



THE PRIORY SCHOOL

D O R K I N G

Headteacher: Mrs J Trimnell

February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

As you are aware The Priory School is a thriving school that continues to believe in working to enable every child to succeed beyond all expectations. Whilst it has been both encouraging and heartening that in recent years the number of students opting to stay at The Priory for sixth form study has increased, the numbers in the sixth form have not been sufficient to cover the cost of provision. After very careful consideration of all the different factors, it is with regret that the Governors and school leadership team have had to make the extremely difficult decision to begin a consultation process to close the Sixth Form provision from September 2022, due to funding.

Typically, sixth form provision needs to offer a wide range of subjects to attract students and provide the options required to prepare students for their chosen university. Each sixth form student brings in funding of approximately £4,000 a year and the typical cost per year of providing a subject class is £10,000. Therefore, it has become increasingly difficult to provide an attractive range of subjects. Benchmark data shows that viable sixth forms should offer approximately 27 subjects to meet student demand and to break even financially, require 100 students in each year group (years 12 and 13). At The Priory, the numbers have not exceeded 67 students since 2017.

It is these stark financial and operational facts that have led Governors to determine to commence consultation on closure of Sixth Form provision. We have always prided ourselves in the ability to offer a small sixth form provision, creating an intimate setting where every student is known and where class sizes are small. We have seen our students flourish in this environment and their results have been excellent. However, due to pressure on financial viability, which will not change, we regretfully have no alternative but to consult with stakeholders on closing the post-16 provision.

Going forward, we will continue to work and develop our relationship with local feeder colleges including Reigate, East Surrey and Colliers. This will ensure that we can provide appropriate support for current Year 11 students as they transition to the next stage of their education and for all future cohorts of students who come through the school. The school remains fully committed to our current Year 12 students who will start their second year of sixth form study with us from September 2021.

We understand that this news may be unsettling to hear, however we are fortunate to be surrounded by excellent sixth form provision in the Dorking area. We ensure that no student is disadvantaged by our decision to engage in consultation and we will ensure that students are well supported to make good choices for their future.

Yours faithfully

Mrs J Trimnell - Acting Head Teacher
&
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