

4 April 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

Closure of Wigan UTC – September 2019

Following discussions between the Department for Education, the Northern Schools Trust and the Local Governing Body, it has been mutually agreed in principle to close Wigan UTC at the end of August 2019. We are working in partnership with the Department for Education to agree a way forward which will allow us to support you and your son or daughter through this difficult time. We will also be working closely with Wigan Local Authority and partner secondary schools in the area. We are very grateful for their commitment to working in the best interest of our families.

Whilst we realise this is distressing, it has been agreed in principle that it is in the best interest of the students at Wigan UTC. A decision has been made in principle to close as the UTC is financially unviable and has been for several years. This is nothing to do with quality of the education at the UTC, but unfortunately the funding formula for schools is such that the current student numbers are not sufficient for the UTC to operate without a crippling deficit which is not sustainable for maintaining that quality.

This will clearly lead to many questions for you and your son or daughter on how the process for closure will happen and how it will affect you. The transition plan to closure has a number of important elements:

- Current Year 9 students who may have been considering the UTC as their school of choice in Year 10 will no longer be offered a place.
- The same will apply to current Year 11 students who were considering the UTC for their post 16 provision. We will be writing to all these parents explaining what is happening and outlining the need for them to identify alternative options.
- Current Year 11 students will continue on to their preferred sixth form provider as planned but clearly this will not be at Wigan UTC.
- If you are the parent of a student who will be in Year 11 in September 2019, we will work with you, Wigan Local Authority and local secondary Headteachers to identify appropriate education provision to enable your son/daughter to complete the courses that they have started at Wigan UTC. This will be done on an individual basis taking into account previous education history, individual needs and where you live. We will write to you further about

how this will work once detailed discussions have taken place with the providers in the area.

- If you are a parent of a student in Year 12 we will work with you, Wigan Local Authority, Secondary schools with post 16 provision and other post 16 providers to identify the most appropriate provision to enable your son/daughter to complete their post 16 studies. This will be done on an individual basis taking into account previous education history, individual needs and where you live. We will write to you further about how this will work once detailed discussions have taken place with the providers in the area.

Whether your son/daughter is in Year 10 or Year 12 we will work with the schools and post 16 providers locally to coordinate opportunities to understand the range of GCSE, BTEC and A Level options and exam boards, visit the alternative schools with available places, organise a series of transition days and manage the handover of coursework etc. so all details are in place for September 2019.

We will host a series of meetings for parents to ensure all concerns are dealt with quickly and communicated fully. The first meeting for all parents will take place at 6pm, Thursday 25th April at Wigan UTC. This will allow us to give you more details on the support programme that is being put in place. You will also have the opportunity over the next 4 weeks to express any views on the processes for closure and for securing school places for students via views@wiganutc.org

I would like to personally reassure parents and students that everything will be done to maintain continuity of provision for students in all year groups. Education over the summer term will take place exactly as planned, all extra-curricular programmes will run, trips, visits, sporting events will continue as normal. I have been deeply proud of the staff team during this past difficult week and know we can rely on them to continue to deliver a professional quality education experience for every child during the period up until closure. We want to thank all our families, staff and students for their support during this difficult time.

I will be available to take questions personally at the next parents' meeting, taking place at Wigan UTC on Thursday, 25th April at 6pm as will members of the senior leadership team.

Yours sincerely

Rod Dubrow-Marshall
Chair of Governors