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23 September 2008

Re: SAPH response to the Penhill Consultation

The Swindon Association of Primary Head Teachers welcomes the opportunity to make a formal response to the consultation on the proposal to close Penhill Primary School on December 31st 2008 and to expand The Swindon Academy.

We wholeheartedly agree with the necessity to provide the best possible education for the children of Penhill and without pre judging the future capacity of The Swindon Academy to provide such improvements, we have concerns, as a professional association, that the case is yet unproven. This is especially in light of the fact that any IFD data for The Swindon Academy at KS2 has not been made available to Swindon Head teachers while it is readily available for FS and KS 1.

SAPH is committed to and welcomes any opportunity to work in partnership with Children's Service and accepts that we all have the moral responsibility to ensure that all the children in Swindon have the best possible life chances.

We would therefore ask elected members and the group director, Children Services to suspend the proposal for this academic year in order to enter into a meaningful dialogue and collaboration with SAPH to look at further alternative solutions and a more creative and innovative approach to supporting Penhill Primary School. Such collaboration, we believe could bring about systemic and long lasting change for the children of Penhill in a more measured and realistic timeframe and more importantly, create a Swindon based model of good practice that could be used for other schools who may find themselves working in challenging circumstances.

Furthermore, we would welcome the opportunity to ensure we collectively give a joint and resounding message to all schools that Head teachers when working in partnership with Children's Services can become a powerful agent of improvement and change which benefits all involved in improving life chances in Swindon.

Yours faithfully

Mr Chris Davis
Chair