

Okehampton Community College



Consultation: Proposal to increase the net capacity on student numbers to 1650

Summary of Consultation Responses

Parents and/or carers of all 1303 current students on roll were invited to respond to the consultation to increase the net capacity on student numbers at Okehampton Community College (OCC) to 1650. 22 written responses were received via email. This equates to approximately 2% of parents and/or carers.

Out of the 22 responses received, all (100%) expressed concern. 8 out of the 22 responses (36%) understood the rationale behind the proposal but feel either alternative options should be explored first or that any increase should be done more gradually than what is proposed.

Within the 22 responses received, four common themes emerged. These are summarised below:

- **Facilities / Space:**
 - 12 respondents (55%) express concern over the potential impact that any increase in student numbers would have on current facilities and/or space within the college. There is a general feeling amongst the 12 responses that the current college footprint is not sufficient for the existing number of students. Specific concerns raised include:
 - The impact on the canteen, including seating and queues for hot food.
 - The impact on movement around the college; in particular, the corridors and pinch points.
 - Whether current spaces, such as, for example, the Octagon and student toilets would be able to cope with the proposed increase.
- **Teacher Recruitment / Staffing:**
 - Given the national and local challenges regarding teacher recruitment and retention, 11 respondents (50%) raise concerns over the potential impact on staffing. In particular, how the college will secure any additional teachers and/or other staff required as a result of an increase in the net cap on student numbers.
- **Impact on Behaviour:**
 - 10 respondents (45%) express concern over the potential impact that any increase in student numbers will have on student behaviour within the college.
- **Existing Priorities:**
 - 9 respondents (41%) request that the college prioritises bedding in the positive changes that have occurred recently within the college first, before any increase in student numbers.

In addition to the above themes:

- 2 respondents (9%) express concern over the potential impact on SEND students. Specifically, how the college will ensure that support and resources for students with SEND are not adversely impacted by any increase in student numbers.
- 2 respondents (9%) sought assurances that the Wardhayes Sixth Form Centre would be able to cope sufficiently with any increase in student numbers.
- 1 respondent (5%) asked whether there was sufficient demand to justify an increase in the number of sixth form places.
- 1 respondent (5%) enquired as to how any proposed increase in student numbers would financially benefit the college.

College Responses

Theme	College Response
Facilities / Space	The college is currently planning to increase the amount of outside covered seating areas for students during social time. We are also reviewing our one-way systems and the general flow of students around the school's site between lesson changeover.
Teacher Recruitment / Staffing	<p>Teacher recruitment has been a priority this year in what has been a very challenging period, mirrored across Devon and Nationally. We have already started to recruit excellent teachers to join the staff team in January 2023, Easter 2023 and September 2023. We have recruitment campaigns focused on also recruiting support staff.</p> <p>We are also working hard on our staff retention strategy, ensuring every member of staff is supported in their work and given the best possible training so they can thrive in their role and support Okehampton College in providing the best provision for students and their families.</p>
Impact on Behaviour	Ensuring every student has disruption free learning in their lessons and an excellent experience on their journey through their school life remains a top priority for the college. The new systems put in place this year are working but need constant monitoring throughout this year and into next. We are working more closely with our primary feeder schools to ensure a strong transition for the new Year 7 students arriving in September 2023.
Existing Priorities	Our college priorities are clear, and we do not feel that an increase in student numbers next year will negatively impact this. We continue to develop our leadership capacity across the school and Trust to turn our actions plans into improved outcomes for students.
Impact on SEND Students	As mentioned already, we have enhanced our transition work with our primary schools this term to ensure, as a college we are ready to welcome and support every new student into Year 7 next year. All members of the Senior Leadership Team are currently visiting every primary school to meet with students in Years 4, 5 and 6.
Space at Wardhayes Sixth Form Centre	Wardhayes Sixth Form Centre is a great space, and we will of course have many years to plan for bigger numbers at Post-16. There is space for more students in this building.
Demand for Sixth Form Places	Another priority this term has been on ensuring our Post-16 curriculum offer is right for the year group. We are working closely with the current Year 11 cohort as they look to finalise their decisions around Post-16 study. We feel passionately that every student should be able to stay on in their secondary school to study at post-16 which is why we are asking Year 11 and shortly also Year 10 students about the courses they want to study so we can try and building the curriculum offer around them.
Financial Benefits	There is a financial benefit to the college in increasing our number of students as funding for schools is based on the number of students who attend. The increase in income will of course go into increased staffing and improving the site and facilities as already mentioned.