



Notification of proposal by Buckinghamshire Council to open a Communication and Interaction (Autism) Unit at Iver Village Junior School

Contact details

Proposal, published by Buckinghamshire Council, The Gateway, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP19 8FF, to open a Communication and Interaction (Autism) Unit at Iver Village Junior School, High Street, Iver, Buckinghamshire, SL0 9QA.

Implementation

It is proposed to open a Communication and Interaction (Autism) Unit with effect from 1st January 2026.

Reason for the Proposal

As part of our SEND Education Sufficiency Strategy the Council sought expressions of interest from Schools interested in opening a primary age inclusion unit for children with Communication and Interaction (Autism). Iver Village Junior School submitted an expression of interest to open a Unit to meet the demand for places. We are therefore proposing to open a Communication and Interaction (Autism) Unit at Iver Village Junior School, Iver.

Proposal to open a Communication and Interaction (Autism) Unit

Over the last five years, the number of Special Educational Needs and Disabled (SEND) pupils with an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) has increased by 75% (3074 pupils). Current projections predict numbers will continue to increase over the next five years.

Children and young people with communication and interaction needs is one of the areas of need that has been rising most (1642 or 82% over the last 5 years). As part of our SEND Education Sufficiency Strategy the Council sought expressions of interest from Schools interested in opening a primary age inclusion unit for children with Communication and Interaction (Autism). Iver Village Junior School submitted an expression of interest to open a Unit to meet the demand for places. We are therefore proposing to open a Communication and Interaction (Autism) Unit at Iver Village Junior School, Iver. This would be an 8 place Unit for pupils with Communication and Interaction (Autism) needs as detailed in their Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP). Only children whose EHCP stated they needed support from a unit would be admitted and admissions will be controlled by the Council's SEND Service; parents would not be able to apply directly to the school for a place in the Unit.

A key aim of the Unit is to enable pupils to access a mainstream curriculum, whilst accessing specific specialist support. Pupils attending the Unit would spend most of their time based within the new Unit. The new Unit will be self-contained with its own outside play area. Pupils in the Unit

will be able to join in with parts of the school day, where appropriate. The 8 places in the Unit would be in addition to the 220 mainstream places at the school.

Specialist teachers would be employed to manage the new Unit. All staff working in the Unit will have received specialist training on supporting children with Autism. The Unit will be staffed by teachers and learning support assistants; additional professionals will support the children including a speech and language therapist and occupational health therapist. Additional professionals will be employed depending on the needs of the children, such as a play therapist, an art therapist etc.

Project costs and an indication of how these will be met

The new Unit would be accommodated in refurbished rooms at the front of the school. The Unit will have its own outdoor play area in the existing courtyard which will be refurbished as part of the planned works.

The cost of the refurbishment will be funded using government capital funding that has been made available for providing new/expanding existing SEND provision across the county. Additional revenue funding would be provided to fund the Unit. It would therefore not have a detrimental impact on the school's existing revenue budget or impact on provision for pupils.

Statutory process for prescribed alterations

The Local Authority and Governing Board is required to publish statutory proposals when it seeks to make a significant change to a school. The statutory process is summarised below:

Stage 1: Consultation - Proposers must consult with the parents of registered pupils at the school and should consult with key stakeholders including:

- the governing board
- the diocese or relevant faith group of school's affected by the proposal
- teachers and other staff at the school
- any LA likely to be affected by the proposal
- the governing bodies, teachers and other staff of any other school that may be affected
- parents of any pupils at other schools who may be affected by the proposal
- any trade unions who represent staff at the school
- MPs whose constituencies include the school that is the subject of the proposal or whose constituents are likely to be affected by the proposal
- any other interested organisation / person that the proposer thinks are appropriate

Stage 2: Statutory Proposal – the proposal must be published within 12 months of the initial consultation stage; this must contain sufficient information for interested parties to make a decision on whether to support or challenge the proposed change.

Stage 3: Representation - once proposals are published there follows a four week statutory period during which representations (e.g. objections or comments) can be made. The representation period is the final opportunity for people and organisations to express their views about the proposals.

Stage 4: Decision – the Council must decide proposals within two months of the end of the representation period, otherwise the proposal will be referred to the Schools Adjudicator.

Stage 5: Implementation – In general, proposals should be implemented within three years of their publication.

Outcome of the Consultation Stage

The first stage consultation process on a Proposal to open an 8 place Communication and Interaction Unit at Iver Village Junior School commenced on 25th June 2025 and concluded on 5th August 2025. In line with statutory requirements the consultation letter was promoted via a dedicated webpage and survey on Your Voice Bucks and also sent directly to a number of consultees.

In line with statutory requirements a consultation letter was sent to all parents/carers of children on roll at the School, governors and staff at the School, schools in the local area, all special schools and other statutory consultees. Copies of the consultation letter were also sent to the following stakeholders:

- Local residents
- Local MP, Councillors, Parish Council
- Trade Union representatives
- Church Diocese representatives
- FACT Bucks

In addition, two meetings were held at the school. The first, a briefing session for parents/carers, was held on Wednesday 16th July at 3:30pm which was attended by 2 governors. LA officers were also in attendance at the meeting to answer questions from parents/carers/staff. The second, a drop in session for the wider public/local residents, was held at the school on Wednesday 16th July at 6pm so that people could drop in to look at the plans and ask any questions that they had. One member of the public, a governor and a local councillor attended this meeting. A separate meeting to brief local councillors on the proposal was held on 23rd June at 5.30pm.

The Council received 10 responses to the consultation proposal. 7 of these came in via the Your Voice consultation page and 3 came to the consultation mailbox or were handed in at the school.

In summary of the 10 who responded 9 (90%) were in agreement with the proposal to open a Communication and Interaction Unit, 1 (10%) did not agree and 0 (0%) didn't know.

Agree/Disagree with proposal to open Unit	Responses Received
Agree with proposal to open	9
Disagree with proposal to open	1
Don't know	0
Total	10

All of the 10 respondents said they understood why a proposal to open a Communication and Interaction (Autism) Unit at Iver Village Junior School had been made.

Timetable for these proposals

The proposed timetable below, which may be subject to change, sets this timeline and next steps out:

Start Date	End Date	Description
12 th September 2025	9 th October 2025	Subject to the decision above: Publication of Statutory Notice and formal 4 week representation period

10 th October 2025	4 th December 2025	Buckinghamshire Council and School Governing Board review the responses from the consultation. Leader of Buckinghamshire Council in consultation with Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services takes a decision on the final outcome
January 2026		Subject to the outcome above, the Unit will open.

Procedure for making representations (objections and comments)

Within four weeks of the date of publication of this proposal, any person may agree, object to, or make comments on the proposal online via the Buckinghamshire Council consultation website: <https://yourvoicebucks.citizenspace.com/>

Alternatively, representations can be made by email to:

ivervillagejnrSENDunit@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

or by post to:

The School Commissioning Team
Buckinghamshire Council
1st Floor
Walton Street Office
Aylesbury
Buckinghamshire, HP20 1UZ

The closing date for comments is 11:59pm on Thursday 9th October 2025.