

# School Organisation Consultation

**Removal of boarding provision at  
Sunnydown School**

**February  
2021**



**SURREY**

## Introduction

This paper outlines a proposal for Surrey County Council to remove the boarding provision at Sunnydown School. The vacant space has the potential for redevelopment to increase day places for secondary pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and who have Autism and Social Communication and Interaction Needs (COIN) in Surrey. The statutory process and timescales for removal of this provision at the school are outlined below.

## Background

1. Sunnydown School is a single sex local authority maintained special educational needs school for boys aged 11 to 16 years in Caterham, South East Surrey. The school has been oversubscribed since 2014, and currently has 80 pupil places and provides 23 residential beds. In 2017, the boarding provision was reduced from 33 residential beds.
2. Pupils that are placed at Sunnydown have a range of SEND needs associated with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The school has a 'Good' Ofsted rating from the last inspection (12 July 2016) and the residential inspections have had an annual 'Outstanding' rating since 2016; the most recent of which was the 13 January 2020.

## Proposal

3. Surrey County Council is proposing that the boarding provision at Sunnydown School is removed from June 2021.
4. Should the above proposal be agreed, it will be proposed that the number of specialist school places at Sunnydown School is expanded by 20 places from 80 to 100. The expansion will utilise existing space and capacity which is currently used as boarding provision on the site. This will be subject to a separate consultation process.

## Rationale

5. As referenced on Sunnydown School's website, 'the offer of a residential placement is not a statutory or compulsory offer, unless stated on an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) and may not be appropriate for all pupils. The school assesses a pupil's access for a residential placement based on a number of factors including; agreement with parents or carers, the distance from home to school, the medical needs of the pupil and staffing levels<sup>1</sup>.
6. There are no pupils placed at the school by Surrey County Council or other local authorities who have boarding specified and quantified in section F (special educational provision), section G (health provision reasonably required by the learning difficulties or disabilities which resulting in a child or young person having

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<sup>1</sup> Full criteria can be found on the school website - [Residential Ethos | Sunnydown School](#)

SEN) or section H (any social care provision which must be made for a child or young person under 18 resulting from Section 2 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Person's Act 1970) of their Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). Therefore, the current boarding provision is not considered to be an efficient use of resources.

7. In Surrey, numbers of primary-aged pupils with ASD named on their Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) increased by 53% between January 2015 and January 2020 (from 1624 to 3087). The projections suggest that numbers will continue to grow over the next 5 years, particularly in secondary year groups as primary pupils move through the school system.
8. As part of the Strategy for Specialist Placements, SCC will look to propose to expand Sunnydown School should the removal of the boarding provision be agreed. Sunnydown School has been oversubscribed for day places since 2014 and expanding the day provision of Sunnydown School will help to meet the increased demand for specialist placements, in particular for pupils with a primary need of ASD.
9. SCC is considering the future expansion of Sunnydown School because the school has a strong and established special school offer, experience of supporting pupils with ASD needs and a desire to meet growing demand for specialist secondary provision. The possible expansion will enable SCC to offer more pupils and their families local, high-quality ASD special educational provision.
10. Any proposal for future expansion will be subject to a separate consultation process, which will be published at the appropriate time and shared with relevant stakeholders.

## **Pupil Placement**

11. It is proposed that:

- The boarding provision at the school is decommissioned and removed from June 2021.
- The space currently utilised for residential is decommissioned or removed, will be refurbished to accommodate additional pupils as part of a proposed school expansion.
- As is currently the case for Sunnydown School, appropriate pupils for the provision would be identified using the SEND admissions process. Further details on the admissions process for SEND specialist provision in Surrey can be found on the Surrey County Council [website](#).
- School places are allocated in accordance with the Children and Families Act 2014, which requires the Local Authority to take into account the pupil's special educational needs, parental request for schools, and the formal view of the schools requested before making a decision. Places will be allocated based on parental requests wherever possible, unless:
  - the school is unsuitable for the child's age, ability, aptitude or SEN

- the placement would be incompatible with the efficient education of the other children with whom your child would be educated, and
- the placement would be incompatible with the efficient use of resources.

## **Building work**

12. Should the proposal to remove the boarding provision be agreed, the refurbishment of the residential provision will take place in August 2021. These will be modifications to the interior of the school and are unlikely to require external planning permission. This will help to limit the disruption to the special educational provision of pupils who already attend Sunnydown.

## **Finance and Resourcing**

13. A capital investment budget will be allocated for the proposed refurbishment, determined by the nature of the work to be completed by Surrey County Council as well as additional fittings, furniture, and equipment to accommodate additional pupils at the school.

14. Sunnydown will receive additional revenue funding to cover the costs of the future expansion and the increased pupils in the expanded provision. This includes placement cost, Top Up, Therapy costs and Individual Pupil Support Budgets (IPSB). Existing funding and provision for pupils currently attending the school will remain the same. Further details of funding for special schools can be found on the [SCC website](#).

15. Sunnydown School, in partnership with Surrey County Council, will formally consult with affected staff and the relevant trade unions regarding the proposed removal of the boarding provision.

## **Consultations, approvals and overall timescales**

16. The proposal is that Surrey County Council removes residential designation from Sunnydown School from June 2021. In order to enact the proposed changes, the Local Authority must follow the statutory process outlined by the Department for Education '[Making significant changes to maintained schools](#)' guidance. This requires a period of consultation, the publication of Statutory Notices and the agreement of Surrey County Council's Cabinet Member for All-age Learning if the proposal is to proceed.

17. The first stage of consultation will be informal and opens on Monday 22 February 2021. During this period Surrey County Council will share its proposals with schools including head teachers and chairs of governors, with unions, parent representatives, partner agencies, local residents and with the staff and parents of Sunnydown School.

18. Following the informal consultation period, it is proposed to publish a Statutory Notice for a four-week period. This is when the local authority formally states the changes that it intends to make. This will be the final opportunity for consultees to make their views known before a final decision is taken. Following this the feedback will be summarised

and reported to the Cabinet Member for All-age Learning. A decision is due on 8 June 2021.

## Have your say

Surrey County Council and Sunnydown School would like to know what people think about the proposal. The consultation opens on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021.

You can respond by:

- a) Using the online survey. You can access the consultation online on the [‘Surrey Says’ website](#) by searching for “Sunnydown School” or by scrolling through the list of open consultations.
- b) Completing the consultation response form that is available alongside this document and emailing it to [schoolorg@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:schoolorg@surreycc.gov.uk) with the subject “FAO Sunnydown School Consultation”
- c) Printing and completing the consultation response form that is available alongside this document and sending it back to the address below:

Sunnydown School Consultation  
FAO Katie Kelly-Weller  
SCC Education Place Planning  
Quadrant Court  
Guildford Road  
Woking  
GU22 7QQ

All responses must be received by **19 April 2021**.

## What happens next?

We will hold an online public meeting for parents and any other interested parties to discuss the proposals and to hear the views that people have. As a public meeting, it is open to all. If you would like to attend, please email [schoolorg@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:schoolorg@surreycc.gov.uk) to register your interest and you will be sent a link to the online event.

The online event will be held on **Wednesday 10 March at 7pm**. There will be a short presentation followed by questions and answers. Please join to share your views and ask questions. You do not have to have a child at the school to join the meeting.

At the end of the consultation period, SCC will collate and review all of the responses received and share these with the school and publish them on the Surrey Says website.

Subject to the outcome of the consultation we intend to publish a Statutory Notice at the school, in a local newspaper and on the Surrey Says website stating our intention to

decommission the residential offer at Sunnydown School. There will be a four-week statutory consultation period for further representations to be received by the council.

All representations will be reviewed before a final decision is taken by the Cabinet Member for All-age Learning Decisions in June 2021.

**Consultation Response Form**  
**Proposal to remove the boarding provision at Sunnydown School**

Please give us your views. Please tick the box that best shows what you think about the proposed expansion and also give us any comments you have. You can write on the other side of this sheet if you want more space to write comments.

<b>1. Do you agree with the proposal to remove the boarding provision at Sunnydown School from September 2021?</b>		
Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2. Your comments:</b>          		

**3. Please tick the box(es) that apply to you.**

- A parent/carer of a child at the school
- A parent/carer of a child in an Early Years setting
- A parent/carer of a child at another school
- Someone who works at the school
- A Governor of the school
- Some other link to the school
- A local resident
- Someone else with an interest – please give details

**4. If possible, please provide your postcode**

**5. Please tick if you have also written comments on a separate sheet**

Please return to:  
Sunnydown School consultation (email: [schoolorg@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:schoolorg@surreycc.gov.uk))  
FAO Katie Kelly-Weller  
SCC Education Place Planning  
Quadrant Court  
Guildford Road  
Woking  
GU22 7QQ

(Further comments can be continued on a separate sheet).

