

WH/RNM

2nd March 2018

Dear Parent/Carer

I am writing to all families who have been allocated a place at Boston Spa Academy for a place in Year 7 in September 2018. We are delighted to be welcoming you daughter or son; you should already have received a welcome letter from Mrs Brennan.

I thought it would be helpful to bring clarity to all of the recent speculation and discussion about our school that you may have been seeing in the media. I appreciate that where you send your child to secondary school is a significant decision and I want to be transparent with what may or may not be happening so you feel informed as you accept the offer of your child joining Boston Spa Academy for their secondary school education.

OUR APPLICATION TO JOIN TGAT

As you know, the school applied to join the high performing GORSE Academies Trust (TGAT) in May 2017 and undertook a legal, open and comprehensive consultation which was overwhelmingly supported by governors, staff, parents and the wider community. Although we knew that the lengthy legal process would not be concluded at this point, the school was re-named Boston Spa Academy from 1st September 2017 and our work with TGAT commenced at the start of this academic year. We implemented a whole range of changes, including introducing Positive Discipline as well as receiving high quality school improvement support as we undertake our journey to become an outstanding learning establishment.

THE LEEDS CITY COUNCIL RESPONSE

Given all of the opportunities they had to notify me of their concerns, you can imagine my disappointment when Mr. Walker, Leeds City Council's Director of Children & Families, finally informed me in January that his department was not declaring support for our application. At a meeting he shared that they were looking at the longer term futures of Wetherby High School and Boston Spa Academy and were considering plans to merge the two schools on a site in Wetherby. At no point in the previous nine months had this been raised by Leeds City Council and what further disappointed me was that they were not supportive of plans to further improve the standards of education in the outer north east of Leeds, where there are currently no outstanding schools.

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I informed parents of this situation at the end of January and what has followed over the last 4 weeks has been nothing short of phenomenal. Our school and local communities have sent an unprecedented amount of correspondence on this issue to our local MP, Alec Shelbrooke. He has publicly supported our position to convert to an academy and has spoken directly to the Minister now handling the decision to personally represent the views from all parts of the community and state his own wish that Boston Spa Academy is allowed to complete the academisation process and formally become a school within TGAT.

NEXT STEPS

I recognise that you will have now received your offer for a place at Boston Spa Academy and I can understand that you feel unsettled by the messages coming out of Leeds City Council.

I should therefore reassure you on a number of fronts. I remain confident that the decision to allow Boston Spa Academy to join TGAT will be approved by the Under Secretary of State for Education, Lord Agnew. Our desire to join TGAT is consistent with the direction central government wants schools to follow and I believe that this will be recognised. Although it is taking longer than we had expected, we should know this by the end of April.

In response to our application to join The GORSE Academies Trust, Leeds City Council launched their own consultation this week. We recognise that LCC are entitled to hold their consultation but have grave concerns about the quality of the survey, and the accuracy, selectivity and balance of the data that they have shared. These are concerns that we have already formally raised with them. You can find my response [here](#), my most recent letter to parents is [here](#) and the comments of Alec Shelbrooke MP are [here](#).

The response from our community to the Leeds City Council plan last month was overwhelming and has done much to create a critical mass of support for our school, but we will need one last push to achieve our goal, so please make sure you complete the [survey](#) to make your opinions heard. Please note that when doing so you do not required to provide an answer to question 1. We are very grateful for your support.

THE POSITION OF GOVERNORS

You can be assured that the senior leaders and governors of Boston Spa Academy will not be distracted by the actions of Leeds City Council and we will continue to build an educational provision for the future which is truly world class for all of our children. Our commitment to build our outstanding school within our community is unwavering. We remain united behind, and committed to, our TGAT partnership plan, and we will welcome our biggest Year 7 intake for some years in September.

I understand that you may still have some questions which remain unanswered. If you need any further information all my correspondence on this matter can be found in the '[Letters](#)' section on our website. For further clarity please do not hesitate to contact me via my PA Mrs Rushton, who can be contacted through RushtonM@bostonspa.leeds.sch.uk and we will be pleased to respond.

We very much look forward to welcoming you child you our school community.

Yours sincerely



CHRISTOPHER WALSH
Principal