



# Nether Stowe School

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## Nether Stowe Sixth Form Consultation

### Frequently Asked Questions

Earlier this term, we consulted on a proposal to change Nether Stowe School's age range from 11–18 to 11–16, meaning a phased closure of the sixth form.

The consultation ran from 26 February to 27 March 2025, and included an online survey and meetings with a range of stakeholders including the local authority, our local MP, and other local post-16 providers.

We received 130 responses. These included feedback from current parents and carers, students, staff and other stakeholders. We have put together these FAQs based on the responses we received, and to explain next steps.

### What was the outcome of the consultation?

After carefully reviewing all feedback, the ATLP Trust Board has decided to proceed with the application for a phased closure of the sixth form.

### Why is this change necessary?

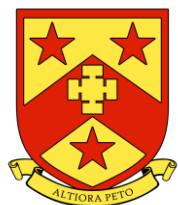
The sixth form has had very low numbers for a number of years, making it increasingly difficult to offer the broad and enriching curriculum our students deserve.

In recent years, funding has had to be diverted from KS3 and KS4 students to sustain the sixth form, which is not fair or sustainable.

Additionally, with a smaller Year 7 intake projected (due to the opening of a new school in Rugeley), it is clear that sixth form numbers would not improve in the future.

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## **Nether Stowe's small Sixth Form and small class sizes are part of its appeal. Why is this change needed now?**

We absolutely recognise that small class sizes and a familiar, nurturing environment have been valued by many pupils and families. However, the financial and educational realities mean that this is no longer sustainable. Very small class sizes result in significantly higher per-pupil costs, which are funded by diverting resources from Key Stages 3 and 4.

This limits the opportunities and provision available for the majority of pupils. Additionally, a small sixth form cannot offer the broad curriculum and enrichment experiences expected by students and parents or required by the Department for Education's standards for strong sixth form provision. By redirecting funding to the core 11–16 provision, we can enhance the educational offer for all pupils and ensure the long-term strength and stability of the school.

## **What does this mean for current students?**

This means:

- Current Year 12 students will be able to complete their studies at Nether Stowe, with support provided throughout.
- From September 2025, there will be no new Year 12 intake.
- By September 2026, sixth form provision at Nether Stowe will close fully, subject to Department for Education (DfE) approval.

## **What happens to current Year 12 students?**

Current Year 12 students will continue their studies at Nether Stowe and will be fully supported to complete their courses.

If specialist A-level teaching is needed in a particular subject, arrangements will be made with other local schools where necessary. In such cases, Nether Stowe will remain the 'home school' for students, ensuring that they have ongoing support and pastoral care from staff who know them.

## **What about current Year 11 pupils?**

Many Year 11 pupils who had expressed an interest in staying on have already secured alternative post-16 places, subject to GCSE results.

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The school continues to actively support the very small number of pupils who are yet to secure a place.

## **Will all students be able to access suitable provision?**

We are confident that all of our students, now and in the future, will be able to access suitable provision.

The changing nature of our community is a factor here. Almost one third of our current Year 11 students live outside of Lichfield – a trend that has grown in recent years and continues to grow in lower year groups. As such, we have a large number of students who have successfully accessed provision elsewhere and we see this trend as continuing.

Our ongoing engagement work with other providers, including local ATLP schools, leads us to have confidence that there is adequate, suitable provision in place for all of our students.

## **Will disadvantaged students lose out?**

No.  
Support for disadvantaged students — such as bursaries, travel assistance (where applicable) and pastoral support — follows them to their new post-16 destination.

By redirecting sixth form funding, we can invest more in improving the overall school experience for all pupils.

## **The school underwent expansion in 2021. Why reduce the age range now?**

The 2021 expansion was designed to accommodate larger lower school cohorts expected due to housing developments across Lichfield. While cohort sizes have increased in current Years 7, 8, and 9, the majority of this growth has come from pupils in the Rugeley area. With a new secondary school opening in Rugeley in September 2025, our intake numbers are expected to return to historic levels.

This change in pupil demographics, combined with the opportunity to reinvest sixth form resources into Key Stages 3 and 4, means we can focus on delivering excellent outcomes for all pupils and strengthen the school's appeal to families in future years.

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## **Will closing the sixth form affect the quality of education for pupils aged 11-16?**

No.

Focusing on delivering a strong education at Key Stages 3 and 4 will strengthen Nether Stowe's reputation and help attract families who value academic excellence and strong pastoral care.

We will continue to ensure that students have supported pathways into post-16 study through strong partnerships with local providers.

## **What about staff who teach sixth-form courses?**

Most of the staff who teach Key Stage 5 courses also teach across Key Stages 3 and 4.

We do not anticipate a significant impact on staffing as a result of this decision. We remain fully committed to retaining talented staff and offering them rewarding professional development opportunities through the wider Trust network. Strengthening our focus on 11–16 provision will create further opportunities to develop a thriving and ambitious school culture.

## **What happens now?**

We will now submit an application to the Department for Education (DfE) outlining our reasons for seeking this change.

## **When will the final decision be made?**

The final decision now rests with the DfE, who will consider the Trust's application to change the school's age range.

We will update parents and carers as soon as we hear more.

## **How will the school continue to support pupils moving forward?**

We are fully committed to supporting all current and future students in accessing high-quality education and suitable post-16 pathways.

Our strong relationships with local providers, alongside our dedicated careers support, will ensure smooth transitions for all pupils.

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