

## **Public Consultation on the proposed closure of Panmure St Ann's Special School**

### **Summary Paper**

The City of Edinburgh Council is consulting on a proposal to close Panmure St Ann's Special School (subject to the Scottish Government's statutory school closure process) at the end of June 2017.

Panmure St Ann's currently has a school roll of 6 learners, all in S4. The school offers secondary school places to young people experiencing significant social, emotional and behavioural difficulties from stages S3-S6.

This paper provides a summary of the proposal. A more detailed consultation paper is available at [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/panmureconsultation](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/panmureconsultation); by telephoning 0131 469 6123 or emailing [Panmurestanns.consultation@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:Panmurestanns.consultation@edinburgh.gov.uk).

### **Why is the Council considering the closure of Panmure St Ann's Special School?**

It is a priority for the Council to provide high quality care and learning for children and young people and wherever possible to make effective provision within their own communities and schools within the City of Edinburgh.

Panmure St Ann's Special School was originally developed as an educational and social work service, for young people of secondary school age experiencing significant social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and attending on a part-time basis whilst remaining on the register of their host mainstream school. However, following a review Panmure St Ann's was formally recognised as a special school offering full-time school education from S3 to S6 in August 2013.

The proposal to close Panmure St Ann's Special School reflects the continuing improvement in school ethos, the curriculum, inclusive practice and partnership working whereby almost all learners in Edinburgh now have their needs met in mainstream schools. This has resulted in a reduced requirement for placements in special schools particularly for learners with additional social, emotional and behaviour support needs (SEBN). The population in the secondary special school provision for SEBN has fallen from 112 to 55 over the past five years.

In the light of these changes, the Council now proposes that Panmure St Ann's should close and the needs of the small number of 6 young people who would remain on the school roll as of January 2017 can be met more effectively through tailored, individual packages within a mainstream school or, where appropriate, at Gorgie Mills

Special School for secondary learners with social, emotional and behaviour support needs.

### **Panmure St Ann's Special School – Case for closure**

Placement at any of Edinburgh's special schools is managed through the Council's Case Management Review Group (CMRG) with the child's right to a mainstream education protected and, where exceptional circumstances require it, special school placements are agreed.

Since this approach was introduced in 2010, there has been a very significant shift in favour of meeting the needs, and organising extensive and appropriate provision, for children and young people who require additional social, emotional and behavioural support needs in mainstream schools. Consequently, the number of referrals of children and young people to the CMRG for placements in primary and secondary special schools for SEBN have reduced substantially and this is reflected in the school rolls in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Special School Placements for social, emotional and behavioural support needs, 2013-17

Special School/Year	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Jan 2017
<i>Primary - Rowanfield</i>	33	31	28	23	32
<i>Secondary</i>					
Gorgie Mills	55	53	53	46	51
Panmure St Ann's	57	43	26	14	4
Secondary Total	112	96	79	60	55
Total	145	127	107	83	87

New starts at Panmure St Ann's Special School have remained very low, leading to a consistent fall in the school's roll as learner's leave school.

Following reductions in the school roll at Rowanfield (primary) Special School the number of referrals for special school placements at P7-S1 for learners with additional social, emotional and behaviour support needs is now only 2-4 placements per year. Gorgie Mills Special School will continue to provide secondary special school placements for learners with social, emotional and behaviour support needs similar to Panmure St Ann's. Gorgie Mills has a capacity of 72 places and by January 2017 it will have around 51 learners on its roll and therefore has capacity for more learners should further placements be required.

Panmure St Ann's continues to operate significantly below capacity, which compromises its educational viability in terms of offering broad curriculum choice and results in exceptionally high per capita costs. Panmure St Ann's School is located in the Cowgate area of the city in a 19<sup>th</sup> century listed building that has proved poorly suited to hosting a modern school education, with no supervised outside space within the perimeter of the school. As a consequence the school is restricted in its ability to provide the necessary learning environment to deliver the full curriculum.

In light of this changing pattern of need the authority has concluded that despite the commitment of the staff, by the end of the 2016/17 school session, Panmure St Ann's Special School will no longer be viable as a school by August 2017 as there would be only 2 leavers by then on the school roll who would be December 2017 leavers.

### **Education Scotland HMIE School Inspection Report (April 2016)**

In addition to the fall in the pupil population, the nature and quality of the education at Panmure St Ann's Special School has fundamental shortcomings, highlighted in the Education Scotland HMIE School Inspection Report<sup>1</sup> that referred to multiple areas for improvement in both attainment and learners' experiences at Panmure St Ann's Special School.

These challenges have become more acute following the decline of the school roll. With such a small pupil population both the ability to deliver breadth of curriculum subjects and the viability of the learning community is compromised.

Further details on Education Scotland's school inspection report and evidence that mainstream provision is likely to achieve better outcomes for learners are provided in the Section 4 Education Benefits Statement in the main public consultation document.

### **Travel and Transport**

Most learners travel some distance to attend Panmure St Ann's School and its city centre location that can result in delays in starting the school day and prolonged journeys at the end of the day. Learners also experience additional disruption during the school day with the need travel across Edinburgh to access facilities and activities due to the lack of onsite provision within the Cowgate area of the city.

The proposal, if agreed, would be highly likely to reduce travel time for the remaining learners leading to a more coherent educational experience provided for by more local provision.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://education.gov.scot/reports/edinburgh-city/1002945>

## **When would the proposed closure of Panmure St Ann's Special School happen?**

It is proposed to close Panmure St Ann's at the end of the school session in June 2017.

## **What will happen to the remaining learners on Panmure St Ann's school roll?**

We recognise that any transition is challenging for learners and their parents/carers and for staff; pupils and parents/carers may be concerned about how this will be managed. Engagement of young people, parents and staff in regular young people planning meetings will help to mitigate the risks and anxieties associated with this change.

Four of the 6 remaining learners are June 2017 school leavers with the remaining 2 being December 2017 leavers and therefore it is anticipated that there will be no learners on the roll at Panmure St Ann's Special School by August 2017.

To enable continuity in their individual progression, extensive individual support for these learners is in place and they are all actively engaged in preparations for transitions and towards positive destinations for school/college partnership and/or intensive support from the council's JET programme provision.

There will be a phased approach to transition of the 6 remaining learners to their new schools (either a mainstream secondary school or Gorgie Mills Special School prior to June 2017) and initially this will be targeted at specific areas of the curriculum that are of special interest; continuity of positive relationships will be provided by the Panmure St Ann's staff to support each of the 6 young people.

Timescales for this will be on an individual basis and, where appropriate, early transition will be arranged. The CMRG, managed by the Depute Educational Psychologist, will continue to monitor the progress of the 6 Panmure St Ann's learners throughout the transition and until they finish their school education, to ensure that any support or interventions are addressed and implemented quickly and responsively in the best interests of these young people

## **Proposed alternative provision**

Maintaining the current provision, i.e. keeping Panmure St Ann's Special School open, is not specifically given as an option in this consultation, but the Council could decide on this course of action if deemed appropriate as a result of the consultation.

The proposed closure would not require changes to be made to existing secondary catchment areas as special school placements are allocated on a city-wide basis.

More suitable alternative provision which in summary includes enhancing universal provision with networks of support; reinvesting £200k per annum of the savings from closing Panmure St Ann's into additional support for secondary aged learners with social, emotional and behaviour support needs.

In addition, in view of the remaining capacity at Gorgie Mills the proposed closure of Panmure St Ann's would not compromise the authority's future provision for special school placements for secondary age learners with social, emotional and behaviour support needs where required as there is still significant capacity at Gorgie Mills Special School.

### **Where can I get more information or comment on the proposals?**

The Council website [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/panmureconsultation](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/panmureconsultation) contains further information on the consultation.

During the consultation period, any views on this proposal should be sent in writing to the address given below. Responses can also be made by e-mail to [Panmurestanns.consultation@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:Panmurestanns.consultation@edinburgh.gov.uk).

The consultation document is available electronically and in paper format.

All responses to the consultation paper should be received by 27 February 2017 and addressed to the Acting Executive Director of Communities and Families.

The consultation period will run for a minimum of 6 weeks (including 30 days of school term time) i.e. from 10 January 2017 to 27 February 2017.

A public meeting will be held in respect of the proposal at the venues listed below

<b>Venue</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>
<b>Waverley Court (Room C.47) 4 East Market Street Edinburgh EH8 8BG</b>	<b>Monday 6 February 2017</b>	<b>6.00pm- 8.00pm</b>

At the end of the consultation period, the Council will provide Education Scotland with a copy of this document; written representations received by the authority during the consultation period (or, if agreed, a summary of representations) and a record of the public meetings.

### **When will a decision be taken on whether to proceed with the proposed closure?**

Following the statutory consultation period, officers will consider all the points that have been raised in writing or at the public meetings and will make a final recommendation to Councillors. This report will be discussed at the Council Meeting on 29 May 2017 when the final decision will be taken.

**Alastair Gaw**

Acting Executive Director of Communities and Families  
The City of Edinburgh Council  
Waverley Court  
Business Centre 2.6  
(Panmure St Ann's consultation)  
4 East Market Street  
Edinburgh  
EH8 8BG



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

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আনন্দের সঙ্গে অনুবাদ করব  
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MOŻEMY PRZETŁUMACZYĆ 很乐意翻译

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