

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Consultation on the future of Chillerton and Rookley Primary School.**

#### **Why is the IW Council considering the future of Chillerton and Rookley Primary School?**

##### **Letter from The Stenbury Federation**

Chillerton and Rookley and Godshill Primary Schools are federated schools under The Stenbury Federation. The IW Council has received a letter from the Stenbury Federation Governing Body requesting that the Council commences a consultation on the future of Chillerton and Rookley Primary School. The letter makes it clear that the preferred option of the Governing Body is the amalgamation of Chillerton and Rookley and Godshill Primary Schools. Legally there is no such position as an amalgamation of two schools and such an outcome will mean the closure of one of the schools concerned.

##### **Pupil numbers**

Pupil numbers for Chillerton and Rookley Primary School shows a decline over the past few years with numbers dropping from 84 pupils in the 2017/18 academic year to 35 pupils on roll for the 2021/21 academic year. There have been no first preference applications for a place in Year R at Chillerton and Rookley Primary for the 2021/22 academic year which will lead to a further drop in pupil numbers at the school.

##### **Educational standards**

Ofsted inspections are a key way in which the quality of provision and performance in schools is judged. Currently Chillerton and Rookley Primary School is judged by Ofsted to require improvement. Although the inspectors found the school to be a safe and happy place where children felt well looked after, they noted that pupils did not make sufficient progress in key stage 1, and that outcomes in mathematics were weak across the school. The school was given the action of increasing the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standards in reading, writing and maths. The school has made significant progress in addressing these issues. The decision to combine the Year 6 cohorts from the Godshill and Chillerton and Rookley Primary Schools for lessons has created an opportunity to enhance the progress of these children. A larger combined cohort increases the effect of peer learning, social and emotional development, and focused teaching in groups.

#### **What are the problems with surplus places/declining pupil numbers?**

School's funding is directly related to the number of pupils it has on roll and is allocated based on a funding formula to ensure all schools receive an appropriate allocation based on their number on roll. Funding for schools is allocated by the Government.

A decline in pupil numbers, and a subsequent reduction in funding, presents difficulties for a school in appointing staff and delivering the full range of curriculum opportunities to pupils. Present and forecast pupil numbers at

Chillerton and Rookley School raise concerns in relation to their future financial stability and ability to offer a wide and varied curriculum.

**What would happen to the pupils currently attending Chillerton and Rookley and Godshill Primary Schools if it was decided to amalgamate the schools?**

Any changes will be managed in such a way as to minimise disruption to pupils' education.

Chillerton and Rookley and Godshill Primary Schools form a federation known as The Stenbury Federation. Godshill is the larger of the two schools and has sufficient surplus places to allow all pupils attending Chillerton and Rookley Primary School to be accommodated. Should Chillerton and Rookley Primary School be closed the pupils will be offered a place at Godshill Primary School. Parents will also be able to make an application to other schools. Any application will be handled following the published admissions process.

Every effort will be made to ensure that pupils will continue to follow the curriculum they are currently studying and support will be provided to all pupils affected by any proposed changes to minimise disruption to their learning.

**I have applied for a place at Chillerton and Rookley Primary for my child to start Year R in September 2021. What will happen to my application?**

As no final decision has been made yet about the future of Chillerton and Rookley Primary School, your application will still be processed and places will be allocated in accordance with the school's published admission arrangements. However, as no applications have been received naming Chillerton and Rookley as a first preference school it is anticipated that any second or third preference applications for a place will be offered a place at a higher preference school. In essence no Year R pupils are anticipated for Chillerton and Rookley for the 2021/22 academic year.

In the event that a decision is taken to close the school, should there be any parents holding an offer at Chillerton and Rookley Primary School they will need to submit a further application for a school place. However, there are sufficient surplus places at Godshill Primary School for a place to be offered for all pupils currently attending Chillerton and Rookley Primary School.

Parents will also be able to seek a place at other schools for their children if they do not wish them to attend Godshill Primary School and the local authority will work with parents to ensure that applications are administered fairly.

**Can I change my application for a place in Year R in September 2021?**

As the closing date has now passed, all applications or change of preference, must be notified to the local authority in writing. If it is a change of preference, a new application form does not need to be completed. You can either send a letter with your changes to School Admissions and Transport, County Hall or an email to [school.admissions@iow.gov.uk](mailto:school.admissions@iow.gov.uk)

### **How can you be sure that the number of pupils expected in the future is accurate?**

Predicting school place demand is a complex task. Where children go to school involves a range of different factors such as housing growth, inward and outward population migration as well as parental preference. As a result, planning for school places uses historical trends and some assumptions and not certainties. While pupil forecasts are derived from sound methodology, external influences mean they come without a guarantee.

### **What would happen to staff?**

The retention of high quality staff is a crucial element in the IW Council's drive for improving education standards and raising pupil achievement.

Consultations will take place with all staff who may be affected by the proposals, and with their respective professional associations and trade unions.

### **How will the pupils get from Chillerton and Rookley Primary School to Godshill Primary School?**

Those pupils attending Chillerton and Rookley Primary School at the time of closure will be entitled to transport to Godshill Primary School (from Chillerton Primary School) until the completion of their primary education. Future pupils living in Chillerton and wishing to attend Godshill Primary School will continue to be entitled to transport.

Parents who choose Godshill Primary School in the future and do not live in Chillerton will not be entitled to transport for their children.

### **What will happen to the Chillerton and Rookley Primary School site should the school be closed?**

No decision has been made on the longer term future of the Chillerton and Rookley Primary site. However, any property implications will be fully considered by the IW Council.

### **What other options have been considered?**

There is one other option that has been considered:

- That no change is pursued and the current situation is allowed to continue.

### **Can I propose other options?**

During the consultation the Council would welcome any additional viable proposals. Please submit via the Response Form on the consultation webpage.

### **Will I have the opportunity to discuss the proposal and ask questions?**

There will be opportunities for parents, pupils and other interested members of the community to comment on the proposals. Comments made, and issues

raised, will be reported back to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills and will be fully considered before any decision is made.

### **How to take part in the consultation**

Please tell us your views by using our online consultation response form here [SandLBusinessSupport@IOW.gov.uk](mailto:SandLBusinessSupport@IOW.gov.uk)

### **The Consultation**

The consultation runs from 29 January until 19 March 2021.

Officers will collate the responses and take a report on the outcomes of the consultation to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills. If it is concluded that the closure of Chillerton and Rookley Primary School should proceed, a statutory notice setting out this intention will be published.

Should notices be published there will be a four week period during which representations can be made. Any representations will then be taken into consideration before the IW Council finally decides whether or not to proceed with the closure of Chillerton and Rookley Primary School. If it is agreed, the anticipated implementation date would be 1 September 2021.