



WINCHESTER
COLLEGE

9 February 2021

Dear Parent

The Governing Body has devoted much of the last two years to defining the best way ahead for the school, at a time of rapid change and much uncertainty about the future. Our aim has been to ensure the continuing success of the school and the continuing achievement of the Founder's objectives. The result is contained in the attached document "Winchester College in the 21st Century", which describes our ambitions for the future.

This represents an exciting new phase in Winchester's history, which will bring multiple benefits to this and future generations of Wykehamists. It will also strengthen our ability to deliver our charitable aims. We have set a demanding agenda, which will take time to implement in full, but we are unanimous in believing that it is the right way ahead for Winchester and is grounded in the ideals of our Founder, if seen through a new prism.

I hope the document speaks for itself. I should, however, say something more about the biggest change: the decision to admit girls into the Sixth Form. It involved extensive debate in the Governing Body over many months – including revisiting a similar discussion in 2005. Fellows have visited co-educational schools, talked to their Governors and studied the evidence on the impact of co-education on academic attainment.

We concluded that opening the school to girls (initially for A-Level) would bring benefits in terms of intellectual challenge and diversity of thought, as well as wider advantages in terms of preparing all our pupils for the world outside Winchester. We also believe, on the basis of experience elsewhere, that this change will bring pastoral and extra-curricular benefits to both sexes.

More prosaically, the admission of girls (and the increasing number of day pupils), will significantly increase the size of Vith Book – as we have no plans to reduce the number of boarding boys. This will allow us to continue to provide a rich range of options for those studying A-Levels.

We plan to make this change over the next 3-4 years and look forward to guidance and support from those who can help us make this a success. We have clearly done a good deal of research already, to reassure ourselves that we can undertake this major transition successfully. But there are many issues, large and small, on which we plan to consult – within the Wykehamist community and outside. We have, for example, not yet decided exactly when the first girl boarders should start (although we are agreed on a target date of 2024); nor the best trajectory on numbers. You will receive details of our plans for consultation after Leave Out, and we look forward to hearing your responses in the course of the coming weeks.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely

Sir Richard Stagg KCMG