

23rd April 2018

Dear Parents/Carers

A Proposal to Federate

As you will be aware, our two schools have been successfully working together for the last year, offering school to school support and challenge for each other which has led to rapid improvements in outcomes for students, both in terms of academic progress and educational opportunities. A significant body of evidence, both external and from our own experiences demonstrates the benefits of our close collaboration.

Over the last year we have found these things to be true:

- strong collaboration with shared accountability leads to better progress and attainment for students, helping us to meet rising expectations
- leaders and teachers share thinking and planning to spread expertise and tackle challenges together
- governors can come together to share strategic thinking, to combine skills and support each other in challenging times
- leaders, teachers and support staff can be shared, helping us find different solutions to recruitment challenges, retain staff by providing new opportunities, and plan succession more effectively
- we can provide richer curricular and extra curricular activities together
- shared professional development has been arranged, led by staff from both schools
- economies of scale and collective purchasing can help us cope better with shrinking budgets

These benefits are not automatic and we have worked hard to realise these things; but we have proved ourselves to be an effective team with increased leadership capacity and capability as a result of working together, and we are now looking to move to the obvious next step to further control and strengthen the futures for both schools – a formal federation. Both schools remain separate entities, with different names and DfE numbers, keeping their own individual characters and ethos to continue to best serve the community it sits within. Both schools remain accountable to the Local Authority. This proposal formalises our relationship and improves the capacity of both to meet the challenges of the future.

The Governing Bodies and Senior Leadership of Solway and Beacon Hill Community Schools are firmly behind this proposal, and now we seek your feedback to ensure our wider communities are fully engaged in the process and have the opportunity to consider the benefits of formal federation.

This letter signals the beginning of a six week period of consultation which will run from 23rd April until 8th June 2018, after which the consultation responses will be collated and the governing bodies jointly will consider responses and communicate their decisions to all stakeholders.

We would like to invite everyone interested in the schools to drop in to either school on 25th April at Solway Community School and 26th April at Beacon Hill Community School, anytime between 4:00pm – 6:00pm, to meet governors and senior leaders and ask any questions you may have. The consultation document is available on both schools' websites, or is available as a hard copy through either school office. Details of how you can make comments and opinions known are at the end of the consultation document and we look forward to hearing from you before the closing date of 8th June.

Yours sincerely



Tim Herbert and John Cook Chairs of Governors, Beacon Hill and Solway Community Schools