



# St Martin-in-the-Fields High School for Girls

11-19 Church of England Academy Founded 1699

*Hopeful Enquiring Respectful Organised Independent Collaborative*

11th May 2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

Following our recent communication to you regarding the change to 2023 admissions at St Martin-in-the-Fields High School for Girls, it is with regret that we are writing to you to inform you of the closure of our school.

We recently announced that St Martin's was unable to accept a new cohort of Year 7 students this year due to falling pupil numbers in Lambeth and neighbouring boroughs. There has been a significant decline in the number of young people living and going to school in Lambeth, meaning that we, along with other local schools, have seen our pupil numbers diminish in recent years. The number of pupils in Lambeth is not expected to increase for approximately eight years. Since funding for schools is awarded based on its pupil numbers, it is no longer viable for St Martin's to continue operating as a school and deliver the level of education that our young people deserve; **the substantive decision has therefore been made to begin the process of closure. It is proposed that St Martin-in-the-Fields High School for Girls will close to all current Year 7, 8 and 9 students, effective from 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023. The school will remain open until 31st August 2024 for current Year 10 and 12 students to complete their qualifications.** We understand this news may be upsetting and disconcerting for members of our school community and beyond, and we would like to assure you that, throughout the coming months, our priority will be providing you with support, guidance and as much information as possible.

We have explored in great depth various avenues in order to keep St Martin's open, including the prospect of becoming co-educational and or merging with other local schools. Unfortunately, after reviewing each of these options in detail, none were viable, nor could they overcome the fundamental issue of falling pupil numbers that we are facing in Lambeth.

St Martin-in-the-Fields was established in 1699, and has a rich history of educating girls. There are currently 388 students on roll at St Martin's and 55 members of staff, all of which remain our priority during this challenging time. We understand that our rich heritage, alumni and keen involvement in the local community means that many other groups will also be impacted by the announcement of our closure – we are committed to offering transparency and support to all those affected.

As an academy built on 'Love and Learning', we are determined to mitigate the impact of this event on the educational journey of your child. We will shortly begin a reallocation process in collaboration with the local authority, in which students who currently attend St Martin-in-the-Fields High School for Girls will be allocated a place at another local school in order to continue their studies in the new academic year with minimal disruption.

For current Year 7, 8 and 9 students, we will work with the Local Authority to use the intended offer approach to ensure that no student or family is disadvantaged. The intended offers will be allocated based on distance to the nearest available place in a Lambeth school that is OFSTED rated as 'Good' or 'Outstanding'. You will have the opportunity to apply for a

**Headteacher Ms J Okokon BA (Hons) PGCE MA**

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**WITH LOVE AND LEARNING**





place at a different school to your intended offer, and your place at your allocated school will be held for you until you receive a response to your other application.

For current Year 11 students who are expecting to attend our Sixth Form in September 2023, we are working closely with our partner schools who form South London 6th Form: The Elm Green School and Dunraven School; to transfer applications and ensure subject choices are met.

You will shortly receive communications from the local authority to inform you of the details of your intended offer. More details of this process will be available at our parent meeting on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> May; we would like to assure you that your child will be supported by St Martin's, the local authority and their new school throughout this transition process. We are also incredibly grateful for our brilliant team of staff, for whom support will be available over the coming months.

We understand this news will be upsetting for many, and are committed to providing support and guidance to members of our community throughout this process. We are conscious that the timing of the announcement will also cause concern. This was outside our control, but rest assured, our aim will be to minimise the disruption to all impacted by this decision. **You are invited to attend our parent meeting, in which we will share plans for the closure and invite you to share your thoughts and concerns:**

- **For Years 10, 11, 12 and 13:** Tuesday 16th May, 6:15pm
- **For Years 7, 8 and 9:** Wednesday 17th May, 6:15pm

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your ongoing support, and for being part of our school's journey. We are very proud of the work St Martin-in-the-Fields has done to educate and support young people over the last 324 years, and are deeply sorry to see it come to an end. The school's site in Tulse Hill is owned by a charitable trust whose objectives are focused on the welfare and education of children and young people. These objectives will be central to any decisions made on the future use of the site.

Yours sincerely,

Josephine Okokon  
Headteacher