

c/o Nicholson and Morgan
14 Bell Villas
Ponteland
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE20 9BE

School Organisation and Resources Team
Children's Services
County Hall
Morpeth,
NE61 2EF

29th November 2021

Dear Sirs,

Consultation regarding the Relocation of Atkinson House

At the meeting of the Coates Educational Foundation which was held on Thursday, 18th November, 2021, the proposal to move Atkinson House Special School into the former Richard Coates Primary School premises on Thornhill Road, Ponteland, was discussed.

The Trustees were concerned about this proposal for the following reasons:

1. The safety of pupils from the age of three upwards at Richard Coates Primary School which is situated next door to the now empty building. We understand that the Atkinson School students are not constrained and are therefore free to leave at any time. This would mean that they would come into unsupervised (by staff at Atkinson House) contact with the primary school pupils at any time. This is an important safeguarding issue.
2. We understand that the Primary School and Special School would share playing fields and that there would be no physical barrier, thus meaning that the primary school pupils may come into contact with foul and aggressive language and behaviour. As the Primary School children use the fields a great deal there would be no possibility of scheduling different timings for use.
3. It has been suggested that the two schools could have different start times, but it is not appropriate to change the flow of the school day for young children, creating, as it would, logistical problems for the parents of these young children with regard to child care, "drop off", "pick up" etc.
4. Whilst the Coates Educational Foundation is primarily concerned with the welfare and schooling of young people in Ponteland, concern was also expressed about the Atkinson House students leaving the site and, possibly, causing upset and concern in the Merton Way Shopping Centre. There is also the fact that almost opposite the site on Thornhill Road are old people's bungalows housing vulnerable people.

The Trustees also feel that the Consultation period has not been sufficiently publicised and that it should be extended so that all residents are able to express any concerns they may have.

Yours faithfully,



David Butler

Chairman of the Coates Educational Foundation