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St. Joseph's Catholic College

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13th March 2017

Dear Parent/Carer

With great regret and following lengthy deliberation the Governing Body of St Joseph's Catholic College, has decided to consult on the proposal not to run new sixth form courses from September 2017. Year 13 courses will proceed in 2017 but the proposal means that the sixth form would close at the end of August 2018.

Catholic schools exist so that Catholic parents can have the best opportunities for enabling their children to grow to responsible adulthood in the knowledge and love of God and neighbour. The argument for retaining a sixth form in St Joseph's rested on the desire for a distinctively Catholic provision in the town. While the college is heavily oversubscribed in the lower year groups the fact that is that 70% of students from Year 11 regularly go elsewhere for a variety of reasons.

The future of school sixth forms has been highlighted in the media for some time, particularly in light of changes in the way Post 16 students are funded in schools. The Department for Education recognises that sixth forms with fewer than 200 students are at risk of not being viable. St Joseph's sixth form currently has a total of 131 students in Year 12 and 13 combined. Current projections for September reduce this combined number to less than 100.

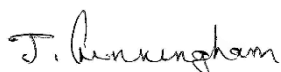
Academic outcomes have not been as strong in the Sixth Form as in Years 7 - 11. Changing the age range from 11 - 18 to 11 - 16 will allow resources to be focused on improving the learning experiences and outcomes for these students. Our aim is to become an outstanding 11 - 16 Catholic College, and to do so, we believe that we must concentrate our energies, resources and expertise on that age range.

The consultation will run from 16th March to 2nd May, during which you are invited to respond to the Governing Body's proposal. In order for you to ask any questions you need to inform your understanding of the Governing Body's decision, we are holding two information sessions. You may wish to attend one of the sessions before responding to the consultation. They will take place at the College as follows:

Parent Forums: Monday 27th March: 5.00 – 5.45pm and 7 – 7.45pm

Your views are important, so please either complete the consultation online <http://www.stjosephscollege.net> or alternatively you may request a paper copy from reception. **All consultations must be completed and returned by noon on Monday 2nd May. All responses will be considered by the governing body.**

Yours sincerely,



Canon J Cunningham
Chair of Governors



Mr P Hughes
Principal

