

# Consultation on the future of South Shields School

20 September - 2 November 2018



**South Tyneside Council**



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## Introduction

This leaflet sets out a proposal for the future of South Shields School. It explains the reasons why the Council is undertaking this consultation and the timescales for submitting your views and making representations.

## Background

South Shields School was opened in 2008 and moved to the new site on Nevison Avenue in 2011. The school has places for 850 pupils aged 11 -16. From September there will be 528 pupils on roll. The new school was built under the Private Finance Initiative

In October 2017 the school was inspected by Ofsted and received an overall judgement of inadequate. In these circumstances, the Regional Schools Commissioner (who works on behalf of the Secretary of State and the Department for Education) must, in law, place a Directive Academy Order upon the school and seek a preferred Sponsor. In these circumstances, as soon as an Academy Sponsor is found, the school becomes an Academy and can no longer be a Council maintained school.

The Directive Academy Order was placed on South Shields School in November 2017, however the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) has informed the Council that it has been unable to find a sponsor for the school. As a result of this the RSC has also informed us that the Secretary of State is minded to revoke the Academy Order but only on the condition that the Council undertake a statutory consultation to close the school. The Council cannot continue to maintain the school in these circumstances and therefore the Council's Cabinet agreed on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2018 to consult on closure as required by the Secretary of State to revoke the Academy Order.

There are many reasons why the RSC may have been unable to find a sponsor for South Shields School but the main concern for potential sponsors is around the viability of the school because of the current low pupil numbers. These will be 528 in September 2018 and are the lowest since the school opened in 2008. Based upon current admission patterns these are predicted to fall further in future years. Funding for schools is based almost exclusively on pupil numbers, so if numbers continue to fall as predicted this will present significant financial difficulties for the school. When schools are in this position it becomes difficult to run the school and to offer a full curriculum.

As a result, the Department for Education requires South Tyneside Council to undertake this public consultation on the potential closure of the school.

## Consultation

At its meeting on 12 September the Cabinet of South Tyneside Council made a decision to follow the statutory process of consultation on the future of the school. This is not a decision on the future of the school but is agreement to begin the first stage of consultation that will run for six weeks from **20 September to 2 November 2018**. The responses to the consultation will be considered by Cabinet at their meeting on 14 November 2018, and they will then make a decision as to whether to proceed

with a second, statutory representation period , which if agreed would run from **21 November to 19 December 2018**. Cabinet would then consider all responses and make a final decision on proposals held on or after **23 January 2019**.

## Proposals

If the decision is made to close the school the Council is committed to supporting pupils, staff, parents/carers to make transition as smooth as possible and to ensure that quality of education is maintained. It is proposed that the closure would take place over two years:

- Pupils in current years 10 & 11 will complete their secondary education at South Shields School.
- 2018/19 - No changes to the school in any year group
- 2019/20 - No Year 7 pupils admitted
  - Current Year 9 pupils will transfer to new school for GCSE years
- 2020/21 - Current Years 7 & 8 transfer to new schools

The table below shows the effect of phased closure on each year group:

YEAR GROUP	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Y7	No change	N/A	N/A
Y8	No change	No change	N/A
Y9	No change	No change	New school
Y10	No change	New school	New school
Y11	No change	No change	N/A

If the decision is made to close the school it would close on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020.

## Transition

There are a number of secondary schools within South Tyneside which have places in the relevant year groups and where pupils could be admitted. Mortimer Community College and Boldon School have sufficient places to accommodate all pupils from South Shields School and already have some commonality in their catchment areas.

## Responding to consultation

There will be a meeting held for parents and carers at **Temple Park Leisure Centre on Thursday 20 September 2018, 5pm for Year 7, 8 and 9, 6.30pm for Year 10 and 11** where there will be the opportunity to hear more about the proposals and to have your say. There will also be a timetable of meetings with staff, governors, Trade Unions and other interested groups during the informal consultation period to 2 November 2018.

Following the consultation process all responses will be considered by Cabinet at the meeting on 14 November 2018. Cabinet will make a decision as to whether to progress to a second, statutory

representation period. If this is the case you will be contacted again to inform you of how you can respond in the statutory representation period.

A response questionnaire will be available at the meetings or can be accessed on the South Tyneside website at [www.southtyneside.gov.uk/southshieldsschool](http://www.southtyneside.gov.uk/southshieldsschool).

All responses should be returned to School Admissions, South Shields Consultation, South Tyneside Council, Town Hall and Civic Offices, South Shields, NE33 2RL or emailed to [southshieldsconsultation@southtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:southshieldsconsultation@southtyneside.gov.uk) by 2 November 2018.

Copies of this consultation document can be made available on request in a variety of formats in addition to this one e.g. Large Print, Easy read, Audio, or translated into another language