Broadening Horizons to Aspire, Believe, Succeed

A: Clarkes Lane, West Bromwich, West Midlands, B71 2BX
T: 0121 588 8384
E: info@phoenix.sandwell.sch.uk
W: www.phoenixcollegiate.org

21st September 2026

Dear Parents, Carers and Stakeholders of The Phoenix Collegiate,

RE: Proposed Academy Conversion & Partnership with Step Academy Trust

At The Phoenix Collegiate, we are always looking at how we can develop our school so that we continue to provide the very best learning opportunities for all our young people. Our commitment has established us as one of the most rapidly improving schools in the West Midlands, and our core goal remains to provide exciting, dynamic learning experiences that inspire our 1750 students to *aspire, believe, and succeed*.

With this in mind, the Governing Body has been actively exploring the option of converting to academy status and formally joining **STEP Academy Trust**. STEP (Striving Together for Excellence in Partnership) is a highly respected, values-led multi-academy trust consisting of 20 schools. It is a 'one team' collaborative partnership that operates under a powerful shared moral mission: *"Where we have the capacity to make a difference we are morally bound to do so."*

We believe that joining STEP Academy Trust will provide our school community with outstanding opportunities to build upon our rapid progress. Under this partnership, **The Phoenix Collegiate will retain its unique local identity, name, curriculum, school uniform, and student-focused values**. Day-to-day decision-making will remain with our Headteacher, senior leaders, and Local Governing Body, while our school gains the security and support of a strong, proven network of schools.

Why STEP Academy Trust?

STEP Academy Trust is an exceptional educational partner with an impressive track record. Crucially, **100% of STEP academies are currently rated 'Good' or 'Better' by Ofsted**. STEP's educational framework achieves remarkable results, consistently exceeding national averages in reading, writing, maths, and phonics. Furthermore, STEP is highly recognised for its inclusive approach to teaching, recently receiving the national **SEND Excellence Award** at the Multi-Academy Trust Excellence Awards.

For our staff and students, this partnership unlocks extensive collaborative benefits, including shared curriculum resources, cross-school joint activities, national-standard debating tournaments, and outstanding professional development pathways delivered through the STEP Ahead Teaching School Hub.

Formal Consultation & Parent Information Evening

To help inform our final decision, we are launching a formal consultation to gather the views of all parents, carers and members of our wider community. The consultation will run for four weeks, **beginning on Monday 21st September 2026 and closing on Friday 23rd October 2026**.

We warmly invite you to attend a special **Parent Information Evening** taking place online. This evening will feature a presentation from our senior leadership team and representatives from STEP Academy Trust, followed by a live Q&A session where you can ask questions directly.

PARENT & CARER INFORMATION EVENING DETAILS

- **Date:** Tuesday 29th September 2026
- **Time:** 5:00pm
- **Location:** This is a virtual meeting via zoom

Join Zoom Meeting

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8209265565?pwd=YmZRTU9GZDdjZ0p4clBSYS9wQUJ1dz09

Meeting ID: 820 926 5565

Passcode: 473405

One tap mobile

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+442080806591,,8209265565#,,,,*473405# United Kingdom

Join instructions

https://us02web.zoom.us/meetings/8209265565/invitations?signature=QxTGnapV-qDrZc0R-5xbWthz7nJGRTQ8m8A3J92uW9I

- **Focus:** Presentation on academy conversion and STEP partnership, followed by parent Q&A

How to Provide Feedback and Submit Questions

If you are unable to attend the information evening, or if you would like to submit questions or comments in writing, you can do so throughout the consultation period. All feedback is highly valued and will be carefully compiled and reviewed by the Governing Body before any final decision is made.

SUBMITTING YOUR CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

- **Online Response Form (Recommended):** Click or type the following address into your web browser to submit your feedback securely online: https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/gQiJqfrRn5

- **By Email:** Send your questions or feedback to the school via **stepconsultation@phoenix.sandwell.sch.uk** (please use the subject line 'Academy Consultation Query').

- **By Mail/In Person:** Drop off written comments at our school reception address (as above), clearly marked for the attention of the Governing Body.

Please note that at this stage, while we are seriously exploring this partnership, no final decision has been made. The Governing Body will only proceed if we are fully convinced that joining STEP Academy Trust represents the absolute best future for our students, their families, and our staff. We have enclosed a Frequently Asked Questions sheet to help answer any immediate questions you may have.

We look forward to hearing your views and working together to shape the future of The Phoenix Collegiate.

Yours faithfully,

The Governing Body & Senior Leadership Team