



Department
for Education

Office of the Regional Schools
Commissioner for the West Midlands
Department for Education
Cheylesmore House
Quinton Road
Coventry
CV1 2WT

██████████
Severndale Specialist Academy
Monkmoor Campus,
Woodcote Way,
Shrewsbury,
SY2 5SH

17 July 2020

Dear ██████████

Termination Warning Notice to the Members and Directors/Trustees in respect of Severndale Specialist Academy

In accordance with clauses 88(d) and (e) of the Funding Agreement for Severndale Specialist Academy, the Secretary of State may issue a Termination Warning Notice where he considers that there has been a serious breakdown in the way the Academy is managed or governed or if the safety of pupils or staff is threatened. I received an Ofsted letter dated 17 July 2020 confirming that there are safeguarding and governance concerns at Severndale Specialist Academy. Ofsted report the following issues of concern:

- Pupils and students in this school are at risk of harm. The school's safeguarding policies and practice are not effective.
- Leaders have not successfully established and embedded a culture for keeping pupils safe. Policies and procedures are not effective in ensuring that all staff would raise relevant concerns and that these concerns would be appropriately investigated.
- Leaders have not ensured the school's current safeguarding policies and procedures reflect current national guidance. Consequently, staff have very little understanding of issues such as contextual safeguarding or child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment.
- The safeguarding policy contains very few references to the broad range of needs of the pupils at the school. Staff do not get clear advice from the policy

- or training on how to deal with specific safeguarding concerns.
- As a result of weak and ineffective self-evaluation, leaders have not identified the weaknesses in safeguarding policy and practice. Leaders are too reliant on external services to identify these weaknesses. They have not acted quickly or effectively to address or plan to address the failings identified at two recent local authority safeguarding audits.
 - Trustees do not have the necessary skills and knowledge to hold leaders to account on the safeguarding systems and procedures at the school or to ensure that the school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements. Trustees' systems for monitoring leaders' work and their impact are underdeveloped and inconsistent.
 - Despite having completed frequent safeguarding training, staff are not confident in implementing that training or the school's policies effectively.
 - Designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) do not fully utilise systems for recording and monitoring safeguarding incidents. This inability to use the school systems effectively and consistently has meant that not all safeguarding concerns and patterns of concerns are responded to. As a result, children and young people are at risk of harm.
 - The procedures for identifying who has safeguarding responsibility for children and young people attending the different settings are not effective and contribute to putting pupils at risk.
 - Initial risk assessments during the COVID-19 pandemic did not ensure that contact was made with all pupils frequently enough. Leaders are currently reviewing these risk assessments so they can ensure visual contact is made with all pupils weekly.

As the Regional Schools Commissioner acting on behalf of the Secretary of State, I must be satisfied that the Academy can achieve rapid and sustained improvement. If I am not satisfied that this can be achieved, I will consider terminating the Academy Funding Agreement.

The following Special Remedial Measures must be met by the stated timescales or the Secretary of State will issue a notice terminating the Funding Agreement pursuant to clause 91 of the Funding Agreement:

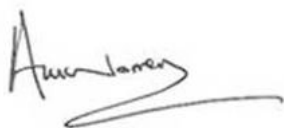
- 1) On or before **7 August 2020**, pass a resolution to transfer the academy to a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) and move to a MAT by **1 December 2020**.
- 2) Work with the RSC office to facilitate the transfer of the school to a trust agreed by the RSC.
- 3) Work with the RSC to secure immediate support for the Academy to address the issues raised by Ofsted, such support to be in place on or before **7 August 2020**.
- 4) Continue to engage with the Local Authority to finalise the Action Plan for the school, sharing this with the Department **by 7 August 2020**.
- 5). Provide details of the current governance and leadership arrangements, including the most recent skills audit conducted for the trustee board by 7

August 2020;

If you fail to meet any of the above Special Remedial Measures or indicate in your response to this Termination Warning Notice that you do not intend to meet them, I will consider serving notice terminating the Academy Funding Agreement forthwith. Pursuant to clause 90 of the Funding Agreement, in making the decision on whether to terminate the Funding Agreement I will consider any written representations you wish to make and any further information or evidence you consider relevant. Please provide me with any representations including confirmation as to whether you intend to comply with the above Special Remedial Measures by **3 August 2020**.

I am copying this letter to copying this letter to Shropshire Council, Ofsted and the National Schools Commissioner. A copy of this letter will also be published in GOV.UK.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Warren', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Andrew Warren
Regional Schools Commissioner, West Midlands