

29<sup>th</sup> March 2017

Dear Parent/Caregiver,

### Lowbrook Academy Expansion

It is with regret that I am writing to inform you that Lowbrook Academy is not in the position to take 60 pupils in September 2017. In conjunction with the Local Authority, an expansion scheme was put together, worked upon and progressed to the planning phases. However, the initial funding of £1.6 million unfortunately, as predicted, fell well below the amount required to deliver the agreed scheme.

Phase I, which has included remodelling an internal space to create a temporary classroom and the construction of a permanent classroom has gone largely to plan and within the predicted budget. Whilst you may have noticed the foundations of this building have not been without complications, we have now resolved this issue and look forward to the completion of this classroom and cloakroom facilities by the summer.

The development of Phase I has left a budget of approximately £1.2 million to deliver a scheme with a hall and four classrooms (Phase II). Our financial estimates clearly demonstrate that this is not possible.

The current Phase II scheme was agreed on the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016 by a Steering Group that included the Head of Schools and Education Services, RBWM. It was designed with lean principles in mind and comprised of a hall that would allow the whole school to meet. At no stage did the Local Authority ask us to remove or reduce the size of the hall or seek to significantly value engineer any other aspect of the scheme.

The predicted shortfall to deliver this project was reported to the Local Authority early on and the scheme was instructed to progress by them with full knowledge that securing this additional funding was crucial to the successful completion of Phase II.

The Academy was under the impression that the shortfall of approximately £750,000 was allocated in the new Council budget and was likely to be agreed at Cabinet this month. At short notice, the Local Authority has informed us that this would not be the case

After further negotiations, the Local Authority has subsequently offered to loan the Academy the shortfall amount. However, after careful consideration and an independent financial affordability review we are not in a position to take on this debt and progress this scheme in this manner.



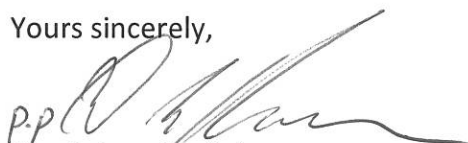
Key milestones for completing Phase II and the financial restraints mentioned above now make it untenable to deliver this scheme at this current time.

Throughout this process, Lowbrook Academy has worked ethically and tirelessly to achieve the best outcomes for current and future pupils. The Governors will not continue with an expansion that does not include a hall or with classrooms that will compromise the outstanding education that we currently provide. Furthermore, we have the corporate responsibility not to financially compromise the Academy.

As you are aware it has always been the Academy's intention to meet the needs of our residents and convert to a two form entry school. We remain committed to this ambition and will work with all parties to achieve this in the future

For further information please refer to the documents on our website and if you have any further questions, queries or complaints please direct these to the Local Authority.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Du Pré', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

P.P.  
Dominique Du Pré  
Chair of Governors