

# **School Organisation Consultation**

Provision of primary school places  
in the planning area of Reigate  
**November 2023**



**SURREY**  
COUNTY COUNCIL

# School Organisation Consultation

## Introduction

This is an education consultation about proposed changes to the provision of school places in the primary planning area of Reigate. It is unlikely that any changes would occur before September 2026. The consultation is open to everyone, there may be impacts for people with children of primary school age, future parents, and businesses and residents living close to current Reigate schools.

The consultation directly impacts Reigate Priory Junior School as the school cannot remain as a 5FE Junior School on the current site for the long-term:

School	Age-range	Type of School	Feeder relationships
Reigate Priory Junior School	Junior 7 – 11 years old	Community School	Dovers Green Infant School Holmesdale Infant School

The consultation impacts many pupils who attend the school currently and pupils who may attend the school in the future, and their families. It will also impact staff at the school.

Other schools in the primary planning area of Reigate who may be impacted by the outcome of this consultation:

School	Age-range	Type of School	Feeder relationships
Dovers Green Infant School	Infant 4 – 7 years old	Academy Greensand Multi-Academy Trust	Reigate Priory Junior School Sandcross Primary School
Holmesdale Community Infant School	Infant 4 – 7 years old	Academy Greensand Multi-Academy Trust	Reigate Priory Junior School Sandcross Primary School
Sandcross Primary School	Primary 4 – 11 years old	Academy Everychild Partnership Trust	Dovers Green Infant School Holmesdale Infant School
Reigate Parish Primary School	Primary 4 – 11 years old	Voluntary Aided Diocese of Southwark	N/A

The consultation may also indirectly impact schools in neighbouring pupil planning areas.

More information about education place planning and primary pupil planning areas close to Reigate can be found in **Annex 4 Education needs analysis of primary school places in Reigate and neighboring areas.**

## Overview

Surrey County Council is consulting about options for the future of Reigate Priory Junior School and the provision of primary school places in the planning area of Reigate. The consultation could affect people with children of primary school age, future parents, and businesses and residents living close to current Reigate schools.

The council has a duty to ensure that children have access to education that is safe, accessible, and fit for the future. The Department for Education has confirmed that the current Reigate Priory Junior School building does not comply with design standards for schools in very material respects. The only way to achieve compliance would be by demolishing the building and re-providing it, but (even ignoring cost issues) as it is a Scheduled Monument and a Grade I listed building in a Grade II listed parkland, there is no prospect of Historic England granting consent for demolition. Similarly, it would be impossible to leave the existing heritage building intact and provide a big enough new building within the park adjacent to the existing building as that would not achieve planning consent.

The Department for Education has stated that as the building is so deficient, they will fund a replacement school building if it is provided on an alternative site. £10.6m in funding has been allocated for a replacement.

Therefore, earlier this year we submitted a planning application to move Reigate Priory Junior School to a new site at Woodhatch Place, on Cockshot Hill, after assessing various locations in the area that may accommodate a new school. The application was not approved at that point, and some parents, carers and residents shared concerns about moving the school to the Woodhatch Place site. Surrey County Council was given the option to re-submit the application but, following feedback from residents, instead took time to consider the best solution for the school and surrounding residents.

As Reigate Priory Junior School, in its current size, cannot remain on the site in the long-term, Surrey County Council must consider all options available to maintain the required number of school places in the area.

As a result, we are now publishing this consultation to hear resident views on the future of primary school provision in the Reigate area, including Reigate Priory Junior School. The consultation will be open for a period of six weeks during term time and two weeks over the school holidays. The consultation starts on 27 November 2023 and concludes on 21 January 2024. After the consultation has ended Surrey County Council's Cabinet will consider all views as well as wider evidence and make a decision on next steps on 27 February 2023. Any required planning applications or statutory consultations will be considered at this point.

The aim of this consultation is to offer anyone in the local area an opportunity to have their say and help inform future decisions. Our overriding priority is the wellbeing and education of pupils attending any of the schools impacted and those who may attend the schools in the future.

This document explains the background and reasons why we need to consult on the future of provision of school places in the primary planning area of Reigate. It is supported by documents in 4 annexes.

## How to respond to the consultation

1. The consultation will be open for a period of six weeks during term time and two weeks over the school holidays. The consultation starts on 27 November 2023 and concludes on 21 January 2024.
2. A number of local organisations can support families of children who have additional needs and/or disabilities and young people who have additional needs to share their views. Please see [Information, advice and resources | SEND Advice Surrey](#)
3. Any person can respond and send comments to the local authority through the following channels:

<b>Website (online survey)</b>	<a href="https://surreysays.co.uk">surreysays.co.uk</a>
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:reigateprimaryschools@surreycc.gov.uk">reigateprimaryschools@surreycc.gov.uk</a>
<b>Post</b>	Reigate Primary Planning Area Consultation Education Place Planning Surrey County Council Quadrant Court, 35 Guildford Road, Woking, GU22 7QQ

## Background on Reigate Priory Junior School

Reigate Priory Junior School is a 5 form entry (FE) Junior School for pupils aged 7 to 11 years old. This means there are 5 classes in each year group of the school, Year 3, 4, 5 and 6. The school was rated Outstanding by Ofsted in July 2012. There were 582 pupils on roll at Reigate Priory Junior School as of the school census in May 2023.

Through the Priority Schools Building Programme 2 (PSBP2) 2014, the Department for Education (DfE) identified Reigate Priory Junior School's current site as a site that requires significant improvements to ensure it meets the future demands and needs of pupils. A study undertaken by the DfE considered how to address the shortcomings of the current building. This study concluded that the current building at Priory Park does not meet the design standards required for education provision today.

## Why are we proposing to make a change?

Reigate Priory Junior School is currently located in the Reigate Priory building, a grade I listed property and scheduled monument, the grounds of which are part of the grade II listed Reigate Priory Park and Garden. There is a significant impact on the day to day running of the school due to several areas where the current building does not meet modern education standards set by the Department for Education:

Classrooms sizes are not sufficient.

- The existing school kitchen is significantly undersized. It is 25m<sup>2</sup> and a school of this size should have a circa 70m<sup>2</sup> kitchen.

- The adjacent dining hall in the existing school is only 85m<sup>2</sup> and it should be 150m<sup>2</sup>.

The building cannot be reasonably adapted to address the deficiency in spaces due to the heritage status and listing of the building. Whilst the [area guidelines for mainstream schools](#) are non-statutory and areas in schools will vary depending on the design, the multiple condition factors at Reigate Priory Junior School led to its successful inclusion on the DfE Priority Schools Building Programme 2. The school was awarded funding for a replacement, which given the size and scale required, would need to be provided on an alternative site.

There are also two key areas of safety concern with the current site:

1. There is a public right of way through the school site, which splits the site in two, with buildings on either side.
2. The school uses Priory Park, which is open to the public, as the sports pitches for the school. The school site sits on an area of land within Priory Park, which is used by the public. There is a low perimeter rail around some of the setting which poses potential safeguarding risk where staff supervision is needed to mitigate risks.

As with all schools there is a continuous need to ensure statutory compliance through regular assessment of Health & Safety and Fire Safety matters and mitigate any risks identified in accordance with Regulations. However due to the age and condition of the building it is much more susceptible to such risks and therefore significant additional mitigations, including resources, are needed to meet this Duty of Care than in comparison with a similar sized school in a more modern building.

The age and condition of the building also means it is not fully accessible for pupils with additional needs and disabilities, and its heritage designation means it is not capable of being adequately adapted. Therefore there are barriers for the school to be fully inclusive.

Furthermore, maintenance costs for Reigate Priory Junior School are 1,108% more than an equivalent size school in a modern building, and consequently it is not value for money for the school to stay in the current building.

The only way to achieve compliance with Department for Education standards would be by demolishing the building and re-providing it, but (even ignoring cost issues) as it is a Scheduled Monument and a Grade I listed building in a Grade II listed parkland, there is no prospect of Historic England granting consent for demolition. Similarly, it would be impossible to leave the existing heritage building intact and provide a big enough new building within the site adjacent to the existing building as such a proposal would not achieve planning consent.

The Department for Education has stated that it will fund a replacement school building, compliant with DfE design standards, if it is provided on an alternative site. This is worth £10.6m in funding.

While the future of the school building is determined, and we undertake this important consultation process, we will continue to maintain facilities at the current school, within the limitations of the existing building. Although the current school building cannot provide a modern setting for

education, we are conscious it may take some time to find a solution, so we will put short-term mitigations in place to address significant facilities issues.

## Why are we consulting now?

Reigate Priory Junior School cannot remain on the current site in the long-term. Surrey County Council is considering all solutions available in the Reigate area to maintain sufficient school places.

We are reviewing available options and feel it is important that we engage with all schools in the primary planning area of Reigate and the local community before Surrey County Council Cabinet make a decision on next steps. The two options we have decided to consult on are set out in the next section.

The formulation of the two options is based on Surrey County Council's commitment to ensuring the sustainability of all our education settings and schools in the [Sustainability Strategy](#). This includes linking decisions relating to capital investment in the school estate with:

- raising standards
- supporting curriculum intent and implementation
- remodelling schools to support inclusion and intervention
- addressing security and safeguarding issues in schools
- supporting class organisation models.

Enshrined in the Council's [School Organisation Plan 2022-2032](#) is the commitment that all children and young people should benefit from an education that helps them succeed in life and allows them to make the most of their skills and employment opportunities. We want children and young people in Surrey to live healthy, active, and fulfilling lives, and for our nurseries, schools, and colleges to equip them to make good choices about their life and wellbeing. All children and young people should be able to feel safe and confident in their education.

## What are the options we are consulting on?

Option	Summary
1	<p><b>Relocate Reigate Priory Junior School to a new site at Woodhatch Place</b></p> <p>The school would move out of the current building and transfer to a new site at Woodhatch Place, the only available site which met the criteria in a site search completed in August 2023. The site is less than 1 mile, from the current site. This option is subject to the necessary planning permission. Since the move would be to a site less than 2 miles from the current site, there would be no obligation for further consultation on this option, if approved. We currently estimate that if this option is adopted and the necessary permissions are obtained, the new site should be open in September 2026.</p>
2	<p><b>Set up an education working group to explore re-organisation options for schools in the primary planning area of Reigate</b></p> <p>Surrey County Council would bring together decision makers across all schools in the primary planning area of Reigate to consider whether school places in Reigate could be re-organised. The five schools in the primary planning area of Reigate are Reigate Priory Junior School, Dovers Green Infant School, Holmesdale Infant School, Sandcross Primary School and Reigate Parish Primary School. The working group would need to identify changes that could be made as Reigate Priory Junior School cannot stay in its current form. This could include expansions, schools amalgamating and/or changing age ranges to become primary schools, changes in admission arrangements and other reorganisation ideas. It could take six months to a year before agreed proposal(s) are formulated, and they would then be subject to further consultation. We currently estimate that if this option is adopted and the necessary permissions are obtained, the changes could be in place by September 2028.</p> <p>If option 2 is pursued, this could be done in tandem with pursuing the planning application at Woodhatch under option 1. This is because of the uncertainties in making all the changes which may be necessary under option 2 and doing so within a reasonable time frame.</p>

### Summary analysis of option 1 and 2

Option 1 would mean children can continue to access education within 1 mile of the existing school. It would maintain Reigate Priory Junior School's status as a 5 FE Junior School and would continue to provide 11 forms of entry across schools in the primary planning area of Reigate. It is likely to be the quicker of the two options to put into effect, assuming permissions are obtained, and there would be no change to other schools. Current concerns include transport to the new site which may be more difficult for some parents, and local residents have expressed concern about local traffic and environmental impact of



building a new school on Cockshot Hill. The option is only achievable if an amended planning application is approved.

Option 2 allows time to consider whether the re-organisation of local schools is a possibility. It would require a further period of exploration and decision making and contains more uncertainties in all aspects of the below evaluation criteria. Option 2 involves all schools in the area and impacts more residents than Option 1. There may need to be a compromise in the number of school places available in the area, due to the constraints of existing sites. There is also a level of uncertainty and longer timescales to deliver a solution. The longer any change takes increases the risk of needing to identify emergency temporary accommodation for Reigate Priory Junior School.

The following supporting documents including further information about each option, can be found on the consultation page at [www.surreysays.co.uk](http://www.surreysays.co.uk):

- Annex 1 Option 1 analysis
- Annex 2 Option 2 analysis
- Annex 3 Proposed timelines for each option
- Annex 4 Education needs analysis of primary school places in Reigate and neighboring areas
- Annex 5 Alternative Site Assessment in Reigate for Reigate Priory School

The two options will be assessed under an agreed evaluation criteria:

- Does the option support Surrey County Council to achieve ambitions set out in the [Community Vision](#) that children and young people are safe and feel safe and confident and that everyone benefits from education, skills and employment opportunities that help them succeed in life.
- Affordability
- Achievability
- Sustainable for the future
- Legally compliant
- Value for money

Responses to the consultation will influence the options analysis that will be submitted to Cabinet on 27 February 2024.

Responses to this consultation will be analysed and shared with Surrey County Council Cabinet prior to its meeting on 27 February 2024.

## **Why is there not an option to stay at the current site?**

As explained above, it is not feasible to keep Reigate Priory Junior School as a 600 place school at its current site, and this is why it is not an option that is being considered.



## Why is there not an option to move to a site other than Woodhatch Place?

Vail Williams, property consultants, were instructed in July 2023 by Surrey County Council to carry out an updated search of the local Reigate market for sites suitable for the development of a school and report all findings together with an assessment of deliverability. The search is an update to one undertaken in February 2022.

Woodhatch Place was the only site identified that met all the criteria required to deliver a 600-place junior school building as well as outdoor school spaces. These criteria were:

- A site of approximately 8 acres and no smaller than 5 acres. Larger sites included, to ensure maximum coverage and that the development can accommodate a school which accords with the Department of Education standards for new schools.
- Within 2 miles of the existing school.

Sites both off and on market with a range of ownership types, uses, access/location arrangements and sizes, have been considered.

The alternative site assessment in Reigate for Reigate Priory Junior School is available with the consultation documents as **Annex 5**.

If you are aware of another site that meets the search criteria which we have not identified, please contact us at [reigateprimaryschools@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:reigateprimaryschools@surreycc.gov.uk).

## What happens next?

We will hold a public engagement meeting for parents, residents and any other interested parties to discuss the above options and to hear views:

**Date and time:** 6:30 pm on 6 December 2023

**Venue:** Reigate Priory Junior School, Bell Street, Reigate, Surrey, RH2 7RL

This is a public meeting and subject to space anyone who wishes to, may attend. Please go to [Eventbrite](#) to book a place for the event at the school. There will be a short presentation followed by questions and answers.

Please join us to share your views and ask questions. It is not a requirement that you have a child at any of the schools impacted to join the meeting. All interested parties are welcome to book a place at the event.

There will also be informal sessions for parents and carers to ask questions at each of the schools. Each individual school will notify parents and carers of dates and times.

You can share your views using the online form at [Surrey Says](#). Alternatively, you can respond by email or post using the consultation response form, at the addresses given in the section [How to respond to the consultation](#).