

## APPENDIX 2

### Thomas Hepburn Community Academy

#### Proposal for Closure

#### Frequently Asked Questions

**1. Can I submit a transfer request now?**

Parents are legally entitled to submit an in-year transfer request to Gateshead Council to secure a place at another school. However, the local authority are keen to lead a very structured and managed process which NET will support by way of an effective transition period.

Whilst transfer requests can be submitted for current Year 7 and 8 students, it must be stressed that there is currently very little capacity in other Gateshead schools in these year groups. The local authority will be working with head teachers across the Borough to create the capacity in order for these students to start their new schools in September 2019.

**2. If the school is to close, will staff begin to leave? If so, how will my child continue to have a quality education until the proposed closure date of August 2019?**

NET is a large Multi-Academy Trust that has 7 other secondary schools in the North East including in Gateshead and Sunderland. Should staffing reduce below the necessary level to deliver the curriculum, teachers from other schools can be used to ensure continuity with education/GCSE courses.

In addition to this, the Trust has a pool of outstanding practitioners who are deployed across secondary academies. This is a central resource which will be used to support THCA students wherever needed.

**3. The Academy is beginning to turn around so why close it?**

NET's new model of school improvement has been implemented at THCA and is making a significant difference. Results for our current Year 11 students are projected to be the best that the Academy has ever achieved.

However, with such low numbers coming into the academy, the balance and breadth of the curriculum will be seriously affected. This would result in our students not accessing the quality of curriculum that almost all other students do across the borough therefore limiting life chances.

**4. What does it mean for children in Years 11 and 10?**

Students in Years 11 and 10 will continue their education as normal at THCA. They will complete their GCSEs studies and collect their results in August 2018 and 2019 respectively. This will have no impact on them.

**5. My child is in Year 9, how will this affect the GCSE courses they have already started?**

Not all schools in the Borough have a three year Key Stage 4 (where students begin their GCSEs in Y9), some start their GCSEs at the beginning of Year 10.

Should your child move to a school where GCSEs have started, there would be an appropriate transition plan put in place so, where possible, the same courses can continue. Teachers will ensure that colleagues in other schools are aware of topics covered so far in GCSE subjects.

**6. What does it mean for the children in Years 7 and 8?**

Students in Years 7 and 8 will remain in the academy until Summer 2019. They will be supported in the transition to other secondary schools/academies through 121 interviews with parents and the students themselves. As mentioned in question 2, there is very little capacity for any movement in these year groups until then.

**7. Will Year 9 students be given support for a new uniform if they have to change school?**

Discussions will be held about this issue should a final decision be made by the DfE to close the academy.

**8. How do I go about transferring my child?**

It is a legal right to submit a transfer request to another school and be admitted if there are spaces. However, there is very little capacity in other schools in current Years 7 and 8 across the local authority. Over the next 12-18 months other secondary head teachers will be working with the local authority to create the capacity to admit these students in September 2019.

For Year 9 students, parents are welcome to complete a transfer request. This will be completed by the academy and then sent on to the local authority. It appears that these will not be processed until the DfE make the final decision about the proposal for closure.

**9. How will places in other secondary schools be allocated?**

Ultimately, the admissions department at the local authority will oversee the allocation of places. However, the Trust are keen to work with our partners at the LA and other secondary head teachers to choose the best possible place for our students on an individual basis.

Factors such as interests, current GCSE studies, additional educational needs, home location, siblings at other schools and previous issues/experience at other secondary schools will be taken into account.