

Appendix 2: Notice of Consultation

Email: educ.consultation@falkirk.gov.uk
Telephone: 01324 506600
Date: 16th September 2024



Falkirk Council
Children's Services

For the attention of:

- Parents and carers of all primary and nursery age pupils living in the catchment areas of Blackness and Grange Primary Schools
- Blackness and Grange Primary School Parent Councils
- School staff and trade unions at both schools
- Blackness and Bo'ness Community Councils
- Blackness Community Hall Management Committee
- All other households in the Blackness Primary School catchment area
- Local Elected Members of Falkirk Council
- MSPs for the area
- The constituency MP

Dear Sir/ Madam

Statutory Consultation notice – Proposal to close Blackness Primary School and rezoning the catchment area to Grange Primary School

Falkirk Council is consulting on a proposal to close Blackness Primary School and rezone its catchment area to Grange Primary School.

This notice provides a summary of the proposal: it is a requirement for you to be notified of the consultation as a consultee, in accordance with Schedule 2 Section 1 of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended. A full copy of the Proposal Document is available at: <https://participateplus.falkirk.gov.uk>

Falkirk Council is conducting a public consultation from **Monday 16th September to Friday 8th November 2024**. During this period, you will be able to make representation to Falkirk Council in respect of the proposal.

It is important that everyone we are consulting tells us what they think about the proposal. Please read this notice and summary and then consider the contents of the proposal document. You can then tell us what you think of the proposal by

making written representation and/or by attending the public meeting. This notice and summary tell you how to do that.

We will consult by:

- Providing a Notice of the consultation and a summary of the proposal to the relevant consultees (this is that Notice and summary).
- Publication of the Proposal Document
- Placing an advert in the local press advertising the consultation
- Placing information on our website – www.falkirk.gov.uk
- Putting information on our consultation hub <https://participateplus.falkirk.gov.uk>
- Holding a public meeting to explain the proposal
- Asking all consultees to tell us what they think of the proposal

A full copy of the proposal document is available:

- On our website at www.falkirk.gov.uk
- By written request to educ.consultation@falkirk.gov.uk or Falkirk Council, Children's Service, Suite 1A, Falkirk Community Stadium, 4 Stadium Way, Grangemouth, FK2 9EE
- In printed form free of charge at Blackness Primary School, Grange Primary School and Bo'ness Library

The Proposal

Falkirk Council is proposing that:

- Provision of a school at Blackness Primary School be permanently discontinued with effect from 27 June 2025, or as soon as possible thereafter;
- The pupils of Blackness Primary School catchment area permanently receive their education at Grange Primary School, from 30 June 2025 or as soon as possible thereafter;
- The delineated catchment area of Grange Primary School be permanently extended to include the whole delineated catchment area of Blackness Primary School from 30 June 2025; and
- All non-catchment Placing Request pupils currently enrolled at Blackness Primary School will be automatically enrolled at their catchment primary school if they live in the Falkirk Council area. Pupils living out with the Falkirk Council area will require a placing request to transfer to another Falkirk Council school

Reasons for this Proposal

This is being proposed for the following reasons:

- The current catchment school roll is 10 pupils and has remained at or below this level since 2018;

- The catchment roll is projected to recover a little until 2027/28 and then level off, but remain at low levels;
- The mothballing proposal previously considered in 2022 was opposed by parents. Statutory guidance advises that where this is the case, a statutory consultation process on closure is most appropriate.

Falkirk Council, as an Education Authority is required to secure adequate and efficient provision of school education (Section 1 of the Education Act 1980); and to endeavour to secure improvement in the quality of school education in schools that are managed by them (Section 3 of the Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000). This is reflected in the Falkirk Council Plan 2021-2030 priority: "Promoting opportunities and educational attainment and reducing inequalities"

Alternatives to the Proposal

A range of possible alternative options to permanent closure are set out in the proposal paper. Those are:

- Open nursery provision in Blackness Primary School
- Increase occupancy through rezoning and extending the catchment area of Blackness Primary School
- Reallocate available capacity in Blackness Primary School for other purposes
- Mothball Blackness Primary School
- To keep Blackness Primary School open

After assessment, the Council does not consider that those alternatives included in the proposal document are reasonable alternatives to closure of Blackness Primary School. You can make written representations on the proposal and on the alternative that are include within the proposal paper. If you consider there are other alternatives to the proposal you can include those in your written representations on the proposal.

A **public meeting** has been arranged at:

- Blackness Primary School/Community Hall on Tuesday 1st October 2024 at 6:30pm.

The public meeting is open to all interested parties. At this meeting, council officers will give a presentation of the proposal, answer questions on it and record the oral representations of anyone who attends. There will be opportunity to complete a consultation response form.

Representations to the Proposal

This summary and the Proposal Document advise how you can make representation to this consultation process. You are invited to have your say on

this proposal. The Council is seeking your representations to be made on the following:

- The proposal;
- Alternatives to the proposal as listed above; and
- Suggestions of other alternatives.

You can attend the public meeting and/or you can make written representations.

On-line: <https://participateplus.falkirk.gov.uk>

By email to: educ.consultation@falkirk.gov.uk.

By Letter to: Blackness Primary School Consultation, Falkirk Council Children's Services, Suite 1A, Falkirk Community Stadium, 4 Stadium Way, Falkirk, FK2 9EE

Respondents should state the capacity in which they are expressing their views and agree to their statement/comments being published as part of the Statutory Consultation process and published in the final Consultation Report (all other personal information will be redacted).

Falkirk Council is seeking your views on the proposal during the consultation period, it does not assume that the proposal will go ahead. All points raised during the consultation period will be included in the final Consultation Report before being presented to Elected Members where a decision will be taken as to the outcome of this process.

What to do now

Please read the full proposal document

- You are invited to attend the public meeting which will be held at Blackness Primary School/Community Hall on Tuesday 1st October 2024 at 6.30pm.
- All responses must be made online, or in writing by Friday 8th November 2024.

Following the consultation, all points raised will be carefully considered and Elected Members will then decide if the proposal should go ahead.

If the proposal goes ahead, any children from Blackness Primary School catchment area would be educated at Grange Primary School.

Yours faithfully,

Jon Reid
Director of Education