



21st Century Schools Consultation Document 2013

Co-educational (Mixed) Secondary Schooling in Barry



Consultation at the Vale of Glamorgan Council, Civic Offices, Holton Road, Barry CF63 4RU

www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

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What is the purpose of this consultation?

The Vale of Glamorgan Council is considering the possibility of merging the two single-sex secondary schools in Barry, Barry Comprehensive School and Bryn Hafren Comprehensive School, into a single mixed secondary school split across the two sites.

Before this idea is given any further consideration we need to know how those most likely to be affected by any changes feel about this.

This consultation is designed to gather the views of parents, pupils, local residents and other interested parties on the idea of establishing a mixed school for Barry.

The outcome of this consultation will be considered by the Council's Cabinet which will then decide if proposals for a co-educational secondary school should be developed or not. Any proposals would then be subject to further consultation.

What is being considered?

At present there are four secondary schools in Barry:

- Barry Comprehensive** – for boys only aged 11-16 years old, with a co-educational (mixed) 6th form.
- Bryn Hafren Comprehensive** - for girls only aged 11-16 years old, with a co-educational (mixed) 6th form.
- St Richard Gwyn Roman Catholic Comprehensive School** – for boys and girls aged 11-16 years old.
- Ysgol Gyfun Bro Morgannwg** – for boys and girls aged 11 – 18 years old taught in the Welsh language.

The arrangement of separate boys and girls secondary schools has existed in Barry for many years. While this was once commonplace, it is becoming increasingly unusual within Wales. In recent years a number of councils have combined separate boys and girls schools into mixed schools. Of the 220 secondary schools in Wales only six are single sex.

The Vale of Glamorgan Council is now considering merging the two single sex schools into one mixed comprehensive school. However, before we do anything we want to know what parents think of the idea.

No work has yet been carried out to determine the finer details of how a mixed school would operate. However, if the idea were taken forward, it is anticipated that a single mixed school would occupy the two existing sites of Barry Comprehensive School and Bryn Hafren Comprehensive School, with one site becoming a lower school and the other the site becoming an upper school.

How can you have your say on the issue?

There are a number of ways by which you can have your say on the matter.



- You can complete and return the questionnaire contained in this booklet or complete our online questionnaire at www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/consultation.
- You can also share your views at a series of community drop in sessions that are being held at both Barry Comprehensive School and Bryn Hafren Comprehensive School during the consultation period.
- These sessions will also provide an opportunity for you to ask any questions that are not answered by the information contained in this booklet.

In addition to this, there will be a programme of consultation specially designed to gain the views of both current and future pupils of the two existing comprehensive schools.

What impact will my views have?

Your views matter.



No final decision on a change to mixed schooling will be taken based on the results of this consultation. However, we will use the results to decide whether or not to develop detailed proposals for a mixed secondary school for Barry.

We do not want to commit the time and resources required to create a detailed plan for a mixed school unless we know there is demand for one from our residents.

If the outcome suggests there is enough interest and support for a new mixed secondary school in Barry, then a second consultation looking at a detailed plan to merge the two schools would then take place.

Whatever your feelings on the issue, please let us know what you think.

What will happen next?

The outcome of this consultation will be considered by the Council's Cabinet. If there is support for a change to mixed schooling then we will begin to work with the governing bodies of the two existing schools to develop detailed proposals for a co-educational secondary school in Barry. This work would address issues such as: the size of the school; the potential curriculum to be provided, particularly the sixth form programme; admission arrangements and links with primary schools; the manner in which each site could be best

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used; any need for investment in the buildings; further consultations arrangements; transitional arrangements.

Alternatively, if the consultation shows that the existing single sex schools are still the preferred option then no detailed work will be undertaken.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is the Council considering this change?

In recent years feedback from parents to the Council's Admissions Team and comments received directly from schools suggests that a number of parents no longer favour single sex education for their children.

We would like to know how widely this view is held and so are trying to gauge public opinion through this consultation. The consultation will provide us with an understanding of how those likely to be affected feel about the issue before we begin considering any possible changes.

Are there benefits to mixed schooling?

While a great deal of research has been undertaken, there is still no conclusive proof that either single sex or mixed schooling consistently results in better educational outcomes.

Girls and boys in Barry are already educated together in nursery schools, primary schools and sixth form. Transition from primary school may be easier as mixed friendship groups can be maintained. Families with girls and boys may find it more convenient to deal with one staff team and one set of policies and arrangements. All pupils should have access to a broad, balanced and exiting curriculum that reflects their individual aspirations and needs. A mixed school may be very well placed to promote the social development of pupils.

All relevant research in these areas will be considered during any future work with governing bodies.

When would any potential new mixed school open?

The timescale for a new school to open would be dependent on a number of things: the Council deciding to develop proposals; how long this work would take; the work required to implement any proposals; and funding being available to pay for any required alterations to the existing school buildings.

Careful planning would be required to ensure a smooth transition for pupils and so even if there is strong support for the idea it is unlikely the change to mixed schooling would happen very quickly.

Any changes would also be dependent upon the completion of a second consultation on detailed proposals before any final decision was made.

How will any future growth of Barry affect the school?

At present there are 1160 pupils at Barry Comprehensive and 1204 at Bryn Hafren Comprehensive. Barry Comprehensive is large enough for 1423 pupils whilst Bryn Hafren is smaller, having enough space for 1331 pupils. Although secondary school numbers are currently falling they are expected to increase in the future as larger year groups move on from primary schools and to take account of planned housing developments. If detailed proposals are developed careful attention would be given to the size of the school.

Would a single mixed school be too large?

There are already a number of schools in England of this size and, more locally, Whitchurch High School in Cardiff currently has capacity for 2317 pupils. If there is support for the development of detailed proposals we would expect to look closely at the experience of these other schools to establish how they meet the needs of individual pupils.

Would there be any changes to admission arrangements?

There are no plans to change the Council's policy on school admissions.

If proposals are developed it is likely that these would suggest that all boys and girls offered a place at the new school would join year seven in mixed classes. Possible options for older year groups would also be developed as part of the detailed proposals.

If single sex schools are retained there will be no change to the admission arrangements.

How would any changes affect staff?

At present this is not known. Any proposals for a new school, including the outline staffing structure, would be developed in collaboration with the two existing school governing bodies. Detailed proposals would be subject to further consultation including with professional associations and trades unions prior to a final decision being made.

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Would there be any changes to school transport?

No changes are being proposed to our school transport policy as part of this consultation. The Council will continue to provide free school transport to all eligible children who live within catchment and over three miles from their school irrespective of the outcome of this consultation.

Are any changes to Ysgol Gyfun Bro Morgannwg or St Richard Gwyn Comprehensive schools being considered?

No, we are only considering changes to Barry Comprehensive School and Bryn Hafren Comprehensive School.

What other work would be done to assess the impact of this possible change?

An Equalities Impact Assessment would be carried out whilst developing proposals with the governing bodies to ensure that the proposals do not adversely affect any particular group in society. In addition to this, a Community Impact Assessment would also be undertaken at this stage to ensure that any proposal avoids negative impacts wherever possible.

Key dates

What are the key dates proposed for this consultation?

9 September 2013

The consultation period will open. From this date all Vale residents will be able to submit their views online or in writing.

25 October 2013

The consultation period will close. After this date no responses will be accepted.

16 December 2013

The Council's Cabinet will consider the outcome of the consultation and decide if proposals for co-educational schooling should be developed with the schools' governing bodies.



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Consultation Response Form

Co-educational (Mixed) Secondary Schooling in Barry

Please provide your name and address. We will use this information to ensure that all respondents are kept informed of the outcome and of any possible next steps in the consultation process. It will also provide us with a greater understanding of who our consultation has reached.

Name

Address

Postcode



Please return this form to: Coeducational Secondary Schooling in Barry,
Corporate & Customer Services, Vale of Glamorgan Council, FREEPOST SWC2936 Barry CF63 4GZ



21st Century Schools Consultation Response Form

To have your say on the future of secondary schooling in Barry simply complete this form and return it to the freepost address given below.

Co-educational Secondary Schooling in Barry

Question 1 In what capacity are you responding to this consultation? (please tick box):

Parent Pupil Local Resident Governor Member of Staff

Other (please specify)

Question 2 If you are a parent/guardian of a child (or children) currently attending school in the Vale of Glamorgan please give the name of their school(s):

Question 3 What are your views on the idea of changing to mixed secondary schooling in Barry? (This is an optional question. You do not have to provide a response)

Question 4 Would you support in principle a change to mixed secondary schooling in Barry?

Yes No

Please return this form to:
Coeducational Secondary Schooling in Barry,
Corporate & Customer Services,
Vale of Glamorgan Council, FREEPOST SWC2936, Barry CF63 4GZ

Alternatively you can complete an online version of this form at
www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/barryschools
or you can e-mail your views to consultation@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Please note that all comments sent in writing or by e-mail must contain the full name and full postal address of the person making the comments.