



AUDENSHAW SCHOOL

30 April 2018

Dear Parent/Carer

RE: Consultation of the closure of Sixth Form

It is with regret that a period of consultation has been started regarding the proposal that the sixth-form at Audenshaw School should close. The reductions in funding, rising costs and a continuing fall in student numbers are the primary reasons behind this proposal being put forward by the governing body of the school.

This consultation is the start of the process and no decisions have yet been taken. The decision to consult on the closure of the sixth-form to a new intake is one that has been made very reluctantly, but is being done to protect the best interests of all the students in the school. As the number of students has decreased steadily since 2012-13, the cost of sixth form provision has increased.

The uncertain future of school sixth forms has been highlighted in the media over many years and particularly in the light of budget changes to post-16 funding, which has substantially declined over recent years.

An average sixth form college has around 1000 students, while an average school sixth form has approximately 200. As a result, economies of scale apply which means it is more expensive for school to provide sixth form provision than a sixth form or FE college.

As a result, the school has to subsidise the Sixth Form from other funding streams such as that for 11 to 16 year olds. The Department for Education (DfE) recognises that sixth forms with fewer than 200 students are at risk of not being financially viable. Although Audenshaw School Sixth Form was built to take a capacity of 300 students when opened in 1997, it is only being half-filled in recent years.

Ever since the proposal to close the sixth-form was discussed, the leadership team have been acutely aware of the impact that this would have on our current students. However, this will not affect any of our current Year 12 students as we will continue all the courses we currently offer and support the personal development, with enrichment and career education opportunities, so that our students are fully supported throughout Year 13.

For Year 11 students, staff will be supporting individual students to access provision at other local institutions if the decision is taken to close. These institutions have been informed that the closure of the sixth-form has been proposed and they are willing to accept applications for September 2018. The school will support students when making their applications to ensure that they all have suitable destinations to continue their learning. Extra support is also being given by Positive Steps, who are able to provide independent careers advice and guidance to our students.

For students who have applied from other local schools, the school careers staff have been contacted. It is expected that these students will also receive appropriate help in securing places for September 2018 at other 16-18 providers.

Yours sincerely

Mr T Hall
Chair of Governors

Headteacher: **Mrs J Saw**

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