

Proposal to remove 6th form provision at The Open Academy from 1 September 2026 resulting in a change of age range (from 11-19) to 11-16

This document is designed to:

- Notify you of the proposal by Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust (DNEAT) to remove 6th form provision at The Open Academy from 1 September 2026
- Notify you that the proposal includes a change of age range from 11-19 (as a result of the change in provision) to 11-16
- Explain the rationale behind this proposal
- Invite your comments on this proposal
- Inform you of opportunity to meet with the school and Trust to discuss the change

The statutory process

The Department for Education (DfE) has set out the requirements and processes for making changes to an academy in the guidance [‘Making significant changes to an academy’](#). This consultation period is the first stage in that process.

Why are we proposing to remove the Sixth Form provision at Open Academy?

Pupil forecasts

Class sizes for the sixth form were between 1 and 7 students, and forecast figures from the Year 11 cohort reported that 12 students had selected the Open Academy sixth form.

Numbers for the provision have steadily declined over the past three years, as other local competitors have been able to offer a broader curriculum due to their size.

Finance

The Trust’s view is that the sixth form is not financially viable, or sustainable moving forwards. The budget for the lower school was supplementing the sixth form provision in the region of £100k per year. Calculations highlighted that the provision would need at least 100 students per cohort (200 across Years 12 and 13) for provision to be cost effective.

What would change and what would not change?

The school will continue to operate for all pupils from years 7-11 from September 2026. There would be no change to the local governance arrangements or buildings.

The only changes would be the closure of the sixth form and the change in age range of the school from 11-19 to 11-16 year olds. The current Year 13s will end their time at the provision as usual in the Summer of 2026 and no new Year 12 students will be admitted after this time. The significant range of post 16 educational offers will continue to be shared and explained to Year 11 students, allowing them all to make the best choice for them from the wide offer available in Norwich and beyond.

Staffing

Given the limited number of periods of sixth form teaching in our curriculum model, there will be no impact on teaching staff. The non-teaching role of assistant head of sixth form, is being removed as part of current staffing restructure.

Alternative post-16 pathways

Denominational choice for parents

DNEAT is very proud to be a Diocesan Trust and values its links with local parishes too. The choice of parents in the future who wish to send their children to a denominational school will not be restricted by this proposal. However, we do acknowledge that the change will limit the choice of a denominational sixth form to the small number of children currently attending.

Admissions & Catchment area

Catchment area is unaffected. The only change for admissions will be to admissions to the sixth form which will cease to apply.

The next stage

This consultation period provides you with an opportunity to express your views and ask questions regarding the proposal outlined in this document.

The 3-week consultation period starts on 13 April 2026 and will close on 6 May 2026
An opportunity to meet with representatives from the school and the Trust will be available, taking place Wednesday 29 April 3-5pm. You can book a slot via the school office: patotheprincipal@open-academy.org.uk

Who will make the final decision and when could the change happen?

After this consultation ends on **6 May 2026**, DNEAT will review the comments received and use the findings to inform their full business case to the DfE who will decide whether to proceed with the proposal. We will send **all** responses received in the consultation to the DfE so they can gauge community views.

How can I learn more about this proposal and have my say?

Tell us your views by:

- Discussing them with school and Trust representatives, as outlined above
- Emailing us at: [info@dneat.org](mailto:info@ dneat.org) (please quote Open Academy as the subject in your response)
- Write to: The Open Academy Consultation, DNEAT, Orchard House, Hall Lane, East Tuddenham near Mattishall, Norfolk, NR20 3LR

We need all responses by 11.59pm 6 May 2026