authority, and with parents/carers joining the virtual meeting remotely.
18. The meeting will be held in Council Chambers and the total number of participants for the main panel will be limited to 8 to enable 2m physically distanced seating in the central row. It is also envisaged that representatives from each of the relevant Parent Council's will also be in attendance (forming the public element of the meeting in the Council Chambers). Additional colleagues can be present; the Council Officer or personnel from IT who need to be in attendance from a technical support perspective can be added to the risk assessment as they would be positioned safely away from the panel members e.g. the master control desk in the corner of Council Chambers where the Council Officer would normally be seated.
19. Due to COVID-19 the formal public meetings will be supported via a video conference. Anyone wishing to attend the public meeting will be invited to do so and be provided with appropriate login details. The meeting will be convened by East Ayrshire Council and will be addressed by the Head of Education.

- 20.** In order to facilitate this meeting parents/carers will be asked to confirm in advance with the Head Teacher of their child's school that they wish to participate so that appropriate login details can be distributed to all interested parties.
- 21.** It is hoped that the video conference will reach a wider audience and enable some parents/carers who may have struggled to attend such meetings in the past because of e.g. childcare commitments, to participate more easily.
- 22.** The meeting will be an opportunity to:
- Hear more about the proposal;
 - Ask questions about the proposal; and
 - Have views recorded so that they can be taken into account as part of the consultation process.
- 23.** The public meetings in the form of a video conference will be held as follows:
Council Chambers (Willowbank School) Tuesday 24 November 2020 at 7pm
Council Chambers (St Joseph's Campus) Thursday 26 November 2020 at 7pm
- 24.** A note will be taken of comments, questions and officer responses. These notes will be published on the Council website, and a copy will be made available on request. These notes will also be forwarded to Education Scotland along with all other submissions and comments that are received by the Council during the consultation process.

Questionnaires and Focus Groups

- 25.** An explicit part of the process is that children and young people at all the affected schools are to be consulted. In line with guidance published by the Scottish Commissioner for Children and Young people (SCCYP), East Ayrshire Council will ask Common Ground Mediation, an independent organisation, to complete this piece of work.
- 26.** SCCYP Guidance recommends that children and young people are informed about any proposed changes and understand what this may entail. With this in mind a presentation about the Council's proposal will be prepared and

delivered to the affected schools by Common Ground Mediation in a way that takes account of each child and young person's needs and abilities.

Responding to the Proposal

- 27.** Interested parties are invited to respond to this proposal by making written or electronic submissions between **16 November 2020 and 4pm on 15 January 2021** to:

Head of Education, East Ayrshire Council, Council Headquarters, London Road, Kilmarnock KA3 7BU; or
e-mail to: education.consultation@east-ayrshire.gov.uk

- 28.** For the convenience of those wishing to respond, a form is provided at Appendix 6, and is also available on the council's website at:

<https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/CouncilAndGovernment/Consultations/School-consultations.aspx>