

Saints Peter and Paul Catholic College



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14th March 2019

Consultation Regarding the Viability of Sixth Form Provision March 2019

Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

It is with a sense of regret that we are writing to inform you that the governing body at Saints Peter and Paul have taken the difficult decision to consult on the closure of the Sixth Form.

A continuing fall in student numbers, reductions in funding and the availability of high quality 16-19 provision locally are the primary reasons for this decision. Given these challenges, the Sixth Form at Saints Peter and Paul is not academically or financially viable. **It is important to note that students in our current Year 12 BTEC and Year 13 will continue with no disruption to their studies. Parents of the 11 remaining A Level students in Year 12 will receive an invitation to a meeting on Tuesday 19th March during which we will discuss choices regarding how they can continue studies with us or take up opportunities at Cronton College or Carmel College. Should this date be inconvenient for any parent/student we are happy to make an alternative appointment.**

This decision follows a determined (but unsuccessful) attempt to attract enough numbers to ensure that a curriculum and provision of the very highest quality can be assured – our students deserve nothing less. Our students are increasingly moving on to a variety of very good provisions in Carmel College, Cronton and Riverside and unfortunately the falling numbers mean we can no longer replicate such quality provision. We remain committed to supporting a high quality 11-19 education for our students and are delighted that all of these institutions will work closely with us in the future.

Current Year 11

We recognise that some of our students and parents/carers, particularly those in Year 11 this year, may be disappointed by this decision. Fortunately, there exists a wealth of very high-quality provision in the local area and 220 of 262 students in Year 11 have already visited Cronton College, Riverside College, Carmel College or have decided to progress into work or apprenticeships. Many have received and accepted offers from these colleges.

For those students who have not visited the above colleges, special provision has been agreed by the colleges to ensure that visits can still take place. Additionally, the colleges have agreed to re-open admissions for students from Saints Peter and Paul only. Cronton College will hold an assembly with Year 11 on **Tuesday 19th March** followed by an interview day on **Thursday 2nd April** in school for those students who have not yet applied to Cronton/Riverside. Additionally, Carmel College will be replicating this offer.

Although we feel somewhat sad to be consulting on this, it is the right decision to take as it is in the best interests of all our students going forward. A viable school sixth form has approximately 200, we currently have 28 in Year 12 and 56 in Year 13 with very small class sizes in Year 12 (1 or 2). We recognise that this is not conducive to providing a high-quality and engaging learning experience for our students. The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that sixth forms with fewer than 200 students are at risk of not being financially viable, that schools with small sixth forms may be required to divert funds from their 11-16 budget in order to subsidise their small sixth form.

Without the need to subsidise our small sixth form it will mean more funds will be available to improve our school. Diverting our full focus, expertise and budget to Years 7 to 11 would enable us to accelerate our work to secure the very best for students here at Saints Peter and Paul. Additionally, the Sixth Form Centre resource, which also includes dining facilities, would be redirected for other year groups.

Clearly, your views are very important to us, so please take the time to read our consultation document which includes our rationale and the data underpinning our decision. There are details in the consultation document about how to share your views. You will find this on the main menu in the Sixth Form tab on our College website.

Yours sincerely

Jim Wilson
Chair of Governors

Danielle Scott
Principal