

LETTER TO HELENSWOOD PARENTS

Dear Parents/Carers,

We were very proud to celebrate another year of excellent GCSE results at Helenswood, as we continue to be the top performing school in the town. The new term has also started very well, with students responding very positively to our new routines!

We have been considering how we can build upon the progress we have secured at Helenswood in recent years. In what are challenging financial times for all schools both Helenswood and William Parker have been working hard to address challenging financial issues. Both schools are under-roll and require significant investment in their buildings, which are currently spread across three sites. Last year we explored the possibility of consolidating Helenswood onto one site but were unable to secure financial support for our plans. It remains clear that the current operating structure is not sustainable, and the financial constraints will make it increasingly difficult to provide the standard of education we want for our students.

We are writing to inform you that next week we will begin consulting on a proposal to bring Helenswood and William Parker together as one co-educational school. The school would run across two sites, with Years 7 and 8 based at the Helenswood Lower Site, and Years 9 to 11 plus the Sixth Form at the William Parker site. If approved by the Department for Education, these changes would be effective from September 2019.

Helenswood and William Parker have a long history in Hastings, and the two schools are already working well together, as shown by the impressive results that our students achieved in the combined Sixth Form this summer. We believe that our plans will build upon the traditions and expertise of both schools, and ensure that we are able to utilise these strong foundations and create a high performing school for the local community which is sustainable into the future.

The decision on whether to go ahead with the proposal will be taken by the Department for Education following the formal consultation, which will run from 18 September to 30 October. We appreciate that this news will raise many questions and some concerns; we are very keen to hear and understand your views, as well as those of pupils and the local community.

We will be holding several meetings throughout the formal consultation period, some of these will be exclusively for parents. The first Helenswood parents meetings are scheduled for **Wednesday 19 September at 6pm**, and, **Thursday 20th September at 10am**.

We will send out more information about the formal consultation in the coming days, all of which will be available on the consultation website, launching later this week at: <http://hastingsconsultation.org>. You can also email queries to hastingsconsultation@arkonline.org.

Yours sincerely,

Yvonne Powell
Executive Principal