

Briefing: Increasing the Registered Places at Rowdeford School

Proposal

To increase the registered places at Rowdeford School from 130 to 170.

Why

Due to increased demand, following the 2019 intake, as of 1st February 2020 Rowdeford has 166 students compared to a registered capacity of 130. DfE guidelines state that where numbers vary by more than 10% of registered capacity a statutory process should be followed to change the prescribed capacity of a school. This process should be completed without delay to ensure statutory compliance.

What are the sensitivities/ risks and how will they be managed?

It is anticipated there will be a low level of interest in this change amongst parent carers and other stakeholders because the increased number of students already attend Rowdeford so this is effectively an administrative process to ensure statutory compliance for Wiltshire Council and Rowdeford school.

There are no financial implications (Rowdeford is funded per student, so already receive the funding level applicable to the students they have) and the increased student numbers are being met through existing space and resources at the school.

Given the recent and current consultations regarding the closure of the three schools (Larkrise, Rowdeford and St Nicholas) and the opening of the new special school across three sites, it is recognised that this proposal may confuse parent carers and stakeholders. Therefore, a covering letter has been written to explain how the different pieces of statutory and project activity work together and this will accompany the proposal for consultation. Prior to opening the representation period there is also an informal meeting at Rowdeford school for parent carers, staff and governors.

Guidance from Legal Services has been part of this process to ensure full compliance with the legislative requirements for the consultation and representation periods.

How does this contribute to/ work alongside the wider special school project?

The increase in pupil numbers is part of the development of the wider special school transformation work. Consultation/representation of this current increase in pupil numbers at Rowdeford school could have progressed in the autumn, but it was agreed at the time, that with the significant consultation in process it would have been too confusing to also consult on the immediate change in places required specifically at Rowdeford school. However, we are obliged within the DfE guidance to take forward the formal processes to agree the current pupils placed at Rowdeford in preparation for the anticipated opening of the new school in September 2020.

Next steps

27 February - Agree the wording of the proposal (complete)

9 March – start a 4-week representation period (complete) closing on the 6 April 2020

By 5 June 2020 – to have completed a delegated decision to formally agree the change

For now, this is for information only. Following the representation period, Pauline will be provided with the feedback from the statutory consultation and a delegated decision form.