

Informal Consultation on the proposal to amalgamate

Bishop Challoner Catholic Girls and Boys Schools and Sixth Form to create a Bishop Challoner Co-educational Catholic School

20th September 2022

The Proposal

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets, in partnership with the Diocese of Westminster and governors of Bishop Challoner, are proposing to merge the two schools to form (initially) a nine-form entry 11-16 school with sixth form. This will create a single secondary school from the start of the September Term in 2023.

Why are we proposing the change?

Governors believe that an amalgamation will offer additional opportunities to maximise expertise and resources across our staff group and for us to work together for all our children.

We believe that by building on our existing co-educational practices we will be able to raise expectations and success for our young people, further enhancing their existing strong school experience.

Will this affect our school leadership?

The existing Executive Headteacher will become the Headteacher for the amalgamated school. There would be a single strong leadership team and all leadership expertise would be available to both schools. We will continue to have a single headteacher and a single governing body who collectively oversee the running of the amalgamated school.

What are the benefits of becoming a single co-educational school?

Further opportunities to enhance the educational offer for our children.

Continued access for pupils and their families to extended services and facilities.

Greater financial stability to make certain we continue to improve and offer a first class education.

More development opportunities for the staff, such as shared leadership and training and the chance to work more closely across the curriculum and gain experience and understanding from each other.

The strengthening and continued developing of Catholic community links which already exist.

What will it mean for our young people?

The whole purpose of the merger is to create an environment that will have a positive impact on the quality of education that children receive.

We already share the same policies and procedures, and the same dates for staff training days and school holidays, this amalgamation will help us ensure that we can maximise staff expertise across the school for the benefit of all pupils.

What will it mean for my child being part of a larger school?

On a day-to-day basis very little will change. The differing needs of each child will continue to be met. Our young people already meet co-educationally and are familiar with all school buildings.

The care and importance given to each individual child, which is a strength of both schools, will always remain paramount.

What will it mean for the staff?

Very little will change on a day-to-day basis. Staff conditions of service will not be affected. All staff employed at the Girls' and Boys' Schools (at the time of the proposed amalgamation) would automatically continue their employment in the new co-educational school and their rights would be preserved.

Each year, our schools review their staffing. The amalgamation will probably create some new opportunities and minor changes for staff. If any significant staffing changes are proposed they are always followed through in line with Tower Hamlets agreed processes and HR consultations.

Would there be any changes to the school building?

In the event of merger, the school would remain largely the same with all the existing premises being used in the most appropriate and effective way.

As we settle in as one school there may be other changes which need to be made to ensure we use all the school space effectively.

Procedure to achieve the merger

It is proposed that Bishop Challoner Catholic School (the exact name will need to be agreed with Westminster Diocese) will open on 1 September 2023 catering for pupils from age 11 to 18.

The process to achieve this involves the 'technical closure of Bishop Challoner Catholic Boys' School on August 31st 2023 and the expansion, and renaming, of Bishop Challoner Catholic Girls' School to become Bishop Challoner Catholic School from 1st September 2023. However, it

should be noted there will be no actual closure of school buildings.

Admissions

If the proposal is agreed the Co-educational School would be created on 1 September 2023 and the following would apply:

- All children currently attending Bishop Challoner Girls or Boys School will automatically join Bishop Challoner Catholic School.
- First admissions: Children who have applied for places at Bishop Challoner Girls or Boys School for September 2023 would be offered places through the standard admissions process, using the schools current agreed Admission's Policy.

Why are we consulting you?

We want to consult you to gather your views because you are part of the school community. The governing body of the school, Diocese of Westminster and the London Borough of Tower Hamlets cannot simply decide to make changes to schools without first seeking the views of parents, staff and other stakeholders. There is a legal process which must be followed before changes can be made, and it is important that the governing body, the diocese and the council hear your views before deciding whether to proceed.

We have organised the following opportunities for parents and carers to share views, because of continuing coronavirus risks these be a mixture of face to face and virtual meetings to ensure that everyone has a full opportunity to feed into the consultation.

1. You can use the response form (or any other written format) at the end of this document to record your views. It can be posted to the schools, or emailed to

amalgamation@bishop.towerhamlets.sch.uk

2. There is a box in the reception of each school where you can leave your comments, response forms and any questions.

3. There will be a staff meeting specifically to discuss the proposal on 26th September

4. There will be an open meeting for parents at school on the evening of **Wednesday October 5th at 5.30pm for one hour.**

5. A further "zoom" virtual feedback meeting with our Independent Consultant, Helen Jenner is open to all stakeholders on **11th October at 5 pm.**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85625470205>

6. School staff will create age appropriate ways of consulting with our children on their views as part of the school curriculum.

What happens next?

The informal consultation period starts on **Wednesday 21st September 2022** and ends on **Friday October 21st 2022** – the last page of this document can be used for you to feedback your view to governors. It should be returned to the school office. Following the consultation process, the governors will review your feedback and use it to make a response to the council, and Westminster Diocese on whether or not to recommend proceeding with the school amalgamation proposal.

The decision to amalgamate schools has to be taken by the Local Authority, but they will always take consultation responses, the diocese and school governors' recommendations into account.

Early in the second half of the Autumn Term the governors will feedback to you on the consultation. In November the Council Cabinet (or the Mayor's Decision Panel) will decide whether to post statutory notices proposing the amalgamation.

Once these notices are posted everyone has 4 weeks where they can make representations to the Council if they wish, regarding the proposal. The notices will be posted early in December and will explain how to make representations.

The final decision to amalgamate the schools will be taken by the Local Authority at its Council Cabinet meeting in March 2023.

How can I get more information on the proposal?

The schools will publish the feedback from the consultation on the schools' websites during the Autumn Term.

If permission is granted to publish a public notice, further details of this proposal will also be available in the Consultation sections of the Council's website

This document is also available on our federation website, along with papers that governors have considered before consulting with you.

<https://www.bishopchallonerfederation.towerhamlets.sch.uk>

Thank you for taking the time to consider our proposal, we look forward to hearing your views.



Fr David Evans
Chair of Governors



JP Morrison
Executive Headteacher

Proposal to Amalgamate Bishop Challoner Catholic Girls' and Boys' Schools –

Response Form

Our proposal is to bring together our two single sex schools to create a co- educational comprehensive Catholic secondary school.

This would create Bishop Challoner Catholic School from 1 September 2023. We welcome your views on this proposal. Please fill in this response form and return it to the School Reception no later than **21st October 2022 at 3.30pm.**

1) Do you agree with the proposal to amalgamate our two schools to become one school?
Please tick as applicable

Yes		No	
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2) If you like the proposal, please say why you think it is a good idea?

3) If you dislike the proposal, please tell us why you are concerned?

4) Any other comments?

	Bishop Challoner Boys' School	Bishop Challoner Girls' School
I have child/ren attending	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am a staff member at	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am a governor at	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please describe)		

Your Name (Optional) _____

Please return this form to school by 21st October 2022. Feedback from question one will be summarised numerically. Comments will be collated and anonymised. This information will be made available to the public (via the school website), but all respondents' comments and information will be anonymised.