

# Consultation about establishing a Resource Base for girls with autism



Swanshurst School, in partnership with Birmingham City Council, is proposing to establish a Resource Base for girls with autism. The provision would support up to 40 girls in Years 7 – 11 (8 girls per year group) with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) who meet the admissions guidance for this type of provision. The Resource Base would open in September 2027 for the first group of Y7 students and then grow each September as a new Y7 cohort joins the school.

The school would welcome your comments about this proposal. This document provides more detail about why this is being proposed and how to respond. The consultation ends on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2026.

## What is being proposed?

This consultation is about whether to establish a Resource Base for girls with autism at Swanshurst School that would support up to 40 girls in Years 7 to 11 with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

The Resource Base would provide a calm, autism-informed base integrated into Swanshurst's campus and culture, enabling girls with autism to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally, with flexible access to mainstream learning and tailored specialist support.

If the proposal proceeds, Swanshurst would continue to be a secondary school for girls aged 11 – 18 (from Year 7 to Year 13). Up to 330 girls would be admitted into Year 7 each year with applications prioritised in accordance with the published Admissions Policy, plus 8 girls each year who would be admitted to the Resource Base. The total number of pupils at the school would increase by the 40 students in the Resource Base.

There would be up to 40 places in total within the Resource Base for pupils in Year 7 to Year 11, which would be eight places per year group. All girls within the Resource Base would have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) that includes a primary need of autism and who require some specialist support in order to make strong progress within a mainstream school. Admission to the Resource Base would be determined by the Local Authority through their SEND placement allocation process, not directly by the school.

The Resource Base would be expected to open in September 2027 with its first cohort of eight Year 7 students. This provides time to complete the necessary building works, recruit staff, and welcome the first students effectively. The Resource Base would then build up its pupil numbers each September, reaching its capacity of 40 students in 2031/32.

## What is a Resource Base?

A Resource Base provides specialist support to a small cohort of students to enable them to make strong progress within a mainstream school. Girls who are supported by the Resource Base would spend the majority of their time in classes in the main school departments and teaching spaces, often with their peers where appropriate, or being taught a subject curriculum that is tailored to meet their needs, and some of their time (depending upon need) within the Resource Base to access specialist teaching and support. The amount of time spent in the Resource Base, and the support that each student requires, would be determined by staff on an individual basis and would be reviewed regularly.

The Resource Base would be an integral part of the school and would increase the expertise available to support all of our pupils, as well as building the expertise of West Midlands Academy Trust as a whole. The benefit to all pupils, and pupils with SEND who do not have an EHCP, would be broad as the Resource Base would provide valuable resource to train teachers and adapt the curriculum – this would add value to pupils across the school.

## **Why is this being proposed?**

Swanshurst is proud to be an outstanding school with a strong reputation which is built on its moral purpose to provide the very best for all students at the school. Swanshurst and Birmingham City Council are both committed to ensuring that young people can thrive in local schools. In common with many local authorities, Birmingham continues to see an increase in the number of pupils who have special educational needs and / or disabilities (SEND). Establishing a Resource Base at Swanshurst helps meet local need and reflects the commitment of the school and council to inclusive mainstream education.

While all secondary schools in Birmingham are able to meet a range of pupil needs, some pupils have needs that require additional specialist support within a mainstream school. This proposal is part of a programme by the City Council that aims to collectively add over 450 places in Resource Bases in mainstream schools, with a particular focus upon autism. This particular proposal seeks to support the needs of girls with autism who are able to thrive within mainstream schools if they receive some additional support.

The establishment of Resource Bases is in line with the expectations of the Government as set out in their February 2026 White Paper ('Every child achieving and thriving'). The White Paper sets out an intention that all schools have both high standards and high inclusion, with better access to support services to ensure needs are identified early and met consistently.

Swanshurst is a popular and successful secondary school with a culture of inclusion. In January 2026 the school had 15 pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) across Years 7 to 11 and the school has experience of supporting pupils with a wide range of needs. Swanshurst has strong leadership and governance, who have confidence that the school would establish and embed a very successful Resource Base. Leaders believe that through setting up this provision the school would be better placed to support children from our local community who need this additional support.

Establishing a Resource Base at Swanshurst:

- Provides additional specialist places in south Birmingham to meet increasing demand; and
- Provides those places in a successful school with strong leadership that is committed to establishing the Resource Base successfully.

## **What facilities would the Resource Base have?**

Students who are supported by the Resource Base would spend the majority of their time in classes with all of their peers, and would access the Resource Base for part of their time based upon their needs.

The Resource Base would be located in a new building that would be constructed on the site of two gyms that are being demolished in summer 2026 once the new sports hall is completed. The Resource Base would include specialist classrooms, sensory spaces, and small group spaces that can be used flexibly to meet the needs of the students. The new accommodation would be built during the 2026/27 academic year.

The plans for the building project are currently being developed, and would require planning permission. Birmingham City Council would fund the building project.

## **How would the Resource Base be funded?**

In addition to the standard funding received for each student (as received for every student in the school), the Resource Base would receive additional funding from Birmingham City Council. This enables the school to employ additional staff to support the students accessing the Resource Base. These staff bring and develop expertise that is shared with other staff within the school, so improving the quality of teaching and learning for all students within the school.

The school would work with and learn from other schools who have a Resource Base to ensure a successful launch and growth, and would over time expect to similarly provide advice and support to other schools.

## **Who are we consulting?**

We are consulting staff, parents and carers, pupils, associated professionals, other schools, and other interested parties. Any individual or organisation is welcome to respond to this consultation.

## **How to have your say**

Please have you say on the proposal by:

- Completing the online questionnaire that is available [here](#) or from the Swanshurst website;
- Completing a paper copy of the questionnaire (available at the school Reception Hub); or
- Writing to the Headteacher at Resource Base Consultation, Swanshurst School, Brook Lane, Billesley, Birmingham, B13 0TW.

The consultation ends on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2026.

## **What happens after the consultation?**

All responses to the consultation will be carefully considered by the school and West Midlands Academy Trust before a decision is made about whether to apply to the Department for Education for permission to establish the Resource Base.

If the decision is not to establish the Resource Base, no further action would be required.

If the decision is to continue with the proposal to establish the Resource Base, and if Birmingham City Council remains supportive, the next stages would be to apply to the Department for Education (DfE) for permission, to apply for planning permission for the new building, and to seek the approval of Birmingham City Council's Cabinet for the capital funding. Only if DfE approval, planning permission, and capital funding approvals are received would the Resource Base be established.