



**St Peter's**

Church of England (Aided) Primary School  
Henfield

*Unlocking the potential in everyone*

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Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

### **PROPOSAL TO JOIN THE HURST EDUCATION TRUST**

We wrote to you on Monday, 5 June, setting out the governors' proposal, following an extensive due diligence exercise, that our school convert to academy status by joining the Hurst Education Trust. That letter included some information about the Trust, about academy status, and invited stakeholders to meetings held on Tuesday, 13 June and to comment on the proposals. A copy of that letter is available on the school website together with a frequently asked questions document (which is attached) with answers to all questions that have been submitted.

The governors are very grateful to the parents, carers and staff who attended the meetings and have taken the time to comment and ask questions. The team from the Hurst Education Trust outlined the way the Trust works collaboratively with and supports local schools within the Trust, and how our school and the children will benefit if we join. We also held further meetings for staff at our school to ensure their questions had been answered. One of the founding Trust schools, Ditchling C of E Primary School, kindly hosted a visit from several of our staff and their staff provided assurance about the way the Trust operates.

We are pleased so many stakeholders have engaged with the proposals; rightly, a good number of questions were raised at the meetings and also submitted through the online feedback form, from which the regularly updated 'frequently asked questions' has been created.

As we reach the end of the consultation, which closes on Tuesday, 18 July, we are asking all parents and carers to let us know their view on our school joining the HET. Governors will meet to decide whether to continue with the proposal, and any comments you make will be considered by Governors. We encourage all stakeholders to use this feedback form to tell us what you think about the proposed conversion, including whether you support the proposal or otherwise before this deadline.

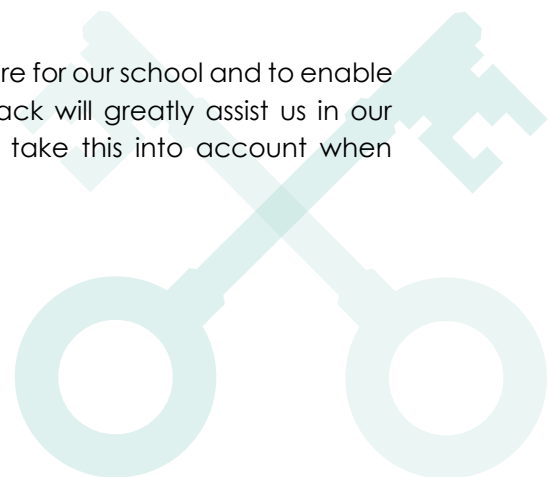
The new feedback form can be accessed using the following link: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/stpetershenfield> or by using the QR code at the foot of this letter.

Governors and staff are determined to secure the best possible future for our school and to enable the whole school community to grow and develop. Your feedback will greatly assist us in our understanding of the community's views and enable us to fully take this into account when making decisions.

Yours faithfully

Revd P. Doick  
**Chair of Governors**

Mrs D. Maurice  
**Headteacher**



## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### ***What is Academisation?***

Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) are groups of schools that formally work together to provide the best outcome for their children. Research has shown the highest performing, most successful MATs are locally focussed and typically contain around 8-10 schools. Hurst Education Trust (HET) are looking to only join with schools within a 20-minute radius and will limit the total numbers - currently St Wilfrid's (Haywards Heath), Albourne CofE Primary School and St Margaret's (Ditchling) CofE Primary School are the schools within the Hurst Education Trust with Bolnore Village Primary School near Haywards Heath in the process to join.

### ***What is the current status of St Peter's Church of England Primary School?***

St Peter's Church of England Primary School is a Voluntary Aided school, funded via the local authority and has a governing body made up of parents and members of the local community. It is part of the Diocese of Chichester. After joining HET, we would have the same governing board structure, the same strong parent voice and involvement as we do today but funding to the trust will come directly from the Department of Education. The Hurst Education Trust is a Diocesan majority MAT, formed in partnership between the Diocese of Chichester and Hurstpierpoint College.

### ***Will our school change?***

On a day-to-day basis the school community will not see any major changes in the way the school is run. We will keep our name, the uniform will stay the same, our values will remain, we will keep our own school curriculum and retain everything that makes our school unique.

Over time we anticipate that being part of HET will bring increased resources, better access to services, and access to expertise to improve educational and general outcomes for our children. Additionally, our children will benefit from occasional use of the facilities at Hurstpierpoint College (for example minibuses, swimming pool, sports facilities, drama facilities etc).

Also, by being part of HET, we expect to see financial savings and economies of scale to ensure we can redirect greater funding back into the classroom for the direct benefit of our children.

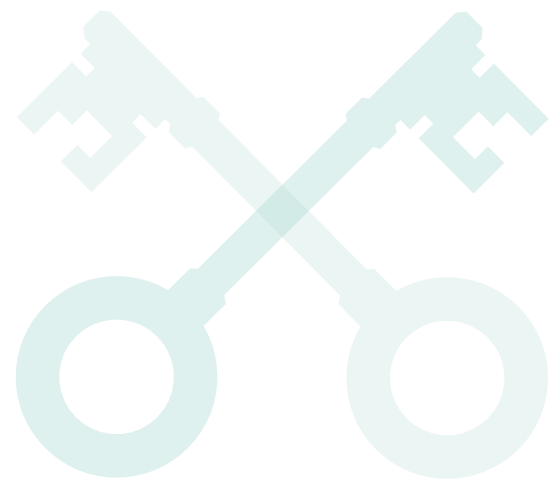
### ***Hurstpierpoint College is an independent school. How will that affect us?***

Hurstpierpoint College is not part of the trust, although we would have use of their resources and facilities from time to time. The College provides the Trust, and therefore the schools within the Trust direct and indirect support as required.

### ***How will St Peter's staff be affected?***

All our staff will transfer to the trust and will benefit from increased inter-school collaboration, opportunities for personal development (CPD) and opportunities to share their ideas and skills with other schools in the trust.

**Continued...**



**When will this happen?**

We are entering a period of due diligence and discussion where HET can understand our school in detail, and we can make sure our school is in safe hands for the future. The due diligence is starting this month, once complete and if all parties are happy, we anticipate the school will be part of HET in Spring 2024.

**How will parents, carers, staff, and the wider community be consulted?**

The consultation process begins with the presentation and question and answer session on 13 June. During the consultation process, which will extend to the summer break, there will be other opportunities to meet with the Trust leaders both informally and through further meetings if they are required. Parents, carers, staff, and the community will be invited to submit any comments using an online form during the process. Any questions or concerns will be addressed in a FAQ document which will be updated on the school's website weekly. Towards the end of the consultation, all stakeholders will be invited to indicate whether they support proposal, and this feedback will be considered by Governors at a meeting next term.

In addition, should the proposal be taken forward, the staff will be formally consulted with. Both Teaching and Support Unions will be invited to attend the meetings with staff both during the informal and formal processes.

**What are the Governors views on HET?**

We are excited to be potentially part of a trust with a real focus on the outcomes of our children. The values, ambitions and vision of HET closely align with ours and together we are confident we can successfully continue and further enhance our journey whilst retaining our school's unique qualities, position in the community and founding ethos. Ultimately, we want the very best outcomes for our children and that has been at the forefront of our mind throughout.

