



Department  
for Education

**Department for Education**  
Eastbrook  
Shaftesbury Road  
Cambridge  
CB2 8DR  
[RG.EOE@education.gov.uk](mailto:RG.EOE@education.gov.uk)

The Members and Trustees of The Sigma Trust

Clacton County High School  
51 Walton Road  
Clacton On Sea  
CO15 6DZ

By email only

13/04/2026

Dear [REDACTED]

**Termination Warning Notice to the Members and Trustees of The Sigma Trust (“the Trust”) in respect of Harwich and Dovercourt High School (“the Academy”)**

In accordance with clauses 5.F to 5H of the funding agreement for the Academy, the Secretary of State may terminate the funding agreement if the Chief Inspector gives notice to the Trust that special measures are required to be taken in relation to the Academy or the Academy requires significant improvement.

I received an Ofsted notification dated 24 February 2026 confirming that the Academy was judged to require significant improvement. For the reasons set out below, I now consider it necessary to issue this Termination Warning Notice.

The Ofsted report published on 5 March highlights the following areas for improvement:

- Leaders, including the trust, should ensure that pupils’ achievement in national assessments improves, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, so that all pupils are well prepared for their next stage in education or training.
- Leaders should ensure that staff training translates into consistently effective teaching of the curriculum, reducing variation, so that pupils achieve well across the school.
- Leaders should ensure that the strategies identified to support pupils with barriers to their learning, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are implemented consistently well by all staff.

- Leaders should ensure that that gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills, including for those pupils who require support with their writing, are closed rapidly so that pupils can progress securely through the curriculum in all subjects.
- Leaders, including the trust, should ensure that rigorous monitoring and evaluation enables the school to identify how well recent improvement initiatives are working and to adjust these to secure stronger impact, as required.
- Leaders should refine and embed the school's attendance strategy to secure sustained reductions in the absence of pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged.
- Leaders should strengthen the school's tracking of pupils' participation in personal development activities to enable pupils who would benefit from further opportunities to be identified and included effectively.

My decision on the future for the Academy will be based on the Trust's ability to address, at pace, the concerns raised by Ofsted, see above, as well as improving performance outcomes across the Trust at Key Stage 4, as discussed previously with the Department.

As Regional Director, I need to be satisfied that the Trust has capacity to deliver rapid and sustainable improvement at the Academy. If I am not satisfied that this can be achieved, I will consider whether to terminate the Academy's funding agreement in order to transfer the Academy to an alternative academy trust.

In making the decision on whether to terminate the Academy's funding agreement I will consider any written representations the Trust wish to make in response to this Termination Warning Notice.

Please provide me with any representations the Trust wish to make by **1 May 2026**.

We are mindful of creating unnecessary pressures on school leaders and staff, and as such we would ask the Trust to ensure that the appropriate provision is in place to support the Academy's workforce.

I am copying this letter to Ofsted, the Trust's CEO, Fiona Pierson, and to Essex County Council. A copy of this letter will also be published on GOV.UK.

Yours sincerely,



**Jonathan Duff**  
Regional Director  
East of England, Regions Group

CC: Ofsted, Fiona Pierson (The Sigma Trust CEO), Essex County Council