

Sally Peck's Talk from 7th Jan

Good evening ladies, gentlemen and girls and thank you for coming to along to Dame Alice Harpur School on this very cold evening to hear and see the transfer plans for the Senior School.

Since we announced the plan to merge the two schools in the summer we know this has been a difficult and unsettling time everyone.

During the last 4 months we have received a whole range of responses from you, some supportive and others less than supportive; in fact very angry. For some of you decisions have been made too quickly and for others we have been dragging our heels, but I can assure you, as Chairman of the Project Steering Group that all the decisions taken have been done with the utmost care, professionalism and due diligence.

Throughout the process we have said we will consult with you wherever possible but some of the decisions have been strategic, where the right body to make the decision, has been the Governing Body; such as the location of the school, that the school will be a day school and it will offer A level and IB in the sixth form.

We have said that the new school, Bedford Girls' School will be built on the strengths and histories of Bedford High School for Girls and Dame Alice Harpur School but under its new leadership it will also develop its own character.

We remain absolutely committed to delivering academic and sporting excellence through an enhanced curriculum and a wide range of extra curricula activities.

Critically important to the process has been the appointment of the 2 Heads, Jo MacKenzie, who has battled her way here today from Ipswich. Jo Mackenzie will take up the Headship of Bedford Girls' School from Easter 2010 and Mrs Corinne Royden has been appointed as Head of Bedford Girls' Junior School. Corinne Royden took up her post in January 2010, along with managing her current position of Head of Bedford High School Junior School.

Tonight we launch the Consultation process for the transfer plans for the senior school and I wish to assure you that no decisions have been taken so far – it is up to you as parents and the staff to respond via the Question Pro which will be emailed to you tomorrow as to which Option you prefer. Next week we are running four Year Group Meetings at the High School where you can come along and discuss any concerns you may have following this evening presentation.

The consultation process concludes on Sunday 17th January. The feedback will be collated by our Project Managing team and a recommendation made by the Project Steering Group to the Governing Body as to which is the preferred Option for transfer and a decision will be confirmed to you by 4th February.

I would now like to introduce the Panel this evening:

Decisions under consideration:

- The transfer plan for the Senior School – once this has been agreed many of following will be determined.

- Staffing Structure: Jo Mackenzie will be establishing her Leadership team during the spring term along with Heads of Department. Subject teachers will be appointed during the summer and autumn term.
- The New Uniform – a uniform survey will be sent to you next week. The Junior School girls will begin wearing the new uniform from September 2010 but how the senior school uniform is phased in will depend upon the transfer date.
- Logo and branding – Jo Mackenzie and the Marketing team will lead this process during the Easter term
- Bringing together alumnae and Parent Associations – all associations have representatives of the stakeholder reference group and are planning ways of bring their respective groups together.
- Defining the Curriculum – Jo Mackenzie and Jill Berry will be covering these points in their talks.

I now have great pleasure in handing over to Jo Mackenzie, the newly appointed 1st Head of Bedford Girls' School who will talk to you about her exciting vision for the new school.