



Department  
for Education

# **Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council: Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Special Free School**

**Seeking proposals to establish a  
Special Free School**

**Rotherham Metropolitan Borough  
Council**

**February 2021**

# Contact details and further information

The application process for this free school presumption will be managed via the YorTender system.

Applicants are asked to raise any clarification questions via YorTender. This can include any apparent ambiguities or errors in, or omissions from the specification documentation and seek to clarify points of doubt or difficulties before submitting an application. Such queries should be raised by the Bidder using the 'Messages and Clarifications' function on Yortender in sufficient time to allow the Council to formulate and distribute a response at least 6 calendar days before the due date for the return of tenders. For this tender the deadline to raise questions is 6<sup>th</sup> March and the deadline by which the Council will have responded to all questions is 9<sup>th</sup> March.

Applicants are requested to submit a separate message for each query raised. All queries will be answered by either a simple response and / or by the re-issuing of the documentation whichever is appropriate. Where relevant queries will be circulated to all potential applicants. These can be viewed via Yortender under the 'Messages and Clarifications' area.

Any queries submitted via YorTender will receive consideration and a response from the relevant Council officer.

**Name** Jenny Lingrell  
**Job Title** Joint Assistant Director, Commissioning, Performance and Inclusion

**Name** Nathan Heath  
**Job Title** Interim Assistant Director of Education  
**Name** Tracy Blakemore

**Name** William Shaw  
**Job Title** Head of Commissioning and Transformation Programmes (CYPS)

Please find below the contact details of the Interim Regional Schools Commissioner who can be contacted directly via the email address below:

**Name** Carol Gray  
**RSC's Office** East Midlands and the Humber  
**Email** emh.rsc@education.gov.uk

# Key Dates

<b>Stage 1</b>	
5 <sup>th</sup> February 2021	Launch of process: National and local announcements using DfE and SCC websites
12 <sup>th</sup> March 2021	Deadline for receipt of proposals

Bidders are reminded to check the accuracy of their tender prior to submission. Submission of tenders or any other documents must only be made via YORtender using the *'Your Response'* function of tender reference **DN525000** no later than 12 noon on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2021. Tenders will not be permitted via YORtender after the stated deadline has passed.

When submitting your response, you are not required to complete the *'Supplier reference'*, *'Supplier information'* or *'Additional comments'* field within the *'Additional Information'* section of *'Your Response'*. Any information entered into these fields will not be taken into consideration. Please therefore tick the *'I have read and understood this section and can confirm I am happy not to include any additional information'* box.

Once you have successfully made your submission, the system will show that the response has been **'Submitted'** along with the version number. You can also make amendments to your submission until the closing date/time of the tender.

<b>Stage 2 – assessment</b>	
12 <sup>th</sup> to 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2021	Assessment of proposals and selection of preferred proposers
19 <sup>th</sup> to 23 <sup>rd</sup> April 2021	Assessment Panel Interviews and presentations
30 <sup>th</sup> April 2021	Proposals are sent to the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) for the East Midlands and the Humber for consideration and decision. The Secretary of State will only consider entering into a funding agreement with an approved sponsor/s. (The DfE's approved sponsor list can be accessed from the education.gov.uk website).
<b>Stage 3 – Decision</b>	
	The RSC, on behalf of the Secretary of State will consider the LA assessments and recommendations and decide which proposer is in the best position to take forward the new school. The RSC will inform the LA and the successful proposer of the decision and the LA will inform unsuccessful proposers. There is no specified timescale for this part of the process.  It is expected that it will take place during May 2021.

## Section A - Introduction

Under section 6A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (the 'free school presumption') when a local authority identifies the need to establish a new school it must, in the first instance, seek proposals to establish an academy. Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) has identified the need to establish a new Special School for children and young people with social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) difficulties. It is proposed that this school, located in Dinnington, will open during the autumn term of 2021.

The new school is required to meet the needs of children in the borough who have an Education, Health and Care Plan where Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) is identified as the primary need.

Rotherham has seen a significant increase in the number of children and young people with special education needs who have SEMH identified as their primary need and who require specialist placements. There is currently a cohort of 2378 children who have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) in Rotherham, 535 or 22% have SEMH designated as their primary need.

Of these young people 124 have EHCPs which currently name Pupil Referral Units in Rotherham as their placement. The Local Authority recognises that a Pupil Referral Unit is not an appropriate provision for children and young people with Special Educational Needs.

The Council's Children and Young People's Services, in partnership with school leaders in Rotherham have undertaken a comprehensive review of Alternative Provision and inclusion in the borough. The final, co-produced report, prepared by Isos Partnerships, identifies 'a mismatch between the pupil needs they were seeing and the current offer of support for inclusion and AP', and 'a blurring of the roles of specialist SEND provision for pupils with EHCPs and AP for pupils facing other barriers.' There is a clear recommendation in the report that Rotherham, 'develops a clear offer of AP (distinct from specialist SEMH SEND places) based around distinct pathways for specific types of needs. This will also require the disaggregation of SEMH places and AP places, and consideration of the sufficiency of high needs places.'

Rotherham recognises that some young people will require longer-term special education provision from a specialist provider and the opening of a new special SEMH free school in the Rotherham Borough will enable local needs to be met more effectively.

Further analysis of the cohort of pupils who are currently receiving their specialist provision within a Pupil Referral Unit indicate the following profile:

- 70% of the cohort are male
- 29% Primary age (Key Stage 2)
- 94% are White British (this data is affected by some non-recording of ethnicity on Capita)
- 4.6% have an allocated CAMHS worker
- 36% have social care or early help involvements.

A detailed cohort description will be provided to the approved provider. There will be strategic support across Rotherham Place to ensure that the right multi-agency pathways are in place to meet the needs of the cohort.

Many children with EHCPs who attend Pupil Referral Units in Rotherham attend the Rowan Centre (more than 70%) with the remainder being placed at the Aspire Unit. The successful provider will need to have a plan to integrate both cohorts of young people and the staff who support them into the new provision.

The community of Dinnington has a strong commitment to education. The proposed site originated as a site of miner's education and adjoins the local secondary school. The SEMH free school will continue the legacy of the site with an opportunity to have a meaningful impact on education across Rotherham. The free school presumption should consider the social value it can bring to the community it is based within and the wider social impact it can have across Rotherham.

Rotherham is committed to an ethos of inclusion across all its schools. The new SEMH Special School will be in a unique position to develop a centre of excellence that meets the needs of children with complex and sometimes challenging behaviours. We would like to work with a school partner who will have a key role in the wider system, providing leadership and sharing expertise and good practice.

The authority is therefore seeking proposals from appropriate sponsors to open this new school. This school would be deemed a free school. Proposers should complete the Free School Presumption application form and return this via Yortender.

The timescales for this project are ambitious and reflect Rotherham's desire to make appropriate provision for children and young people in a timely manner.

Application submissions are invited from Friday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2021 to close at 12 noon on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> March. Applicants are asked to raise any clarification questions via YorTender. Where relevant queries will be circulated to all potential applicants. These can be viewed via Yortender under the 'Messages and Clarifications' area.

Any queries submitted via YorTender will receive consideration and a response from the relevant Council officer.

The Regional School Commissioner (RSC) for East Midlands and the Humber, on behalf of the Secretary of State, will consider the local authority assessments and recommendations before deciding which proposer is in the best position to take forward the new school. The RSC will inform the local authority and the successful proposer of its decision, and the local authority will inform any unsuccessful proposers.

**NB:** the local authority led free school presumption is a different route to the DfE's free school programme. Further information about how to establish a new school via the DfE's free school programme route can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/opening-a-free-school>

[To download the full pack and submit an application click here](#)

**And go to the current opportunities page ref: DN525000**

### **Use of YorTender**

The process to submit an application is via the YorTender portal; this will ensure a well-managed and transparent process. All submissions must also be made through YORTender using the same reference number DN525000.

Proposals will be assessed on the following criteria

- Evidence of successful delivery to a similar cohort of young people, including evidence of education outcomes and attendance within existing provisions.

- Evidence of multi-agency partnership working to support children, young people, and their families.
- Evidence of high standards of leadership, management, and governance, including a commitment to staff welfare, training, and development.
- Evidence of adherence to Rotherham’s Four Cornerstones of co-production and a strong evidence of impact of collaboration with parents/carers.
- Evidence of a genuine commitment and desire to work in partnership with Rotherham Council to meet the needs of Rotherham children in borough.
- Evidence of working in partnership with schools, key health services and CAMHS to support systemic positive outcomes for children and young people with SEMH needs.
- Evidence of an experienced leadership team to implement the transition of pupils and staff from the two Rotherham Pupil Referral Units and support with TUPE and other related H.R. matters.
- Evidence of offering a broad and balanced educational curriculum that enhances education outcomes for this cohort of students inclusive of vocational pathways to support post 16 pathways in key stage 4.
- Commitment to collaborative partnership working across school lead improvement to develop and support SEMH continuing professional development in Rotherham.

It is anticipated that short-listing and recommendation of a preferred sponsor and contract award will be undertaken during April 2021.

### Building timescales

Design brief	Dec 20 – Jan 21
Procurement	Feb – Mar 21
Demolition (Block B)	March – April 21
Works on site	April – August 21

## **Section B - The School**

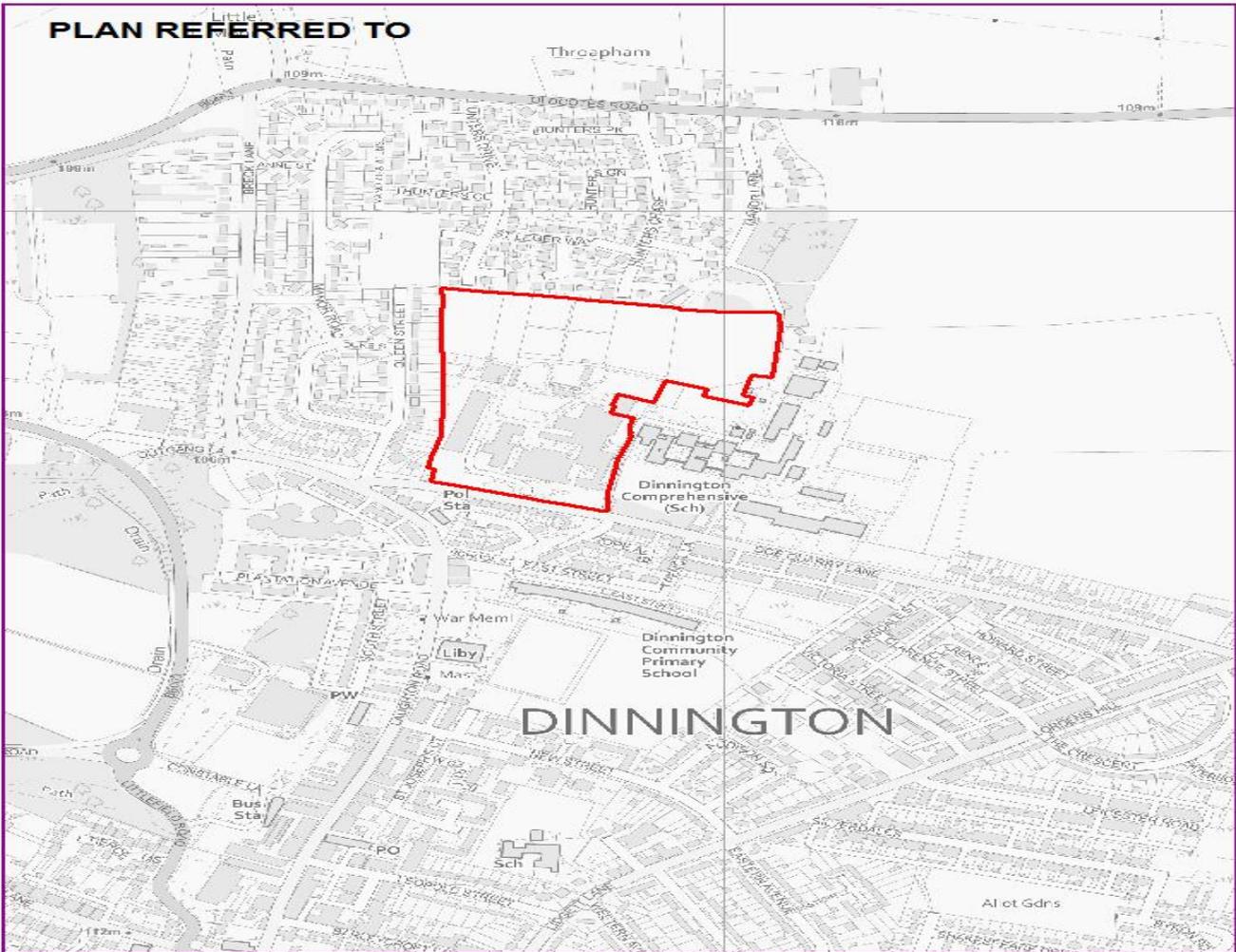
The proposed school will open in November 2021. The site of the school is the historic Dinnington College on Doe Quarry Lane, Dinnington, S25 2NF.

Annex A, displayed on page 9 of this document, shows the location of the Dinnington College campus.

Annex B is displayed on page 10 of this document and shows the red line site plan for the buildings RMBC is purchasing from RNN Group, Dinnington College.

Annex C is displayed on page 12 of this document and shows the breakdown of internal space of Block A which will be developed for the free school. Block B will be demolished on the site plan to provide the required outdoor space. The design brief will contain information on what will be provided in the outdoor space. This could include multi use games area, sensory spaces, play areas and covered external teaching spaces. An agreement will be put in place to ensure the free school has access to 4G sports pitch from the adjacent secondary school.

**Annex A: shows the location of the Dinnington College campus**



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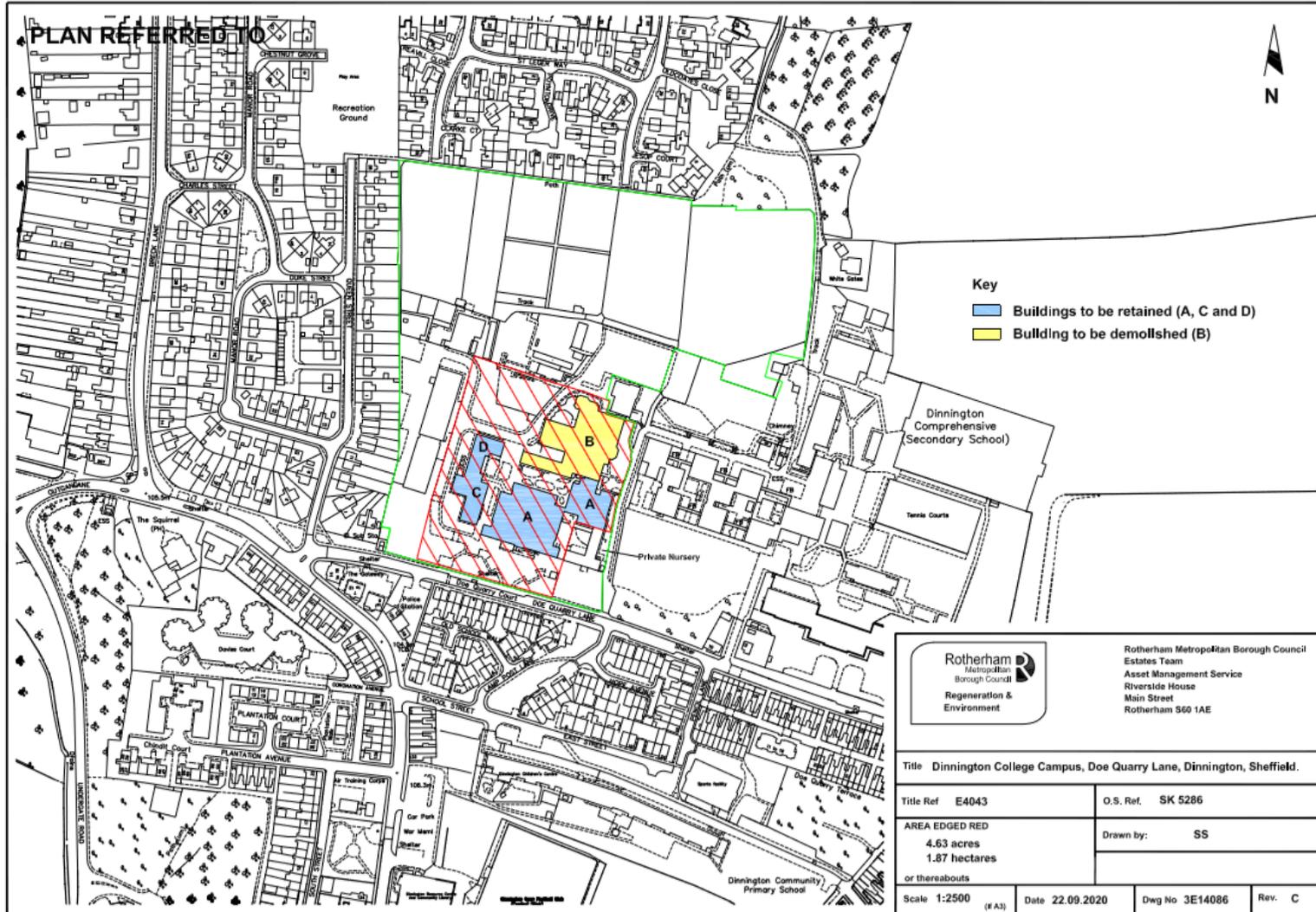


**Former Dinnington College  
Doe Quarry Lane  
Dinnington  
Sheffield**

**FOR IDENTIFICATION ONLY**



Annex B: A plan of the red-line site, showing buildings acquired by RMBC



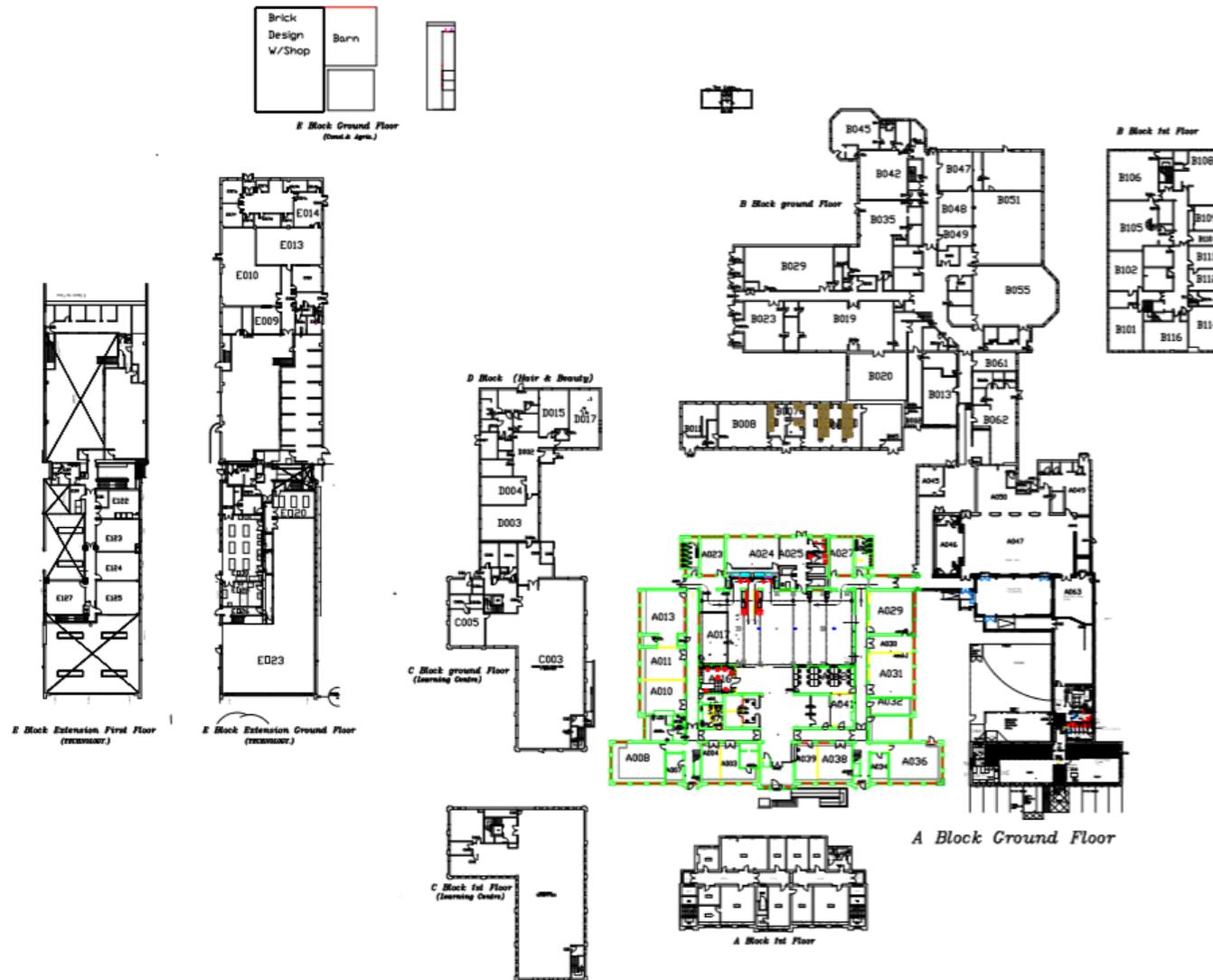
A co-productive approach is being taken to the development of a design brief which will contain what is required for the internal and external space. The aim is to involve the provider, staff, parents, carers and children and young people as part of this co-productive process.

The site has capacity for 125 pupils and the successful provider will have an opportunity to design internal space supported by Shared Agenda (Education Design Consultants).

Newman Upper school will be providing education from Block C and D, adjacent to block A which will accommodate the SEMH Special School. Boundary fencing will be put in place to ensure both provisions can manage safely and separately. There will be some shared areas which will include car parking, entrance, and drop off area and some commercial kitchen facilities and the provider may identify positive opportunities for collaboration.

A plan of the internal space (Annex C) is shown on the following page.

Annex C: A plan of the internal space is shown below



Children and young people who attend this school will live in different parts of the Borough and most children who attend this provision will be eligible for home school transport assistance as per Rotherham's policy

<https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/schools-schooling/guide-school-transport-travel>

The School Transport Team are actively involved in planning to open the SEMH Special School.

The school will be integrating pupils who are currently placed at the Rowan and Aspire Pupil Referral Units. From the autumn term 2021 the ages and year groups will include 112 children from the current cohort (12 young people will leave the current cohort at the end of key stage 4).

The school will cater for children from Key Stage 1- Key Stage 4 on a single site.

The current cohort includes

- 3 children at Key Stage 1 (please note that Key Stage 1 students will transition to Key Stage 2 in September 2021).
- 27 children a Key Stage 2
- 49 children at Key Stage 3
- 38 children at Key Stage 4

Admissions will be via EHCP Panel and via consultation with school senior leadership team as per legislation set out in the SEND Code of Practice. The school will be designated provision for children and young people with complex social, emotional and mental health difficulties which can include children and young people with attachment and trauma difficulties, autistic spectrum conditions, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or young people currently waiting for formal assessment of these conditions. This cohort of children and young people will include children who are currently Looked After, who have previously been Looked After or who are adopted; children and young people about whom there are safeguarding concerns and children and young people who are supported by early help, social care or CAMHS.

The ethos of the school will need to reflect the therapeutic needs of the children and young people who attend, teaching will be in small groups with consideration given to the individual

needs of pupils in relation to their communication, sensory and learning profiles.

It is expected that the school will enjoy positive relationships with health, social care and other professionals involved in the care of the children and young people who attend the provision. The school leadership will be invited to be part of a strong special heads network in Rotherham but also contribute to wider leadership and understanding of SEMH needs in Rotherham and demonstrate best practice in this area. It is anticipated that the school leadership will work co-productively with mainstream schools to ensure smooth transitions into and where appropriate out from the provision to mainstream. The leadership will need to make good relationships with both specialist and mainstream post-16 provisions in Rotherham to ensure successful outcomes for children and young people.

## **Section C - Vision**

The vision for the school, is that it offers a supportive and nurturing environment which enables children and young people to achieve their social, emotional, and academic potential.

The provider should have significant experience of supporting children and young people with social, emotional and mental health difficulties to achieve high academic standards at all key stages, whilst also supporting them to make positive and trusting relationships with peers and trusted adults.

The curriculum needs to have a strong focus on high quality pastoral care, including an understanding of the importance of restorative practice in enabling children and young people and the adults who support them to communicate effectively. Within the school curriculum model there will a strong emphasis of supporting students with personal development with a focus on their resilience, confidence, and independence.

The school will offer a broad and balanced curriculum which offers personalisation and supportive adaptations to meet the needs of the students attending, it is essential that this curriculum supports the educational progression of students including pathways into post 16 learning. Students will have access to a strong educational offer that is aligned to their needs, this will include both the core national curriculum offer and the wider curriculum in order that they can achieve nationally recognised attainment measures including KS2 SATs, GCSEs, BTEC and equivalent recognised qualifications where appropriate. Students will also have

access to other recognised qualifications which are aligned to their profile of learning but still support the key ethos of educational progression.

The school will offer opportunities for enrichment including (but not restricted to) after school clubs and programmes, trips, adventures, and overnight stays in educational facilities.

Students attending the SEMH special school will have access to high quality and evidence based therapeutic support that is appropriate to their needs and the school will provide a model of good practice across outcomes for students with SEMH needs. The school through collaborative working will impact on the education of any student with SEMH needs in Rotherham.

The school will adhere to the Gatsby benchmarks and offer a careers programme which integrates with other relevant aspects of the curriculum and the school will measure children's success in meeting the national preparation for adulthood outcomes framework. <https://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk>.

The school should be outward looking and enjoy positive relationships with local services, mainstream schools and being an integrated member of the Rotherham education partnerships. Schools leaders should understand the importance of good multi-agency working and the principles and values of 'Working Together' 2018.

Within the wider Rotherham school system, the SEMH special school will offer a key role in further enhancing and embedding the Rotherham SEMH strategy across the whole school system. This includes system leadership in supporting enhancements of SEMH high quality practice across the Rotherham school system, delivery of CPD and collaboration with partners to enhance outcomes across the multi-agency partnership which forms the team around the school.

Consultation in relation to the opening of the school and the transition of children and young people from the Rowan and Aspire Pupil Referral Units has already begun with letters being issued to families following publication of the Council's proposals for the Dinnington College site. The consultation will be supported by Shared Agenda and Rotherham Parent Carers Forum who will also be part of the decision-making panel. There is a designated consultation email address and public events as well as individual meetings with parents will be timetabled into this process.

Individual transition arrangements for children and young people will be discussed at their Annual reviews held during 2021 to ensure that the needs of all children during the transition period are known and understood.

## **Section D - Education Plan**

The school should offer a broad and balanced curriculum as described in Section C.

As a minimum please ensure that the following elements are highlighted in your application:

- An ambitious, broad, and balanced, deliverable curriculum plan which is consistent with the vision and pupil intake. This could include a curriculum table and pupil build up chart.
- Strategies for measuring pupil progress effectively in all areas of their development and setting challenging targets including strategies for baselining, measuring and tracking other skills, e.g. resilience, social skills, self-esteem, so that next steps can be identified and progress can be demonstrated.
- The philosophy underpinning the approach to inclusive practice and holistic behaviour management.
- Strategies for ensuring all pupils have an effective transition pathway and are prepared for the next stage in their lives.
- The actions you will take to ensure effective partnerships with other agencies that support positive outcomes for pupils, including health and social care services. Within this area we would also seek to see evidence of the SEMH special school working in partnership with key services including CAMHS, Education Psychology and other health services to deliver positive outcomes for children.
- A curriculum that supports the SEMH needs of the pupils. Provide evidence that the needs of all children are fully provided for and how the school will be fully inclusive, thinking particularly about therapeutic intervention and support for families and how the needs additional to SEMH will be catered for.
- How the school will work in partnership with parents to support them to meet their responsibilities in supporting their child's educational outcomes and regular attendance at school.
- A staffing structure that will deliver the planned curriculum within the expected income levels; with a focus on outstanding teaching (including strategies for effective

performance management). This could also include an organogram and staff build up chart

- How the needs of all children are fully provided for and how the school will be fully inclusive, including planned arrangements for working with other schools in the local area.
- The School's approach to building capacity and supporting children and young people with SEND across the local area.
- Details of enrichment and extended services, for example, breakfast clubs, after school clubs, community engagement and holiday clubs.
- The school's approach to: PHSE; the Prevent Duty; safeguarding and welfare; and promoting fundamental British values (democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs)
- Staff and pupils will be drawn from the existing Rowan PRU, including the full senior leadership team, all teaching and pastoral care staff and the specialist team who deliver support to learners who access a part-time curriculum due to school-related anxiety. These staff will be accompanied by a cohort of additional staff from Rotherham Aspire which include specialist teachers, support staff and student key workers.

## **Section E - Capacity and Capability**

Applicants should take account of the relevant criteria in Annex C of the free school presumption guidance.

As a minimum please ensure you include the following:

- A staffing structure that will deliver the planned curriculum within the expected income levels; with a focus on outstanding teaching (including strategies for effective performance management). This could also include an organogram and staff build up chart
- An ambitious, broad, and balanced, deliverable curriculum plan which is consistent with the vision and pupil intake. This could include a curriculum table and pupil build up chart
- Clear evidence that you have the range of skills and abilities necessary to set up and then run a school effectively, including: managing school finances; leadership; project management; marketing; human resources; safeguarding; and health and safety

- Details of enrichment and extended services, for example, breakfast clubs, sports clubs, homework clubs and music/art clubs
- How the school would be organised and what the governance arrangements would look like, including a diagram of the proposed structures
- Strategies for measuring pupil performance effectively and setting challenging targets
- The needs of all children are fully provided for and how the school will be fully inclusive
- The resources you would draw on and/or deploy to support the development of the new free school by the opening date
- The school's approach to: PHSE; the Prevent Duty; safeguarding and welfare; and promoting fundamental British values (democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs)

## **Section F - Funding and Costs**

The capital costs are estimated at £2.205m for the acquisition, partial demolition, and adaptations. These works are to be funded from Rotherham MBC's capital allocations.

Funding is currently provided for 121 pupils across two LA maintained pupil referral units and equates £2,330,178 p.a.

The SEMH Free School has a proposed capacity of 125 students.

## **Section G - Impact and Equalities Assessments**

As prescribed by section 9 of the Academies Act 2010 and section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the local authority must assess the potential impact of any new school on existing educational provision in the area. The local authority must also consider whether the new school would impact on any groups with protected characteristics.

The Impact and Equalities Assessment for the SEMH Free School is within the application pack.