



## **Proposal to open a Communication and Interaction (Autism) Unit at Overstone Combined School, Wing**

**Open date:** 30 September 2024

**Close date:** 10 November 2024

**Name:** School Commissioning Team

**Email:** [overstoneschoolconsultation@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:overstoneschoolconsultation@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)

### **Overview**

**We want to hear your views on our proposal to open a Communication and Interaction (Autism) Unit at Overstone Combined School, Wing.**

The Unit would have 12 places for children with Communication and Interaction (Autism) needs.

The 12 places would be in addition to the school's mainstream places.

If agreed the Unit would open in September 2025.

### **Increasing need for Communication and Interaction (Autism) support**

Over the last five years in Buckinghamshire there has been a:

- 64% (2577 pupils) increase in the number of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabled (SEND) with an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP)
- 82% (1,642 pupils) increase in children and young people with communication and interaction needs – this is one of the areas of need that has been rising most

Over the next five years in Buckinghamshire we are expecting:

- a further 32% increase in the number of EHCP pupils
- an increase of 1080 pupils or 30% of children and young people with communication and interaction needs

Our [SEND Education Sufficiency Strategy](#) identified the need for a 12 place primary age inclusion unit for children with Communication and Interaction (Autism) needs at a mainstream school in Aylesbury Vale.

We are proposing to open a Communication and Interaction (Autism) Unit at Overstone Combined School, Wing to meet this need.

### **What this proposal would mean for pupils and staff at the school**

A key aim of the Unit is to allow pupils to access a mainstream curriculum, whilst accessing specific specialist support. Pupils attending the Unit would:

- spend most of their time based within the Unit (self-contained with its own outside play area)
- be able to join in with parts of the school day, where appropriate

Specialist teachers would be employed to manage the new Unit:

- staffed by two teachers and learning support assistants
- additional professionals to support pupils – including a speech and language therapist, occupational therapist and play therapist
- further professionals would be employed depending on the needs of the children
- all staff in the Unit would be trained to support pupils who have experienced trauma and have insecure attachments

All staff at Overstone Combined School would be trained to support children with Communication and Interaction needs – providing benefits to all children at the school.

### **How the Unit would be funded**

The Unit would be located within the existing school building using space which is surplus to requirements given the drop in pupil numbers. The building will be adapted to make it suitable for a SEND Unit.

We would cover the building costs using government funding for providing / expanding SEND provision across the county. Overstone Combined School would receive additional revenue grant funding to run the Unit.

To ensure there would be space for the new Unit, the school will be consulting separately on reducing its Planned Admission Number (PAN). Overstone Combined School currently has a PAN of 42 pupils in each year group. However, pupil numbers are well below these levels. The school currently has no more than 32 pupils in any year group and demand for school places is not expected to rise. The school is proposing to have a PAN of 30 in Key Stage One and 32 in Key Stage Two.

## Related documents and links

Before you respond to this activity, please have a look at the following documents available at [yourvoicebucks.citizenspace.com/childrens-services/overstone](https://yourvoicebucks.citizenspace.com/childrens-services/overstone):

- Overstone Combined School consultation letter

## Events / online events

We are hosting two events to find out more about the proposals, including an opportunity to view the proposed building plans for the Unit:

- **Presentation for parents / carers – Monday 14 October 2024 at 5pm**
  - at Overstone Combined School, Church St, Wing, Leighton Buzzard LU7 0NY
  - Overstone Combined School will provide childcare for current pupils if their parents / carers want to attend this meeting – please contact the school if you need a place
- **Public drop in event – Monday 14 October 2024 from 6pm to 7pm**
  - at Overstone Combined School, Church St, Wing, Leighton Buzzard LU7 0NY

## How to have your say

You can tell us your views in one of the following ways:

- complete the online survey at [yourvoicebucks.citizenspace.com/childrens-services/overstone](https://yourvoicebucks.citizenspace.com/childrens-services/overstone)
- complete, and return, a printed version of the survey
- email us at [overstoneschoolconsultation@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:overstoneschoolconsultation@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)
- write to us at The School Commissioning Team, Buckinghamshire Council, 1st Floor Walton Street Office, Aylesbury, HP20 1UZ

If you have any questions about this consultation, or require this information in another format or language, please email us at [overstoneschoolconsultation@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:overstoneschoolconsultation@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)

**Please tell us your views by 11:59pm on Sunday 10 November 2024.**

## What happens next

With Overstone Combined School Governing Board, we will consider all the responses we receive and take a decision on whether to proceed to the next

stage and publish a statutory notice to open a Communication and Interaction (Autism) Unit.

### **Statutory notice and representation period**

If a statutory notice is published, there is a four week period in which you can make any further representations. If the decision is taken to proceed, we would expect the representation period to run from 8 January to 29 January 2025.

### **Final decision**

The Leader of Buckinghamshire Council, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services, would take into consideration any representations made before making a decision on the final outcome. We would expect this decision to be made in March 2025.

If the proposal to open a Communication and Interaction (Autism) Unit is agreed, building works would start in April 2025.

The new Unit would then open in September 2025. Pupil numbers would be gradually increased each year – until reaching the total capacity of 12.

### **Privacy**

We will use the information you provide here only for this activity. We will store the information securely in line with data protection laws and will not share or publish any personal details. For more information about data and privacy, please see our [Privacy Policy](#).

If you have questions about data and privacy, please email us on [dataprotection@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:dataprotection@buckinghamshire.gov.uk) or write to our Data Protection Officer at Buckinghamshire Council, The Gateway, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, HP19 8FF.

## Proposal for Overstone Combined School – Printed survey

### Opening a Communication and Interaction (Autism) Unit at Overstone Combined School, Wing

1. Do you agree with the proposal to open a Communication and Interaction (Autism) Unit at Overstone Combined School?

Please tick (✓) one option

- Yes  
 No  
 I don't know

Please tell us the reasons for your answer:

2. Do you understand why the proposal to open a Communication and Interaction (Autism) Unit at Overstone Combined School has been made?

Please tick (✓) one option

- Yes  
 No  
 I don't know

If 'No' or 'I don't know', please tell us why:

## Further comments

3. If you think there is anything we haven't considered when developing the proposal to open a Communication and Interaction (Autism) Unit at Overstone Combined School, please tell us here:

4. If you have any other comments about the proposal to open a Communication and Interaction (Autism) Unit at Overstone Combined School, please tell us here:

## About you

We will use the information you provide here only for the purpose of this activity. We will store the information securely in line with data protection laws and will not share or publish any personal details.

5. Which of the following describe you?

Please tick (✓) all that apply

- I am a parent or carer of a student at Overstone Combined School
- I work at Overstone Combined School
- I am a Governor for Overstone Combined School
- I am a student at Overstone Combined School
- I live near Overstone Combined School
- I work at another local school in the area
- I represent or own a business in Buckinghamshire

- I represent a community or voluntary group in Buckinghamshire
- I am an elected representative in Buckinghamshire
- I represent a Parish / Town Council or Town Committee in Buckinghamshire
- I work for Buckinghamshire Council
- Other (please give details below):

**6. How did you find out about this consultation?**

Please tick (✓) all that apply

- Letter from the school
- School staff briefing
- Local media (newspaper, radio, TV, website or newsfeed)
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter/X, Instagram, Nextdoor or LinkedIn)
- Buckinghamshire Council website or Your Voice Bucks website
- Email or newsletter from Buckinghamshire Council
- Buckinghamshire Council staff or other professionals
- Through working at Buckinghamshire Council
- Poster or leaflet
- Friend or family member
- Local community or special interest group
- Councillor, town/parish council or community board
- Other (please give details below):

**7. Are you responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation (e.g. a business or a voluntary group)?**

Please tick (✓) one option

- As an individual (go to question 9)
- On behalf of an organisation

## On behalf of an organisation

### 8. Please provide the following details:

Name of organisation:

Your job title:

**End of survey if responding on behalf of an organisation**

## More about you

We want to hear from as many people as possible to understand the views and needs across Buckinghamshire. The following questions help us see if the communities we serve have had the opportunity to be heard through this activity.

All questions are optional. You can skip any questions you do not wish to answer.

### 9. What is your postcode?

We want to understand the views of people living in different areas. You don't have to provide your postcode, but it helps us plan and make considered decisions.

### 10. What is your age?

**Why we ask this:** We want to understand the experiences and views of different age groups.

Please tick (✓) one option

- Under 16
- 16 to 24
- 25 to 34
- 35 to 44
- 45 to 54



- 55 to 64
- 65 to 74
- 75 to 84
- Over 85
- Prefer not to say

**11. Do you consider yourself to have a disability / disabilities, impairment(s) or long term health condition(s)?**

**Why we ask this:** We want to understand the experiences and views of disabled people, people with impairments and people with long term health conditions.

Please tick (✓) all that apply

- Disability / disabilities
- Impairment(s)
- Long term health condition(s)
- No
- Prefer not to say

**12. Are you:**

**Why we ask this:** We want to understand the experiences and views of different sexes.

Please tick (✓) one option

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say

**13. How would you describe your ethnicity?**

**Why we ask this:** We want to understand the experiences and views of different ethnicities.

Please tick (✓) one option

- Asian - British
- Asian - Bangladeshi
- Asian - Chinese
- Asian - Indian
- Asian - Pakistani

- Any other Asian background - Please give details below
- Black - African
- Black - British
- Black - Caribbean
- Any other Black, African or Caribbean background - Please give details below
- Mixed or multiple ethnic groups - White and Asian
- Mixed or multiple ethnic groups - White and Black African
- Mixed or multiple ethnic groups - White and Black British
- Mixed or multiple ethnic groups - White and Black Caribbean
- Mixed or multiple ethnic groups - Mixed or Multiple Ethnic backgrounds British
- Any other Mixed or Multiple ethnic background - Please give details below
- White - English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British
- White - Irish
- White - Gypsy or English traveller
- White - Irish Traveller
- White - European
- Any other White background - Please give details below
- Other ethnic group - Arab
- Other ethnic group - Arab British
- Other ethnic group - Please give details below
- Prefer not to say

Please give other details here:

### **End of the survey**

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.** Please return your completed survey by 11:59pm on Sunday 10 November 2024. You can:

- email it to [overstoneschoolconsultation@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:overstoneschoolconsultation@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)
- post it to The School Commissioning Team, Buckinghamshire Council, 1st Floor Walton Street Office, Aylesbury, HP20 1UZ