



## **ST DOMINIC'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL - Q & A for parents, 19/10/2022**

Dear Parents and Carers - Thank you very much to those of you who attended one of the three parent meetings we held last Wednesday at the school.

A number of questions, as well as comments, were raised and have been noted. We will continue to respond to further questions as they arise during the consultation.

Just to remind you again, this process is not a school, Diocese or Camden process, but is set out in the Department for Education's November 2019 document 'Opening and Closing Maintained Schools - statutory guidance for proposers and decision-makers'. As governors, we are obliged to follow the law as set out by the Department for Education.

### **Q: I'm worried about the possibility of the school closing. Who should I speak to regarding school places?**

Please contact the Admissions Team at Camden. You can call them on 020 7974 1625. Their website has a wealth of information; visit [www.camden.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.camden.gov.uk/admissions), or email them: [admissions@camden.gov.uk](mailto:admissions@camden.gov.uk)

### **Q: I have a child with special educational needs. What should I do to ensure their needs are met should I have to find another school place?**

If your child has an education, health and care plan (EHCP), you need to contact the Camden Special Educational Needs Team on 020 7974 6500. If you have other concerns about your child, please [contact the school](#) in the first instance.

### **Q: What have the governors done to try to keep the school open?**

St Dominic's has a large number of unfilled places. As explained in the consultation document given out last Wednesday, the number of children at the school, and in the local area, has declined over the last few years. Governors have tried to keep costs down as much as possible, without compromising the high quality of education your child is currently receiving.

Holding a farmers' market, car-boot sales, children's parties, and other such activities in order to generate more income, are good ideas but will not make up for the money the school is losing each year due to low numbers of children.

### **Q: Why don't we merge with another local Catholic school?**

This is a good question, given our low numbers of children and our overheads. But this idea would probably not appeal to the governors of the other proposed school. That would mean closure of St Dominic's and expansion of the other school so that

all children would be accommodated in the one school. Parents of one of the schools would need to consider if they are prepared to travel a little further to take their children to and from the school.

**Q: Why don't you open the nursery for two-year-olds?**

We did discuss this some time ago. This would require more staff and staff with specific qualifications to cater for very young children. For children aged 0 to two, the requirement is one member of staff for three children. For two to three-year-olds, the ratio is one member of staff for four children. Unless there were significant numbers of children requiring a nursery place at St Dominic's, the school could risk falling into serious debt.

**Q: Why weren't the parents consulted earlier rather than now?**

Governors have been aware for some time of the drop in the school's budget due to falling numbers of children attending St Dominic's. However, as explained at the meetings, no time is a good time to consult on possible closure. The governors consulted the Diocese and Camden regarding the falling numbers and a decision was made to consult on possible closure.

**Q: Why don't you try and get [CIL money](#) or Section 106 money?**

Money that comes from both these sources is not allowed to be used to top-up a school's budget. This money has to go into further regeneration for the good of the whole community and not to a specific school or project.

**We will be sending out regular updates and responding to further questions as they arise during the consultation. Please complete the questionnaire we gave out or email [stdominics@camden.gov.uk](mailto:stdominics@camden.gov.uk) by 30 November.**

**PLEASE NOTE:**

**If, after this six-week consultation, the governors decide to move to the four-week formal notice period (from January 2023 at the earliest), we would be appointing a 'choice manager' from Camden Admissions who would visit St Dominic's two or three mornings a week to talk to you individually by appointment with the school office. This person would have all the current vacancies in every school and would help you to make the best choices for your children.**

Margaret Harvey  
Chair of Governors