

Our ref: SH/SFF/SS2
Tel no: 0300 300 4383
Email: schoolsforthefuture@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
Date: 20th April 2022

Dear Parent / Carer,

Re: Schools for the Future new proposals for the Shefford and Stotfold cluster

I am writing to update you on the latest position regards your school's transition to the primary / secondary model of education within the Shefford and Stotfold area, as part of the Schools for the Future (SFF) programme. Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) originally consulted you on proposals in 2019 and plans were revised based on your feedback. This saw the area divided into two phases, with the schools in phase one transitioning to the primary / secondary model of education in September last year (2021).

There has also been discussion about whether Robert Bloomfield Academy (RBA) should be a secondary (as suggested in the 2019 Have Your Say consultation) or a primary school, creating an all through school with Samuel Whitbread, per the revised proposals in 2020. In July last year, Central Bedfordshire Council adopted its Local Plan setting out where new homes would be built. It was important that we ensured that the number of school places being proposed matched the school places that were needed. With new data from the Local Plan about house building in the area, what has become clear is that RBA needs to be a secondary school going forward, to ensure we have sufficient places in this phase of education in the area.

Subject to feasibility studies for the school sites confirming they are suitable for development, a new, revised primary / secondary proposal has been developed. This has been done with the support of schools and trusts, and includes the following proposals:

- Robert Bloomfield Academy will change from a middle to a secondary school with 5 classes of 30 pupils (a total of 150 pupils) in each year group;
- Etonbury and Pix Brook Academies will continue as secondary schools with 6 classes of 30 pupils (a total of 180 pupils) in each year group;
- Samuel Whitbread Academy will change from an upper to a secondary school with 7 classes of 30 pupils (a total of 210 pupils) in each year group;
- As before, and subject to feasibility studies, we plan for all lower schools to become primary schools.

You may be aware that the original proposals were for this transition to take place in 2023. Unfortunately, this does not allow the time to complete all the necessary surveys, secure planning consent and construction of the new school buildings. Moving ahead with the transition ahead of these building works being completed, would likely cause disruption to your child's education and mean the existing school buildings would not be able to fit all the pupils, requiring temporary classrooms.

Central Bedfordshire Council

Priory House, Monks Walk
Chicksands, Shefford
Bedfordshire SG17 5TQ


Telephone 0300 300 8000
Email info@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

The transition to the primary / secondary (single transition) model is now therefore aimed to take place in 2025. Central Bedfordshire Council is keen for all schools to transition at the same time to ensure a smooth process. Should there be any major problems in the construction process, which can sometimes happen, and if it can be foreseen that September 25 is not achievable **then this transition date will push back to September 26.** Were this to be the case we would contact you at the earliest opportunity to advise you.

Approval will be sought from Central Bedfordshire Council Executive Councillors for the revised model, including notice of any required consultations in the autumn of 2022, which will be the final opportunity for you to provide feedback on these proposals.

The move to the primary / secondary model (single transition) of education is key to improving the education offer across Central Bedfordshire Council, reducing the number of transitions between schools for your child and in attracting and retaining the best teachers. All the latest information is available on the Schools for the Future website: www.schoolsforthefuture.co.uk

Yours sincerely,

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The signature on the left is 'Sue Archer' and the signature on the right is 'Sarah Ferguson'. The signatures are written in a cursive style.

Sue Archer – SFF Programme Director
Sarah Ferguson – Deputy Director of Children’s Services

Central Bedfordshire Council

Priory House, Monks Walk
Chicksands, Shefford
Bedfordshire SG17 5TQ

Telephone 0300 300 8000
Email info@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk