

Response Form

Pre Statutory Consultation

Proposed closure of Penhill Primary School to allow an expansion of the Swindon Academy

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Please tick:

Parent ☐ Governor ☐ Staff ☐ Resident ☐

Member of the Penhill Forum ☐

Do you support the linked proposals to close Penhill Primary School to make way for an expansion of the Swindon Academy?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Comments:

Signature: _____

Responses must be received by 14th July 2008 latest.

Please return Response Forms by post to:

Tricia Devaney
Children Services, Swindon Borough Council
Sanford House
Sanford Street
Swindon SN1 1QH
01793 465748
email: tdevaney@swindon.gov.uk

Data Protection

The information you provide will be for the analysis of responses received as part of the Pre-Statutory consultation on the linked proposals to close Penhill Primary School to allow an expansion of the Swindon Academy for the purposes of compiling recommendations to Cabinet. Personal information will not be



This information about the Proposal to close Penhill Primary School and Nursery is available on request. It can be produced in a range of languages and formats (such as large print, Braille or other accessible formats) by contacting the Customer Services Department.

Tel: 01793 463725
Fax: 01793 463982
E-mail: customerservices@swindon.gov.uk

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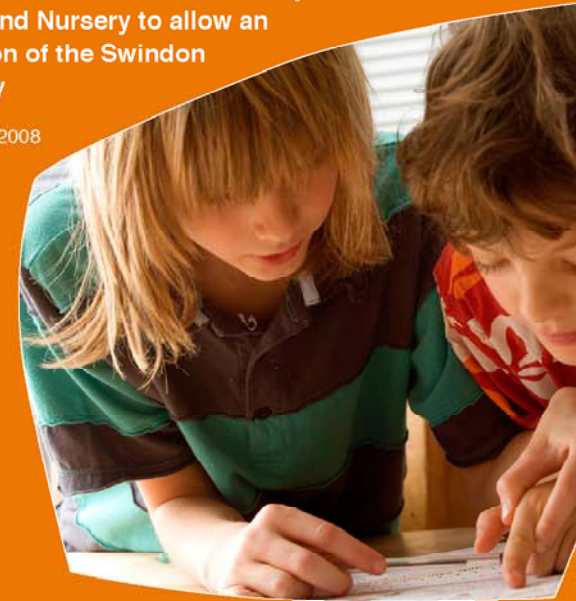
ART1293/FO13277/08

Children Services

Children and young people deserve the best start in life.

Proposals to close Penhill Primary School and Nursery to allow an expansion of the Swindon Academy

June - July 2008



Contact: David Neal, Academy Project Manager,
Sanford House, Sanford Street, Swindon, SN1 1QH
Tel: 01793 463367 or email: dneal@swindon.gov.uk
Web: www.swindon.gov.uk/educationandlearning-

Dear Parents/Carers, Staff and Governors of Penhill Primary School and Nursery and members of the Penhill Forum and community.

Please see the enclosed information about the Council's linked proposals to close Penhill Primary School to allow an expansion of the Swindon Academy. You are invited to let the Council know your views about this proposal.

In addition to the written information and Response Form provided in this document, the Council has also arranged meetings at Penhill Primary School to allow you to ask questions you might have and put forward any comments. The United Learning Trust (ULT), sponsors of the Swindon Academy, will also be seeking your views about how the expansion of the Swindon Academy will make a positive impact on children who transfer from Penhill Primary School. DJB Consultancy, Independent Consultants, will carry out this consultation and will participate in the meetings arranged by the Council.

The dates and times of the Council's consultation meetings are set out below. Please note that parents and carers have a choice of two meetings to attend:

Penhill Primary School Hall - 9th June 2008
 Parents/carers 3.30pm
 Staff 4.45pm
 Governors 6.00pm
 Parents/carers 7.15pm

Penhill Primary School Hall - 12th June 2008
 Penhill Forum and Public - 6.00pm

Childcare facilities will be available at the parents/carers meetings at Penhill Primary School.

The Objectives of the Proposal

The key objective of the proposal is to improve the life chances of children in the Penhill area by transforming the education offering. This transformation is to be achieved by closing the traditional Primary school and transferring children into an expanded Academy. The reasons that the Council wants to promote this proposal are set out below:

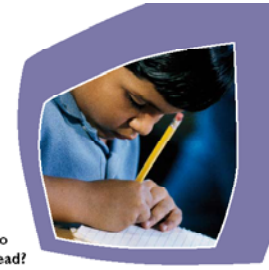
- a Penhill Primary School is on the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) list of 266 'hard to shift' primary schools in England and has failed to meet the floor target at Key Stage two in both Maths and English for five years, despite receiving considerable additional resource and support from the Local Authority. The Local Authority considers that a structural solution is required to move this school forward. If the school became part of the Academy it would benefit from the drive to raise standards already evident in the Academy.
- b An all-through Academy can help pupils with the transition from one school to another and provides continuity of teaching and learning for pupils. Evidence shows that pupil performance dips, and pupil progress is slowed, as a result of moving schools. In an area where raising standards of achievement is a key priority between primary and secondary and where this has not to date been successfully addressed through to age 16, it is vital that these barriers to progress are removed. There are opportunities in the future for feeder schools to the Academy to be more closely associated with the United Learning Trust, for example through, trust status. However, the critical issue of school standards in Penhill Primary School needs to be addressed;
- c During the consultation phase for the Academy, it became clear that members of the community of Penhill felt that their children might miss out on the Academy development. Although children from the Penhill Primary School area have the opportunity to apply for a place at the Academy at the secondary school stage, there is a perception that primary age children may be potentially disadvantaged compared to those in the previous Pinehurst Schools, by being excluded from the Academy arrangement.
- d The developing educational plans for the all-through Academy suggest that it will break out from traditional year group structures and move towards working within vertically organised systems where the needs of the individual learner can be more readily met and personalised. Pupils will be able to progress according to the 'stage' they are at in their development rather than their chronological age. Such a development may make it more difficult for the pupils of Penhill Primary School to integrate into the Academy when they move at 11 years of age.
- e As well as helping to raise standards, the expansion of the Academy to include Penhill Primary School would also promote inclusion and there will be benefits attached to continuity of care, especially for more vulnerable children.
- f In the same way, an all-through Academy would help the multi-agency team support children better i.e. easier access, economies of scale for all agencies involved, and closer relationships through more regular formal and informal contacts, all resulting in an improved standard of provision for pupils.

If implemented, the existing site and buildings would be transferred to the Academy. Staff affected by the proposal would also be transferred to a new employer; the United Learning Trust.

We would be very interested to know whether or not you share our views about the advantages of merging Penhill primary school with an expanded Academy. Please complete the attached Response Form and return it to us by **14th July 2008**.

Frequently asked Questions

1. **Why does Penhill have to be closed to change it to part of the Academy?**
A. The Council currently owns and maintains Penhill Primary. Legislation means that in order for the school to be transferred into new management, it needs to be 'closed' to allow the new management to take over.
2. **Will parents/carers of children at Penhill Primary need to apply for a place at the Academy if the proposal goes ahead?**
A. No. All children on roll at Penhill Primary at the time of the closure will automatically transfer to the roll of the expanded Swindon Academy.
3. **What will happen to the land and buildings?**
A. The United Learning Trust will take a long lease on the land and, therefore, the responsibility for the buildings.
4. **Who decides if this proposal goes ahead?**
A. The Council is able to decide the closure of Penhill Primary School locally. The expansion of the Swindon Academy has to be decided by the Secretary of State. The timeline below sets out the various stages of the decision making process. The views expressed by parents/carers, staff, governors, residents and those of the Penhill Forum will be reported to Cabinet on 23rd July 2008. The meeting is open to members of the public.
5. **What will happen to staff working at Penhill Primary School if the proposal goes ahead?**
A. Staff employed at Penhill Primary at the time of its proposed closure will transfer to the United Learning Trust, the organisation that employs staff at the Swindon Academy.



Timeline

Target Dates in the Decision Making Process

1st June 2008	Pre Statutory Consultation begins
9th and 12th June 2008	Consultation meetings take place at Penhill Primary School and Penhill Forum
14th July 2008	Pre Statutory consultation ends
23rd July 2008	Outcome of Pre-Statutory consultation report to Cabinet
Late August / September 2008	If agreed, the Statutory consultation commences
October / November 2008	Decision by Cabinet Panel
January 2009	Proposed Implementation