



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

11-19 Church of England Academy Founded 1699

Hopeful Enquiring Respectful Organised Independent Collaborative

12th May 2023

Following the recent news that St Martin-in-the-Fields High School for Girls will not be admitting a Year 7 cohort in September 2023, we are writing 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 September 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 student 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 31st August 2023. The school will remain open until August 2024 for current Year 10 and 12 students to complete their qualifications.** We understand this news will 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 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 journeys of our students. 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'. Parents will have the opportunity to apply

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WITH LOVE AND LEARNING





for a place at a different school if they wish, and their intended offer will be held for them while they await a response. More details of this process will be available to parents at our parent meetings on Tuesday 16th May and Wednesday 17th May.

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 Elmgreen School and Dunraven School; to transfer applications and ensure subject choices are met.

We wholly appreciate that this news will cause concern 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 is to minimise the disruption to all impacted by this decision. We would like to invite you to share your questions and thoughts.

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. Those objectives will be central to any decisions made on the future use of the site.

All media enquiries should be directed to georgie.gage@tsatrust.org.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Josephine Okokon
Headteacher