



Consultation on the amalgamation of
**Pensby High School for Boys and
Pensby High School for Girls**

January - February 2015

Consultation on the amalgamation of Pensby High School for Boys and Pensby High School for Girls

In May 2010, the two Pensby secondary schools entered into a hard Federation, “The Pensby High Schools Federation”. This enabled the two schools to work together more closely under a single governing body led by a single headteacher, building on the existing joint sixth form arrangements, helping to safeguard viable secondary education for both girls and boys in Pensby when rolls were falling. In September 2014, the Governing body of the Pensby High Schools Federation approached the Council to ask to begin a formal consultation on the amalgamation of the two schools to form a single mixed sex school in Pensby.

The reasons given by the Governing body were:

- The impact the decrease in pupil numbers in each school is having on providing the broadest curriculum offer, the best teaching and learning and therefore outcomes for students;
- Numbers across both schools have fallen and will not increase to the pupil admission number of 150 for each school in the foreseeable future if at all;
- The current numbers in each school mean the schools on their present separate but adjacent sites are financially unsustainable.

A six week public consultation is therefore being held on the proposed amalgamation of Pensby High School for Boys and Pensby High School for Girls. This document sets out the reasons why we have considered such a possibility and asks for your views.

Council’s Cabinet will review the responses from parents, staff, the Local Authority, Unions, local residents and local schools in a report later this year. At that point Council’s Cabinet will decide whether to continue to the next stage, which is for statutory notices to be published, or to take no further action.

This consultation document is divided into a number of sections:

1. The Introduction, which explains more about the two schools, what a Federation is and why we are proposing it
2. The Proposal
3. The Consultation - timeline and date of meeting
4. Some questions answered
5. Having your say - How to respond

INTRODUCTION

About the two schools

Pensby High School for Boys is a single sex, non-selective community secondary school with places for 867 boys aged 11 to 18. In Autumn 2014 there were 420 pupils on roll.

Pensby High School for Girls is a single sex, non-selective community secondary school with places for 883 girls aged 11 to 18. In Autumn 2014 there were 566 pupils on roll.

The two schools are located side by side on Irby Road, Heswall, Wirral. The admission number of each separate school is a maximum of 150 in Year 7.

In May 2010, the two Pensby secondary schools entered into a hard Federation: “The Pensby High Schools Federation”, enabling the two schools to work together more closely under a single governing body led by a single headteacher, building on the existing joint sixth form arrangements. This was intended to help to safeguard viable secondary education for both girls and boys in Pensby as rolls continued to fall in the forthcoming years.

Why are we considering amalgamation? What are the benefits?

The number of pupils in Wirral secondary schools is falling and will continue to do so for a number of years. Not all areas of Wirral are being affected in the same way, but there are significantly fewer children in the Pensby school community. Both schools are already experiencing falling rolls and with this, decreasing budgets. If this is left unresolved it will result in a narrowing curriculum entitlement and reduced opportunities for pupils.

The number on roll at each school has reduced significantly and the reduction is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. By 2019, over half the places in the two schools are expected to be empty.

	2004	2014	2019*
Total pupils (boys and girls)	1619	987	808
Total places	1750	1750	1750
% occupancy	93%	56%	46%

* projected

Table shows number of boys and girls at the Pensby secondary schools ten years ago, now and in 5 years time. Total places includes Sixth Form (250 places). Projections to 2019 are based on current pupils moving through the school, the staying on rate for Sixth Form, and a three year average of parental preference for Year 7.



This matters because the main way in which schools are funded is on the number of pupils on roll. The current numbers in each school mean the schools as separate establishments are financially unsustainable.

Amalgamation will enable the mixed sex school to make best use of resources, thereby gaining economies and efficiencies of operation and further driving up educational standards.

As already happens at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, courses that would not be viable in one school alone can be run for students in both schools, thus providing greater choice and improving curriculum opportunities.

As a single, larger school, the Governing body believe that there are



more opportunities to provide a broader curriculum, the best teaching and learning and therefore outcomes for students.



THE PROPOSAL

The simplest route to amalgamation is to propose to close one of the two schools, combined with a linked proposal to change the gender intake of the remaining school from single sex to mixed sex. All pupils currently on roll at the closed school would transfer automatically to the roll of the remaining



school, if that is what they wish. The Governing Body can then agree a suitable new name for the mixed sex school.

- a) It is proposed to close Pensby High School for Boys as a separate establishment from 31st August 2015.
- b) The gender intake of Pensby High School for Girls would change from girls only, to co-educational (mixed sex), with effect from 1st September 2015.
- c) The Governing body would agree a suitable new name for the co-educational school.
- d) The admission number for the new school would be 150.

THE CONSULTATION - TIMELINE AND MEETING DATES

Start of Consultation	Wednesday, 7th January 2015
Consultation meeting at Pensby High School for Girls	Wednesday, 21st January 2015
End of Consultation	Friday, 20th February 2015
Cabinet Report	Expected March 2015
Publication of notices (if decision is to proceed)	Expected May 2015
Cabinet	Expected June/July 2015

The consultation meeting begins at 7pm, and is expected to last approximately two hours.

SOME QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Q. What will this mean for admissions?

A. All pupils who are on roll at the Boys and Girls schools on 1st September 2015 would automatically transfer to the register of the co-educational school. Any requests for transfers to alternative secondary schools would be processed according to the usual admission arrangements and the availability of places.

The admission of pupils to 11 to 16 at the co-educational school will be made through the Council as the admission authority, just as now.

Admission to the sixth form will not alter.

Q. What will this mean for lessons and classes?

A. Sixth form lessons and many Key Stage 4 classes are already taught in mixed classes.

In the co-educational school, boys and girls in all year groups would be taught together in all classes and subjects, except Physical Education (PE) and some PHSE classes.

The Joint Sixth Form provision and existing collaboration between the Pensby Sixth Form and other local schools and colleges will continue.

Q. How will staff be affected?

A. All existing staff are employed by the Pensby High Schools Federation and can work or be instructed to work in either the Boys or Girls school. If the proposal was approved, their employment would be transferred to the governing body of the co-educational school.

Q. Why is Pensby High School for Boys being closed and not the Girls school?

A. The Pensby High School Federation governing body have indicated that their preferred route would be that the Boys school is proposed for closure, combined with a change in gender intake (and name) for the Girls school. This is a technicality as the amalgamation could be carried out the other way round.

Q. Is this about saving money?

A. Within the Federation, the schools have separate budgets which does not support the sharing of resources across the two schools as effectively as would be the case with a single budget and also requires separate financial management and accounting processes to be carried out.

Part of each school's budget is a fixed Lump Sum. Amalgamation would eventually return the closed school's Lump Sum back into the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for re-distribution to all schools through the budget formula. An amalgamating school is however entitled to receive 85% of the two Lump Sums in the first year after amalgamation. This could be extended to 2 years if the Council applies for this exceptional factor.

An amalgamated school is likely to require a new staffing structure for the existing staff. There is therefore potential for future school redundancy costs.

There are no savings for the Council from the proposed amalgamation.

Q. Aren't single sex schools better?

A. There is little evidence that single-sex education is a significant advantage to either girls' or boys' academic achievement compared with co-educational schools.

Other factors, including quality of teaching and learning, prior attainment, student engagement, social background and family support, are probably more important in how young people achieve at secondary school.



HAVING YOUR SAY - HOW TO RESPOND

We aspire to be World Class schools providing World Class learning opportunities for every young person.

The Council and the Governing body of the Pensby High Schools Federation believe that amalgamation will build on the opportunities realised from the Federation including: sharing best practice, improving curriculum opportunities and sharing resources, all of which will have a positive impact in supporting learning to further raise achievement and standards.

What do you think?

You can write on your own, or you can join together with other people to write a joint letter. Your comments can be sent by post, through the school, or by email. If you find it helpful, you can complete and return the feedback form provided.

All written representations should be marked "Pensby High School Consultation" and sent to:

The Director of Children's Services,
Children & Young People's Department,
Hamilton Building
Conway Street
Birkenhead
CH41 4FD

Or emailed to:
secondaryplaces@wirral.gov.uk
by **FRIDAY 20th FEBRUARY 2015**

We look forward to seeing you at the meeting and reading your responses.

The Governing bodies of Pensby High School for Girls and Pensby High School for Boys would really like to hear your views. We look forward to seeing you at the meetings and reading your responses.



Pensby High School Amalgamation Consultation Feedback Form

Please let us know the main relationships you have with the school(s) by putting a tick in the appropriate box or boxes. You might be a parent and a member of staff, for example.

School	Parent	Member of staff	Governor	Other Person
Pensby High School for Boys				
Pensby High School for Girls				
Other (please say which one)				

Do you agree with the proposal to amalgamate Pensby High School for Boys and Pensby High School for Girls? Tick one box only.

Yes No

Comments: Please use this space for your comments. You can write more on another sheet if you need to.

Please note: In order to ensure that this process is fully open and transparent, other people will be able to read all the responses to this consultation.

Continued overleaf...



...Continued

Please tell us your name and address, postcode and email address if you have one. We will not use your personal information for anything other than this consultation.

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ **Postcode:** _____

Telephone: _____ **Email:** _____

All written representations should be sent to:

**The Director of Children's Services
Children and Young People's Department
Hamilton Building
Conway Street
Birkenhead
CH41 4FD
Marked 'Pensby High School Consultation'**

OR by email to secondaryplaces@wirral.gov.uk

**The closing date for all comments is:
FRIDAY 20th FEBRUARY 2015**



