

Dear Parent/Carer

**Re: Proposal to Expand Drumbeat School (attached)**

STEP Academy Trust and Drumbeat School are excited to be working together in a new partnership that will help meet the growing needs of children with autism and learning difficulties in Lewisham. We are now writing to all staff, governors and parents of children at both schools to share information about this proposal and give you an opportunity to share your views.

**Why are STEP Academy Trust and Drumbeat School working together?**

STEP Academy Trust is committed to improving the life chances of all children and where we have the capacity to make a difference we are morally bound to do so. We have an exciting opportunity to extend our reach beyond children who directly attend one of our academies. We are fortunate to have surplus physical space within Turnham Academy, which is not forecast to be required for the next 5 years.

Drumbeat School is committed to providing high quality education for children with autism in Lewisham. Our two school sites in Downham and Brockley are over-subscribed and there are many more children who could benefit from our provision than we are able to accommodate.

By working together, STEP and Drumbeat can support more children in Lewisham. STEP is offering Drumbeat temporary space to expand their provision. This will enable Drumbeat to offer places to a further 45 pupils, so that those children can receive high quality education within Lewisham, rather than having to travel to other boroughs.

We hope to forge a strong partnership between STEP, Drumbeat and Lewisham Council, to support the education of local children both during this project and beyond.

**How does this impact Turnham Academy?**

Turnham will provide physical space, while Drumbeat will operate the provision in the same way as their other sites.

Turnham's building will be modified to create a self-contained area, including an outdoor play space, for Drumbeat to occupy. Essentially, this will mean two separate schools (Turnham and Drumbeat) operating from one building.

Although the learning areas will be separate, we are looking forward to having the opportunity to collaborate with staff at Drumbeat and develop our practice, by learning from one another. This will benefit children attending Turnham and Drumbeat.

Turnham and Drumbeat will work closely together to ensure the continued effective safeguarding of pupils at both schools.

### **How does this impact Drumbeat School?**

We envisage setting up five new primary classes at the Turnham site. These places will be offered to new primary aged pupils that the local authority identifies as meeting the admission criteria for Drumbeat. We are not planning to move any children or classes from our existing sites to Turnham.

We are working with the local authority and Turnham to ensure that the school environment is appropriate for pupils with autism. The provision at Turnham will mirror the tried and tested approaches used at Drumbeat, and we will continue to offer a bespoke high quality education for all Drumbeat pupils.

Yours sincerely,

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Executive Headteacher  
Drumbeat School and ASD Service

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Executive Headteacher  
Turnham Academy, STEP Academy Trust