



HEATHLANDS

Nursery, Primary and Secondary Provision, Day & Residential
BSL Training & Resource Centre



Co-Headteachers – Mrs L Reeves Costi and Ms S Shields

6th January 2025

Dear Consultee,

Proposal to develop residential for Post 16 students at Heathlands by September 2025

Heathlands is a community school for Deaf children, situated at Heathlands Drive, St Albans, AL3 5AY. As a specialist school for Deaf children, the school serves a wide number of local authorities as well as the Deaf community within Hertfordshire. Heathlands caters for deaf children and young people from the ages of 3-16, and from September 2024 has been increased to age 18 as the school has been approved to provide A Levels at KS5.

Heathlands School is proposing to develop a small residential provision for up to eight Post 16 pupils who are unable to attend as day students due to the travelling distance.

The proposal to extend the age range from 16 years to 18 years for residential will enable the school to offer A levels and equivalent qualifications to all students transitioning from Key Stage 4 (KS4) to Key Stage 5 (KS5). The Key Stage 5 offer will allow long distance students to continue to attend Heathlands on a daily basis to progress their learning.

Why is this being proposed?

Existing Heathlands pupils who live too far to travel daily and board Monday-Thursday at Heathlands may wish to apply to join the sixth form at Heathlands, but currently cannot apply due to the lack of post 16 residential provision. This is an unfair disadvantage as there is a lack of post 16 provisions following a Total Communication* approach offering A Levels within the UK.

**Total Communication is a philosophy, not a method of communication, which includes British Sign Language, sign supported English, spoken English, written English, lip-reading, listening through hearing aids/implants/sound field system and using visual teaching methods.*

Students, their families and some LAs have requested for a post 16 residential provision at Heathlands to ensure consistency of education in students first language which meets the requirements set out in their Education, Health and Care plans.

What will post 16 residential do?

The vision is that through A Level education and academic support from qualified Teachers of the Deaf using sign language, the confidence of students will be developed. They will be supported emotionally as well as academically to reach their full potential and to successfully progress into higher learning establishments.



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Having a small post 16 residential provision will enable OLA children who cannot travel daily to take up a post 16 place at Heathlands should they meet the entry requirements so they can access further education which cannot be met elsewhere.

This in turn will provide a wider and richer peer group for Hertfordshire post 16 students, meaning more courses can be offered.

It is recognised that the residential provision will be small, approx. 2-8 residents in total. This fits in with the current post 16 offer which is a small cohort of students taking A Levels. Residential places will be capped at a maximum of 8. The current boarding provision (KS2/3/4) is also capped at 20.

Proposal is for an extension build onto a current staff house on the existing site. There is available space on the side which does not encroach on any 'green' play space. Alternatively, the existing build may be demolished to build a new fit for purpose-built residential provision. This would provide a living/kitchen/dining area and bedrooms for young people as well as staff residence.

The proposal meets Ofsted and the National Minimum standard requirements because it is a separate accommodation away from the school building and current residential provision.

What does this mean for students?

For the existing school community, students and families, there will be no impact on the current provision from years N-11. Younger Heathlands students can be inspired by seeing key stage 5 students achieving A levels and going on to higher education. The younger students viewing this transition and achievement as a norm will fuel the belief that they too can achieve these qualifications and goals through Heathlands regardless of where they live.

Students transferring from Key Stage 4 to Key Stage 5 at Heathlands receive:

- On site specialist course delivery
- Joint and collaborative delivery with the local schools consortium supported by Heathlands.
- A 24-hour learning program.
- Full pastoral support.
- Support in future transitions to adulthood

In addition to the above support, residential post 16 students will receive:

- On site accommodation to board 4 nights per week term time only
- Residential staff to supervise and ensure safety whilst maintaining a level of independent living
- Preparation for the independence of University or working life.



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What would be the impact on staff?

The Co-Headteachers are responsible for the strategic overview of the current residential provision. Post 16 residential will be an extension of this. Heathlands would retain a flexible staffing model to meet needs.

What are the financial implications of the proposal?

There are no capital implications for this proposal. Extension would be fully funded by Heathlands School circa £500k. Money has been set aside for this.

The current KS5 offer at Heathlands has no impact on revenue funding and the costings for A Level places would work on the same basis as N-11 funding; each student would be funded at base rate per place plus top up. Costs for residential are paid solely by the OLA which has no impact on Hertfordshire financially.

How will the decision be taken?

This is a proposal to create a small residential provision for post 16 students who cannot travel daily to attend sixth form at Heathlands. All comments on this proposal should be made to The Heathlands Governors by 2nd February 2025 sending them via post, marked for the attention of Heathlands Governors, to: Heathlands School, Heathlands Drive, St Albans, AL3 5AY or by email to: head@heathlands.herts.sch.uk titled 'Heathlands Post 16 residential'.

Consultation timescale:

Consultation Period	6 January – 2 February 2025
Executive Member Briefing (EMB)*	5 February 2025
Leader / Dep*	18 February 2025
Conservative Leadership Group (CLG)*	20 February 2025
Conservative Group*	24 February 2025
Education, Libraries & Lifelong Learning (EL&LL) Cabinet Panel*	5 March 2025
Cabinet*	17 March 2025
*Part of HCC's approval process	

Yours sincerely
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Chair of Governors