



Proposal for the closure of St Teresa's Catholic Infant School

This leaflet provides background information about the proposal for the closure of St Teresa's Catholic Infant School. It also answers some of the questions that parents, carers, pupils and members of the wider community might want to know.

Introduction

Sefton Council wishes to seek the views of interested parties regarding the proposal for Sefton Council to close St Teresa's Catholic Infant School as at 31st August 2022.

Background

St Teresa's Catholic Infant School is a single form of entry school with a published admission number of 30 situated at Everton Road in Birkdale. The school is voluntary aided.

Demand for places at St Teresa's Catholic Infant School has been falling for several years. The Governors of St Teresa's have explored all avenues to increase pupil numbers and reduce financial issues at the school. However, this has not resulted in an increase in demand for places. At a meeting on the 4th November 2021 the Council's Cabinet agreed to proceed with the request from the Governing Body of St Teresa's Catholic Infant School to commence the statutory consultation process.

It is extremely important to note that no definitive decision has yet been made about the future of the school.

The chart below outlines the four-stage statutory process that the local authority must adhere to when making decisions concerning the potential closure or significant changes to schools.

Stage 1	Consultation 22nd November 2021 – 17th December 2021	This is the start of the process when the Local Authority provides information about what is being proposed and gathers the views of interested parties to help them develop the proposals.
Stage 2	Publication – 2nd March 2022	A legal notice is published in the local paper (usually the Champion) and on the Council website which sets out brief details of the proposal and where more information can be found. It also gives details of where objections and comments can be sent and the closing date for these. It marks the start of the representation period or formal consultation.
Stage 3	Representation 2nd March – 30th March 2022	This is a four-week period from the date the notice is published to allow interested parties the final opportunity to send objections and comments to be taken into consideration by the decision maker. It is classed as the formal part of the consultation process.
Stage 4	Decision Cabinet to make final decision – May 2022	All the objections and comments gathered during the representation period are provided to the decision maker to enable them to make the final decision.

There will be a consultation period which will run from 22nd November 2021 – 17th December 2021.

As part of the consultation process for the proposal, we will be holding meetings with staff, governors, and parents/carers of pupils at the school. It is important that we hear the views and opinions of as many people as possible.

Date and Time of Meetings:

Meetings have been arranged to provide an opportunity for interested parties to make their views known.

St Teresa's Catholic Infant School

Meetings for parents will be held on 30th November 2021 at 6pm at the school to enable as many parents to attend as possible.

A meeting for staff will be held at 4pm and governors at 5pm on 30th November 2021.

Alternatively, if you are unable to attend the meeting, you may wish to comment on the proposal by sending an email to:
school.organisation@sefton.gov.uk

Information will also be provided on the School Organisation page on Sefton Council's website at <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/schools-learning/school-organisation/>

Parents and Staff Voice

The formal consultation process will provide parents and staff with the opportunity to respond to the proposal.

All parents and staff are actively encouraged to give their views during the consultation period.

Other Consultees

Other organisations who must be consulted will be written to as part of the process and be invited to submit their views.

Subject to the outcome of the consultation process, the Local Authority intends to publish a statutory notice setting out the proposals for St Teresa's Catholic Infant School. It is the Local Authority's intention to publish this notice in the local newspapers during March 2022, and this will be followed by a four-week representation period – during the period all interested

parties will be invited to make their representations and comments in writing. At the end of the four-week period, the matter will be considered by the Council's Cabinet, who will make the final decision on the proposal.

Reasons for the Proposal

Pupil Numbers at St Teresa's

- Pupil numbers have been falling at St Teresa's for several years and this trend is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. The school had 83% surplus places in October 2021 when the last school census was undertaken.

School Finances at St Teresa's

- School finances are highly dependent on pupil numbers for their funding and as pupil numbers fall schools are unable to maintain staffing levels and the funding available to support each pupil is reduced. This compromises the ability to provide the best education for pupils attending the school.
- There is a projected financial deficit of -£134,500 at 31st March 2022.
- The governors and senior leadership have worked extremely hard to reduce costs and find savings but are now at a stage where they are unable to address the increasing deficit. As a result, the school is not financially viable for the longer term.

The following questions are based on previous school organisation proposals and the type of information and support that parents/carers, pupils, governors, staff, unions and the wider community might want to know.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q1

Who has responsibility for the school?

St Teresa's Catholic Infant School is a voluntary aided school maintained by the local authority. It is run by a governing body, the majority of which are appointed by the Archdiocese of Liverpool. They are responsible for the

overall management of the schools within the statutory framework set out in current legislation.

Q2
Why is the Council involved?
Voluntary aided schools are maintained by the local authority and receive their revenue funding from them. Legislation sets out that local authorities are under a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places in their area, promote high educational standards, ensure fair access to educational opportunity and promote the fulfilment of every child's educational potential. To help them meet these duties and restructure local provision they have the power to close all categories of maintained schools. This involves following a statutory process to consult on any closure and expansion proposals. Ultimately the Council is the decision-maker on these proposals.

Q3
When will the closure take place?
If the proposal to close is agreed St Teresa's would close with effect from 31st August 2022.

The closure of schools is governed by the School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013. The proposals at this stage are still subject to consultation and the statutory publication process.

Q4
If St Teresa's does close, what will happen to the pupils?
If the proposal to close St Teresa's is approved, parents of current pupils are able to apply to alternative schools in the area and the local authority will put arrangements in place to enable parents to do this. Parents of pupils who have named the school as a preference for Reception 2022 entry will be contacted with further information on changing their school preferences.

Q5
How would you ensure the continuance of a good quality education for all pupils?

The governors and staff at the school, in partnership with both the local authority and the Archdiocese, would ensure the standards of education were maintained throughout the process with no adverse impact on pupils at the school.

Q6
Are there any alternatives to closure proposals?
The point of the consultation is to seek the views of others who may have an alternative view. All viable options will be considered before a decision is made.

Q7
Can a plan be proposed to prevent the school from closing?
Yes – we are currently in consultation and any proposals can be considered. If there is a proposal that would prevent the school from closing it should be presented to the Governing Body for them to consider in the first instance. For any plan to be seriously considered it would need to establish, in a sustainable way, an approach to setting a balanced budget.

Q8
What will happen to the school staff?
All staff will continue to deliver quality teaching and support to pupils. If the decision is taken to close the school, the Local Authority and Archdiocese of Liverpool will provide dedicated support and guidance to help them find alternative employment.

Q9
What will happen to the governing body if the result of the consultation is to close St Teresa's?
If the decision is made to close the school on 31 August 2022 the governing body would remain in place and continue to manage the school until the school closed. Support would be provided by both the local authority and the Archdiocese to the governing body throughout the process.

Q10
What will happen to the school site and premises if the school closes?

The school buildings and their footprint are owned by the Archdiocese. No decision has yet been made about the future of the school site.

Q11

My child has Special Education Needs, (SEN) and the school is receiving extra funding from the Local Authority to support their needs. Will my child continue to receive this support if we move to another school?

Yes. Any additional funding received by the school to meet the SEN of a pupil would transfer to their new setting to support their transition and help them settle into their new environment. This funding would then continue to be monitored and reviewed in the usual way.

The staff at St Teresa's would ensure that any information regarding the SEN of pupils is shared with their potential new school so that transition planning can take place. Parents of pupils with SEN will be included in this process.

If you would like to speak to a member of the Special Education Needs and Inclusion Service, they can be contacted at:

SENIS@sefton.gov.uk or 0151 934 2347.

Please tell us what you think about the proposal.

You can return the form with your comments to the School Organisation Team, School Support Services, Town Hall, Oriel Road, Bootle, L20 7AE or return to the Headteacher at St Teresa's Catholic Infant School. You can also comment by email to school.organisation@sefton.gov.uk