

Honiton Post 16 Consultation: Key themes and FAQs

Is this just a financial decision?

No, this is not just a financial decision. The current size of the Sixth Form means we are unable to provide students with a broad and deep curriculum offer, and access to the in class and enrichment experience they deserve. We want every student to have the best possible opportunities, and that is not something we can sustainably offer with such low numbers.

From a financial perspective, our decision to apply for closure is driven by the fact that in recent years, the College has redirected a significant amount of funding from students in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 to keep the Sixth Form running. We do not believe it is fair to compromise the education of younger students in this way.

Why are you not giving the new Headteacher time to increase recruitment?

For over ten years, the number of students enrolling in our Sixth Form has been unsustainably low (detailed numbers included in our original [consultation document](#)). A survey conducted last summer confirmed that this trend is unlikely to change, with projected class sizes falling well below the Department for Education's recommended levels.

From an experience perspective, this would further limit our ability to offer a diverse range of subjects to our students, meaning we would be unable to offer our students the best possible opportunities.

Will this impact teacher retention?

Our staff teams are so important to us and our Post 16 team are a valued part of our HCC community. We are committed to retaining the great staff working across our College and outlined some of the steps to do this as part of our initial consultation document.

Not all teachers deliver Post 16 lessons, the vast majority of our staff team predominantly teach in KS3 and KS4. This year there is no Year 12 curriculum being delivered, and this has not impacted on staffing retention so far.

We are really mindful that staff will likely feel a sense of loss should the application to close be approved, which could affect the overall sense of community and belonging. To mitigate these impacts, we will maintain open and transparent communication with the whole team.

Working as part of our Trust all staff have access to a wide range of opportunities which impact positively on their teaching experience that coupled with the new leadership at the College would encourage teachers to remain at Honiton.

How thorough were the surveys you completed in the summer term?

Before taking the difficult decision to consult on closure of its post 16, we have sought to increase uptake in the post 16 provision.

In the Summer term 23/24, the School held a family information session, spoke to current students and sent a survey to all Year 9 (2026 entry) and Year 10 (2025 entry) students to help gauge interest in future years to plan for 2025 entry and beyond to help inform our next steps. The survey allowed families to choose from a single delivery option at Honiton Community College or a joint delivery model with Sidmouth College.

We are an **ambitious** and **inclusive** Trust of schools **strengthening communities** through **excellent education**.

All attending students completed the survey to ensure the school was aware of the intentions of the entire cohort, and the outcomes were as follows:

- 22 year 10 students indicated they would want to attend the single site model. When looking at their preferred options and when mapping the subjects into options blocks to accommodate the student preferences, it indicates a class size for 2025 of 5.4.
- 39 year 9 students wish to attend the single site model. Honiton Community College completed the same mapping activity for option blocks. 32 students would all get their first choices, with a further 7 who would need to seek an alternative choice. Based on the current choices the average class size would be 6.4. When the additional alternative 7 students (if they agree to pick a different choice) are included that would bring that figure up to 8.4.

We are aware that given the age of the 2026 cohort, it is likely that there would be some natural drop out as students get older and have an opportunity to visit other local Post 16 offerings.

School wrote to parents in July 2024 with the outcomes of the survey indicating that further time would be needed to consider next steps and confirming that we would consult on any proposed changes in the Autumn Term. As part of this letter, school invited anyone who may have changed their mind about future options (following completion of the initial survey) to contact the school again over the summer break.

How will this decision impact some of our most vulnerable students, including those who travel from rural areas to access a Post 16 provision?

Should the DfE approve our application we will work closely with students and families to support an enhanced transition for students who may need additional support to remove barriers to continued education. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed as part of our Tier 1 application, and has been expanded to consider the needs of students who live outside Honiton and travel into the town to attend the provision as this was one of the key themes raised during our consultation.