



Small School ♦ Strong Values ♦ Great Experiences

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BRI/JHO

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Dear Parents/Carers

We hope you are well, and wish you a Happy New Year from all at Parkside.

We are writing to update you on the progress that has been made since our [letter in September](#) regarding the governing body's decision to explore the option for Parkside Community School to join the Embark Federation. Within that letter, we informed you that it was the intention of the governing body to undertake full consultation with all of the major stakeholders within our local community later in the Autumn term. As with many things within the current climate, this work has been delayed by circumstances beyond our control. It is, however, the governing body's intention to undertake a full consultation as soon as possible; this is likely to now take place later this 2022 Spring term.

Within our September letter we also informed you that the school will share details of the proposal with the Department for Education (DfE) in order to obtain approval from the DfE for the proposal for Parkside Community School to become one of four Derbyshire secondary schools to join the Embark Federation. This approval is required to enable the governing body to conduct full and proper consultation.

In order to obtain this approval, the school has been required to submit an application to the DfE's Regional Advisory Board. The application provides details about the schools and the Embark Federation as well as the proposed partnership we would like to explore further. The Advisory Board will review the applications from all four secondary schools and the Embark Federation at the same time as a singular proposal at their meeting later this month. Governors will be informed of their decision within a few weeks of that meeting.

If approval is granted, then governors at each of the schools involved will be in a position to conduct full and proper consultation with all stakeholders involved. When formal consultation has been completed, governors will then decide whether joining the Embark Federation is in the best interests of Parkside Community school.

Governors would like to advise you of two unfortunate terms that the DfE use at this current stage where the DfE Regional Advisory Board consider the schools' applications. Firstly, the DfE's documentation describes this as 'an application to become an academy'. It is important to be clear that this is actually an application to the DfE's Regional



Advisory Board to approve the proposal in principle. This approval must be given to enable governors to conduct full and proper consultation. As above, the governing body will make decisions about the future of the school after consulting all stakeholders.

The other piece of terminology governors wish to alert you to is the wording used by the DfE if the proposal is approved at this relatively early stage. If approved, they will use the phrase 'an academy order has been issued'. This could very easily be misinterpreted. An academy order means that the DfE has approved an application for a school to become an academy (and in the case of our application, join the Embark Federation). If this happens, the schools and the Embark Federation will be able to begin work on the more detailed processes which will be an essential part of effective due diligence.

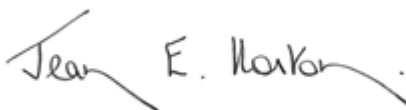
As outlined above, full and proper formal consultation will take place only if the DfE approve the proposal and if the governing body of Parkside Community School decide they wish to continue to explore this as an option.

The governing body look forward to engaging with you and all stakeholders to discuss these important proposals if and when the conditions above are met.

Yours sincerely, and with very best wishes



Ben Riggott
Headteacher



Jean Horton
Chair of Governors