

Brighton & Hove City Council

Council

Agenda Item 62

Subject: Petition for Debate - Help save St. Peter's Community School

Date of meeting: 14 December 2023

Report of: Executive Director for Governance, People & Resources

Contact Officer: Name: Anthony Soyinka
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Ward(s) affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 Under the Council's Petition Scheme if a petition contains more than 1,250 signatures and is not petition requesting officer evidence, it will be debated by the Full Council.
- 1.2 The e-petition has resulted in triggering a debate at the council meeting, having exceeded the threshold with a total of 1674 signatures confirmed at the time of printing the report.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the petition is noted and referred to the Children, Families & Schools Committee for consideration.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION / CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

3.1 The Petition:

My daughter, who has Special Educational Needs (SEN), is a proud student at St. Peter's Community School in Portslade-by-Sea, Brighton and Hove, Brighton, UK. This school is a beacon of hope for children like her who struggle in larger educational settings due to their unique SEN needs.

St. Peter's is not just a school; it's an amazing community where teachers are kind, compassionate and understanding. The focus here is always on the families and children - an ethos that fosters well-mannered students who feel valued and supported.

However, our beloved school faces uncertain times which could disrupt the education of many pupils including SEN children who may not cope well in bigger settings this is due to falling pupil numbers across the city. Which is no fault of St Peter's.

The closure of such schools can have devastating effects all pupils but also on SEN students' academic progress and mental health (source: British Journal of Special Education). We must act now to ensure that our children continue to receive the support they need within this nurturing community environment.

We urge local authorities to recognize the importance of maintaining smaller community-based schools like St Peter's for SEN students without an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP). Our plea is simple but urgent - save our school from any threat that could compromise its existence or capacity.

Please sign this petition today to help preserve St. Peter's Community School for current pupils as well as future generations with/ without special educational needs.

4. PROCEDURE:

4.1 The petition will be debated at the Council meeting in accordance with the agreed protocol:

- (i) The Lead petitioner will be invited by the Mayor to present the petition and will have up to 3 minutes in which to outline the petition and confirm the number of signatures;
- (ii) The Mayor will then open the matter up for debate by councillors for period of 15 minutes and will first call on the relevant Committee Chair to respond to the petition and move a proposed response. The Mayor will then call on those councillors who have indicated a desire to speak in the matter, before calling on the relevant Committee Chair to respond to the debate;
- (iii) An amendment to the recommendation in paragraph 2.1 of the report or to add additional recommendations should be submitted by 10.00am on the day before the meeting; otherwise it will be subject to the Mayor's discretion as to being appropriate. Any such amendment will need to be formally moved and seconded at the meeting;
- (iv) After the 15 minutes set aside for the debate, the Mayor will then formally put:
- (v) (a) Any amendments in the order in which they are moved, and
(b) The substantive recommendation(s) as amended (if amended).