



Dear Parent

I am writing to inform you that the Local Authority will be making a proposal to consult on the closure of Pent Valley Technology College. I appreciate this news will be of great concern to you and your family. I am sorry for this, but I wanted to ensure that you heard from the County Council about this possibility, together with some factual information, rather than via the local media.

I assure you that at this time no decision on the school's future has been made. If the County Council agree to undertake a public consultation, the proposal will be that the school would close from September 2016 for all pupils **except** the present Year 10, and for all pupils from September 2017. This would allow the present Year 10 pupils to complete their final year of GCSE studies at Pent Valley, with some staff being retained to deliver the courses and provide the pastoral support needed.

Pupils in Years 7 to 9 will be offered places in other local schools. Students in Year 11 will be supported in applying to local school sixth forms, colleges, or to training providers for their post 16 study. Year 12 students will be assisted in finding alternative placements to complete their courses, if these require two years of study, or to find courses that enable them to progress.

This has come about because the school has very low pupil numbers, which is a situation that does not look likely to improve in the near future. As a result the school has a rapidly reducing budget and will not have the resources to provide an adequate education for its pupils. At the same time the school is performing poorly.

At present the school has been led very well and managed by The Swale Academies Trust on behalf of the Local Authority. The Trust has been in charge at Pent Valley only since last April and since that time they have achieved significant improvements. However, while these are very good for the pupils currently at the school, the progress achieved will not be enough to increase numbers and improve the budget situation in the short term.

The pupil numbers have fallen year on year, with smaller intakes being admitted annually. The current Year 11 is the largest cohort, with 122 pupils currently. This is half of the school's admission number of 240. There are 43 pupils in Year 7, while the school has places for 180 pupils in each year group. As school budgets are predominantly based on pupil numbers, annually the school has needed to respond to a diminishing budget, and will need to do so for each of the next few years, as larger cohorts leave, and smaller Year 7 cohorts are admitted. This has impacted on the curriculum offer, support for pupils, and we see the situation becoming more challenging for the school. Similarly, the school's results have plummeted to 15% of students achieving 5 GCSE's graded A* to C, including English and Maths. This is

below the results achieved in any year since 2004, and far below the Government's floor target of 40%.

Looking to the future, we recognise that we will need to have some Secondary school provision in the area. As it is forecast that there will be a need for additional school places from 2018, it is expected that a new school would need to open on the Pent Valley site by September of that year. We aim to have a fresh start, with a new offer for parents and children.

We clearly appreciate that you will have many questions to which you need answers. We will provide these as soon as we are able to do so. The first thing is to explain to you the process and timetable, which will give you a better idea of when you will receive information, how you can make your views known, and when decisions will be made.

- Tuesday 15 December - The Education and Young Person's Services Cabinet Committee will consider a report on the future of Pent Valley, and recommend whether or not a public consultation on closure should be undertaken. The report being considered can be viewed from 11th December at:

www.kent.gov.uk/pentvalley

This meeting can be viewed on the County Council's website:

http://www.kent.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/198925

We will hold a meeting for parents on the evening of 15 December (5.30pm to 7pm) to inform you of the decision of the County Council. We will write to you again to inform you of the decision.

- Wednesday 6 January, if consultation proceeds, we will send to you a consultation document. This will advise you of the date of a public meeting. It will also give dates for meeting with parents of pupils in Years 7 to 9, parents of pupils in Year 10, and parents of pupils in Years 11 and 12. In these meetings we will listen to your views, explain the proposal in greater detail, answer your questions and discuss how we ensure your child's future education is provided.
- Mid-February (date to be confirmed) – Consultation responses will be considered and a decision made about whether to issue a public notice in the local press indicating the Council's intention to close the school. Anybody can submit comments or representations to the County Council in response to this notice.
- End of March/Early April – Any representations or comments received will be considered and the final decision made on whether Pent Valley closes.

We cannot stress enough that no decision has yet been made. This is a regrettable, but necessary proposal that County Councillors need to consider.

We are writing individually to all parents about each of their children. Your letter will be posted direct to your home address. If you have more than one child in the school you will receive more than one letter. If you have not received a letter for any of your children by Friday morning or should you have any questions about admissions please call the admissions team on 03000 412121. For any other questions please call the Area Schools Organisation Officer, Lee Round, on 03000 412309.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrick Leeson'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'P' and a long, sweeping underline.

Patrick Leeson
Corporate Director
Education & Young People's Services