Dear Stakeholders,

Between Wednesday 8 May 2019 and Tuesday 25 June 2019, Orchard Hill College Academy Trust (OHCAT) conducted a Public Consultation Process under Section 10 of the Academies Act 2010 to establish a new Free School in Wallington. The proposal was to close the current school Carew Academy (at Church Road, Wallington, Surrey, SM6 7NH) and to build a new Free School to provide better facilities and to accommodate children from 5-19.

Following a majority of survey respondents (63%) stating that they were in favour of the new school, permission was granted by the Department for Education (DfE) to proceed and is now subject to entering into a funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education before opening. The new school will retain the name of Carew Academy and is scheduled to open in April 2025.

In accordance with the DfE requirement, OHCAT is now undertaking a two-week statutory 'listening period' with key stakeholders, as part of the closure process of the current Carew Academy and the opening of the new Carew Academy. The purpose of the listening period is to offer information as to why the school is closing (see enclosed) and for stakeholders and interested parties to submit their views on how the school closure process can be best managed.

The listening period will run from Monday 13 May to Sunday 26 May 2024. Information can be found on the Carew Academy Website www.carewacademy.org/free-school/listening-period

You may submit any comments to us via the following email address: lnagle@carewacademy.org

Or by writing to Lisa Nagle, Office Manager, Carew Academy, Church Road, Wallington, Surrey, SM6 7NH.

Kind regards

James Kearns Principal, Carew Academy

Background

Orchard Hill College Academy Trust (OHCAT) currently operates Carew Academy - URN: 139722, DfE number: 319/7001. Carew Academy is a special school that caters for 230 students aged 7-19 with a wide range of ability levels and additional learning needs, including complex needs.

In April 2016, OHCAT submitted a Free School bid with the intention of closing the current school in order to create a new school that extends the age range to 5-19, and to increase the capacity to 246. The Orchard Hill Special Free School (Sutton) bid, as it was called then, was approved by the DfE in September 2016.

A Section 10 Public Consultation took place between Wednesday 8 May 2019 to Tuesday 25 June 2019, which was in support (i.e. 63% of respondents) of the proposed closure and the opening of a new Free School, with the same designation.

The new school, which will retain the name of Carew Academy, is currently being built on the site of Sheen Way Playing Fields, Wallington. Completion is expected in December 2024; however, the current Carew Academy will not be ready to move from their existing site to the new school site until April 2025.

Proposal

2.1 Local authority need

The Regional Director and the DfE Free School Team are fully aware of the proposed new Free School, and thus the closure of the current Carew Academy. The local authority, the London Borough of Sutton, are also aware and are supportive of the new school.

2.2 Impact of closure on existing students, staff and the local community

The new Carew Academy will have a capacity of 246 for children and young people aged 5-19. The Local Authority (LA) is supportive of the planned new capacity of 246 places and change in age range from 7-19 to 5-19.

All students from the current Carew Academy will transition to the new school and no student will have their education interrupted or be displaced. There will be no requirement to amend any student's Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan as a result of the transfer to the new school.

All staff will also transition to the new school. There are no TUPE implications as the staff will remain employees of OHCAT.

The new school is being built on the site of Sheen Way Playing Fields, Wallington. The school address will be Carew Academy, 33 Headley Avenue, Wallington, SM6 8NQ.

The intention is to close the current Carew Academy at the end of the Spring term 2025. We will then move to the new build and the new Carew Academy will open in April 2025.

An Academy Equality Impact Assessment of the proposed closure has considered the expected impact of the proposed change on all individuals with protected characteristics, under the Equality Act 2010. Analysis showed that the proposal will have a neutral impact and no groups will be adversely affected by the project. Further information can be provided on request.

Note: The academy is not designated as having a religious character.

2.3 Current Carew Academy performance

The current Carew Academy is graded OUTSTANDING (Last inspection: 16 January 2020). Pupils achieve a range of GCSE and other accreditations meaning NEET figures are always below local and national average; with many pupils accessing local colleges and sixth form provisions.

3. Next Steps

Once the closure plan is completed, and a substantive closure decision has been made by the Secretary of State, OHCAT will liaise with the DfE and the Education and Skills Funding Agency to:

- agree the new place funding for the new Carew Academy;
- terminate the current academy's Supplemental Funding Agreement (SFA) through a Deed of Termination; and
- establish a new SFA for the new Carew Academy.

Please note that as a result of the closure of the current Carew Academy, there will be:

- no staff redundancies;
- no displacement of pupils;
- no change to pension liabilities as the staff will remain employees of OHCAT; and
- no change in the academy's reserves position, as it will be transferred to the new Carew Academy