

## **Royston School Academy Trust (RSAT) - Sixth Form Plans**

The consultation on proposed changes within Royston Schools Academy Trust detailed:

### **What change is being proposed?**

To deliver Sixth Form provision through a partnership between Meridian Sixth Form and The Knights Templar School Sixth Form (Park Street, Baldock, Herts, SG7 6DZ).

### **What is the context to this change?**

Despite some excellent A level results and recent increases in pupil numbers, the current Sixth Form provision is not currently financially viable. The Trust is committed to maintaining as wide a 16-19 provision as possible and has noted parent feedback on the growing success of the local Sixth Form. We are working with Knights Templar to enable sixth form courses to continue to be offered to local Royston pupils. These negotiations are still in progress. It is our intention to publish the plans for the Sixth Form by the end of November.

### **What would this mean for your child?**

All current Year 12 pupils will complete their Sixth Form courses in Royston.

### **What is the plan for 2018/19?**

#### *Year 12 students*

We are fully committed to providing our existing sixth form students with high quality teaching and resources to attain their required grades at A Level and secure leading universities, apprenticeships or employment. Courses will be completed at the RSAT Sixth Form Centre (current Meridian site).

#### *Year 11 students*

RSAT will continue to offer post-16 provision through an alliance with Knights Templar. This will enable a wide range of courses, including vocational and A level subjects. The following vocational courses will be delivered through the RSAT Sixth Form Centre and A Level courses will be delivered at the Knights Templar Sixth Form Centre:

- BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma Performing Arts (Dance) delivered at Stage Right's state of the art studios in Royston.
- CTEC Extended Diploma Sport & Physical Activity (in partnership with Royston Town Football Club).
- A level courses - <http://www.sixthform.ktemplar.herts.sch.uk>

Knights Templar is located in Baldock, less than 10 miles from Royston. Feedback has highlighted that the cost of travelling outside of Royston is a concern for some families. Through this alliance, transport to Baldock will be funded for students for at least the next two years.

There will be an opportunity for current Meridian Year 11 students to find out more through a special open day event on Tuesday January 23rd, when interested students can visit Knights Templar and see what it is like to be a Sixth Form student at the school. Transport will be provided at no cost to students or parents.

On the afternoon of the 23rd January, parents will have the opportunity to visit the school and speak to the Headteacher and the Head of Sixth Form. As a result of the date of this Taster Day, the application deadline for Meridian students who wish to study their A levels at The Knights Templar School, will stay open until Monday 29th January 2018.

## Background

### How large is a viable sixth form?

RSAT has experienced significant funding pressures at all levels but particularly around cost effective delivery of post-16 education. The future of school sixth forms has been highlighted in the media for some time, particularly in light of recent changes in the way post-16 students are funded in schools and colleges. The funding has gradually declined and this has had particular impact on small sixth forms.

The average sixth form college has around 1,700 students, while the average school sixth form has a little over 200. Economies of scale apply, so it is more expensive per student for schools to provide a sixth form, meaning they may have to subsidise sixth form students from other funding streams, such as that for 11 to 16-year-old students. The Department for Education recognises that sixth forms with fewer than 200 students are at risk of not being financially viable.

In March 2016, ministers introduced five new tests to ensure that new sixth forms are viable. DfE guidance, 'Making significant changes to an open academy' states that schools wishing to open a new sixth form must have a good or outstanding Ofsted grade; that it should be realistic for the new sixth form to offer 15 subjects and enrol 200 or more students; that there should be no detrimental financial impact on the rest of the school and that there should not be a negative impact on high quality schools and colleges nearby.

### How many students choose Meridian Sixth Form?

RSAT Sixth Form currently has a total of 110 students in the sixth form (Year 12 and 13 combined). Over the last five years, Meridian Sixth Form has enrolled 30-35% of Year 11 students into Year 12. As a small sixth form, the school is finding it increasingly difficult to compete with the much larger sixth forms in the area (for example, competition from Cambridge sixth forms), which some Royston residents are currently choosing to access.

### Why an alliance with Knights Templar?

Closing the Royston Sixth Form has been an option explored by RSAT and this plan allows an alternative: a Sixth Form alliance. RSAT has decided to progress a Sixth Form alliance to provide an offer for students post 16 and to have a positive impact on resource allocation for the benefit of pupils across Years 5 to 11.

Knights Templar is one of the most successful sixth forms in North Hertfordshire:

*"Examination results at key stage 5 are consistently good...Knights Templar monitor progress in the sixth form closely and put support in place to ensure the best outcomes for all students." (Ofsted 2017)*

The changes to Sixth Form provision through an alliance with Knights Templar will ensure RSAT makes the most effective use of its resources and will allow the school to provide an excellent offer for students post 16.